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Light On Our Path



*Messages by various speakers mostly
on the book of Romans
at the Streetlight Mission Church
in the 6:30 p.m. services of September 2007*

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September 2, 2007
Pastor Paul Aasman

Romans 2:1-4 “You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?”

To Know God, you must Know Yourself

Reading: Romans 2:1-16
Text: Romans 2:1-4

Last week we learned about how some people become slaves to sinful patterns. Paul pointed in particular to the enslavement of homosexuality. We even talked a little about it during question period. So, how did it make you feel toward people who are helpless before their addiction, enslaved to their sinful ways? Would you say that you are more righteous than they? Are you a better person?

The Apostle Paul wanted to make sure that we don't get that feeling. When he finished talking about those people whom God 'gives over to the sinful ways that they desire', he saw clearly that we might say: Well that's not me. I'm a righteous person. I'm a Christian. I'm better than them. No, says Paul – you also are a

sinner. Hence Paul says in vs. 1 “*You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.*”

The Lord Jesus spoke often and passionately about this. He once told a parable that nicely illustrates the point which Paul speaks about in our passage. It is found in Luke 18:9-14: “*To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ‘Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men - robbers, evildoers, adulterers - or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.’”*

Was God the Saviour of that man? No. Jesus said he did not go home justified - he was still in his sins. Did that man understand who God was? No, he thought that God was someone he could make a deal with: If I do this good thing, then God will have to reward me. What was his basic error? He did not know himself - that he desperately needed God's grace because as a

sinner, he was going to eternal hell.

You and I need to be less like the Pharisee, and more like the tax collector. He knew who God was (a forgiving, merciful God) because he knew who he was (in great need of mercy and forgiveness). The two points are closely connected – you will never know God till you know yourself. A proud and unrepentant person will always worship a false god.

Don't ever look down on another person because you will lose your relationship with God. When you look down on another person and condemn him for his sin, then you condemn yourself, because, says Paul "*you who pass judgment do the same things.*" The only difference is that you might not be given over to the sinful pattern. When you see a person locked in slavery to sin, don't look down on him. Pray for him, love him, grieve for him. You may have to warn him. The church may even have to excommunicate him, but don't look down on him as though you were a better person.

Beware of judging others in pride. You will not escape God's judgment by your righteousness. You can only escape God's judgment by Christ's righteousness. You cannot escape by lifting yourself up. You need to bring yourself down to your knees. You have time; God is tolerant and patient with you. In his kindness he has not called you home yet, nor called an end to this

world. His tolerance, patience and kindness toward you are meant to give you the opportunity to repent.

It is only those who are on their knees whom God will raise up in glory. He grants them eternal peace and joy. He forms their hearts to be as his children.

If you know yourself to be a sinner, the door is opened to us and you can enter the courts of God's presence and see your God. He holds out his arms to you because he is your Father in Jesus Christ. And because you are his child, he has plans for you, to raise you up so that you might walk in his ways.

Come to your senses. Realize this: God's kindness, tolerance and patience with you is meant to lead you to repentance. Repent of your sins; confess them. God will grant you full forgiveness, and then afterward he grants much, much more.

September 9, 2007
Rev. George van Popta

2 Timothy 4:10a “for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica.”

Demas

The Fall of Demas is a Warning Not to love the World and Forsake the Word. We see Demas':

1. Earlier commitment;
2. Perilous affection;
3. Lamentable fall

Reading: 2 Timothy 4
Text: 2 Timothy 4:10a

From time to time as you are driving along the road, you see a small memorial. You see a cross on the side of the road, on the shoulder or in the median. The cross is covered with flowers. Perhaps a piece of paper with some writing on it is pinned to the cross.

When you see that, your breath catches. For you know that someone has died there in a motor vehicle collision. It's a rather somber thing to see such a memorial. Someone who had been alive and well, active and busy in life, is now dead. Such a memorial is also a warning - to drive carefully. The roads are a dangerous place.

This evening's text is a similar memorial. It commemorates the death - the spiritual death - of Demas. Our breath catches when

we read these words. Demas had been alive and well, busy and active. And then, he was dead, spiritually. This text - this memorial - is a warning - a warning to live carefully. The world is a spiritually dangerous place.

1. Demas' Earlier commitment.

We know very little about Demas. Besides here in 2 Timothy, he is mentioned twice in the New Testament, both times by the Apostle Paul. We first hear of him in Col. 4. Paul concluded the letter to the Colossians with a list of greetings from his fellow-workers. Paul wrote his letter to the Colossians from a Roman prison. In Col. 4:10 he mentioned that he was in prison. He was in prison for the gospel. A man called Aristarchus was in jail with him. In the vv 7 ff he mentioned several men who were supportive of him. And then in v. 14 he wrote: "*Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.*"

He mentioned Luke and Demas in the same breath. We know from the book of Acts that Luke was very important to Paul. He travelled extensively with Paul and was very supportive of him. At the end of his letter to the church at Colosse, he mentioned Luke and Demas together. Demas must have been well known in the churches for Paul said that Demas, along with Luke, sent greetings. From Rome to Colosse was 1500 km as the crow flies. And yet Demas was known there.

The second time we read his name is in Paul's letter to Philemon. He wrote this letter around the same time as the letter to the Colossians. In v. 23 & 24 Paul wrote: "*Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.*" Did you hear that? "*Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.*" Together with Epaphras and Aristarchus, who spent time in jail with Paul - for the sake of the gospel; and along with Mark and Luke, whom we know travelled extensively with Paul spreading the gospel; along with those faithful men who continually put their lives on the line for the sake of the gospel, Demas was a fellow worker of Paul.

Because he was a fellow worker of Paul, he shared in Paul's calling. What was Paul's calling? What had Christ called Paul to do? Acts 9:15 & 16 state the substance of Paul's calling. The Lord said there that Paul was his chosen instrument to carry the name of Jesus Christ before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. Part of Paul's calling (v. 16) was to suffer much for the Name of Christ.

Demas shared in that work of carrying the Name of Christ Jesus before Gentiles and Jews, and to suffer much for the sake of Christ.

Paul wrote about his calling in 2 Cor. 5 & 6. In 5:19ff he wrote: "*And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were*

making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 6:As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, 'In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.' I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."

As Paul's fellow-worker, Demas functioned as an ambassador of Christ, appealing to people, imploring them to be reconciled to God. Not only was Demas a fellow worker of Paul. But, as 6:1 puts it, he was a fellow worker of God. He proclaimed the time of God's favour and the day of salvation. He had done work similar to what Paul said Timothy was supposed to do, as we read in II Timothy 4:1-5.

Demas was committed to the work. He was part of the team. He helped to roll out the maps and chart their directions. He was at the cutting edge of the church, breaking up new ground for the gospel. Taking the truth where people had never heard the name of Jesus before. He was there when elders were appointed and congregations were established. He helped organize the churches. He witnessed great miracles. Heady days! Exciting times!

We live in circumstances different from those of Demas. We are not fellow workers of an apostle like Demas was. Not many of us are called to travel throughout the world at the bleeding edge of the church. And yet there is a common element. In our

own time and place, office and calling, we are called to be committed to the Word of God, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what characterized Demas: commitment to the gospel of Christ.

Are you, in your daily life wherever God has placed you, wholly committed to the Word of God? You, young person, are you committed to the gospel of your Lord Jesus Christ? Are you committed to the Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed in the gospel? Friend: are you committed to the Word of God? Does it govern your life? Does the Word of God function in your life? In the life of your family?

Love the word. Love it like Demas did at the first.

2. Demas' perilous affection.

Sadly, Demas did not keep on loving the gospel. He quit loving the word and started loving the world. Literally Paul wrote that Demas loved the present age.

About 5 or 6 years elapsed between the letters of Paul to Philemon and Colosse Church and his second letter to Timothy. Paul was released from prison. He got back to work preaching the gospel and establishing churches. But then he was arrested again. He also wrote II Timothy from a prison. He was back in jail. II Timothy is his last letter. Shortly after he wrote this letter he was executed by order of Emperor Nero.

Some time in those intervening years - probably close to the time Paul wrote II Timothy - Demas had fallen in love with the present age. He heard the talk, the music, the laughter. He saw the fine homes. Oh, the world: it had fashion and style, pleasures and excitement. There was intellectual stimulation. Career opportunities, wealth, money, fame, approval, acceptance. Demas was captivated by all the neat and nice stuff out there in the present age.

Yes, he had heard Paul preach about the coming age. He, himself, as Paul's fellow-worker, had even taught others about the coming age. He had urged people not to place their hope and love in the things of this age but to look up on high to Christ seated at the right hand of God. He had beseeched and persuaded people to prepare themselves for the kingdom of God which was coming.

But then, Demas' love for the coming age waned and faltered. Love for the present age grew. The seed fell among the thorns in Demas' life. As Jesus said in the Parable of the Sower: The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but... the deceitfulness of wealth chokes it, making it unfruitful.

The seed of the Word of God fell among the thorns in Demas' life, and the deceitfulness of the things of the world choked it.

You are always drawn towards whatever or whomever you love. Isaac loved Rebecca and was drawn to her. Jacob loved Rachel and did whatever he had to do to get her. Those are beautiful stories.

Samson loved Delilah and had to have her. David loved Bathsheba, and acted crazily and almost went crazy because of his illicit love for her. Those are sad stories. Both sets of stories illustrate how you drift towards what you love.

Be careful what you love! You will go to whatever you love. If you love this present age, you will turn your back on Christ and the coming age. You will gravitate towards the things of this present age. The arms of this present age will embrace you. And suffocate you.

When you love someone, you want the love returned. When a guy falls in love with a young lady, he wants the love returned.

Let me ask you a question. What do you think? If you love the present age, do you think it will love you back?

I can tell you, it will not. The world will not love you back. Satan, the god of this present age, will not love you back. You can give up your morals, your reputation, your virginity for the sake of your love of the things and ways of this life and world. You can hurt your parents, your family, your friends. You can sacrifice all your parents' hopes and dreams for you. You can sacrifice your

own hopes and dreams. All because of your love for the world. But the world and the devil will not love you back. The world and the devil will only laugh at you, and kick you in your teeth.

Now here's another question. If you love God instead of the world, will God love you back? Will God love you because of your love for him? Not really.

Are you shocked? Surprised? You shouldn't be. God does not love you back because you loved him. No, God loved you first. Love starts with God. We would never love him if he had not loved us first. Remember what Paul wrote in Romans 5:6 and 8 *“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* And in 1 John 4:19 we read *“We love because he first loved us.”*

God loved you from before the foundations of the world. God loves believers and their children. He sealed and confirmed his love for you when you were baptized. Christ loved you so much that he died to reconcile you to the Father. And now, all he wants for you is that you love him back. Don't love this present world and age. If you do, you will die in its deadly embrace.

3. Demas' lamentable fall.

Paul said that because Demas loved the present age, he had deserted him. He forsook him. Abandoned him. Left him in a lurch. Paul was in prison under the sentence of death. And Demas

deserted him. Left for Thessalonica, some 850 km away, as the crow flies.

Others had left Paul (cf. the rest of v. 10): Crescens and Titus had both left. But Demas had *deserted* Paul. It is only of Demas that Paul used that word: *deserted*.

To make clear how strong a word Paul used here, it might be good to know this is the same word Christ used on the cross. When, at midday, Christ was plunged into the darkness for three hours, then he called out: “*My God, why have you forsaken me?*” The Son of God was completely abandoned, deserted. It was that feeling, that sense of abandonment, that Paul experienced.

When Demas deserted Paul, he abandoned the Word of God. Paul was an apostle of Christ, sent out by Christ with the Word of God, the gospel of salvation. Demas deserted much more than an old man in prison. He did much more than leave a convicted man to his fate of execution. He forsook the messenger of Christ. He threw away the Word of God. All because of his great love for the present age.

Do not desert the word of God. Do not desert the church, the messenger of the word of God. Today the apostolic church has the apostolic calling. To desert the church is to desert the Word of God.

There are those strong warnings in Heb. 10 against deserting the church and the word of God:

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching. If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. ... It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Don't become a memorial to death. Don't become like one of those roadside markers that remind the people driving by that someone died there. Don't be like Demas who deserted the word of God. Remember how much God loved you so much that he sent his son to die for you.

Remember how much Christ loved you: so much that he suffered and died for you on the cross. Today, God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit continue to love you. Love God back. Don't love the world. Don't desert the Word. Don't be a Demas. Don't be a roadside marker. Rather, love God. Find yourself in His embrace. In his warm embrace you will live.

September 16, 2007
Brother Richard Bultje

Romans 2:17-29 “Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a

teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth - you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who brag about the law, do you dishonour God by breaking the law? As it is written: 'God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.'

Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.

A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God."

Do you want to look good for God or People?

Reading: Luke 16:19-26
Text: Romans 2:17-29

When you think of God and how God sees you; do you want to look good or bad to God? What does it take to look good for God? We read the story of the Rich man and Lazarus. While the rich man lived on earth, he looked quite good. He lived in a big house, had fancy clothes and a big family. From the way Jesus told the story, the rich man also knew who God was and went to church.

How did Lazarus look? Lazarus had sores all over his body and laid in the gutter. Lazarus would probably not have been able to go to church on a regular basis.

Who looked good in the eyes of man? The rich man. Who looked good in God's eyes; good enough to be brought to heaven? Lazarus did. Why did Lazarus look good to God? Because Lazarus loved God and believed God's promises.

Why do you think Jesus told that story about Lazarus and the Rich Man? To teach us that it is not what people have or look like to the world that counts. What really matters is what is on the inside of a person. That is the place that God is really interested in.

A person can put a mask on and pretend to be someone they are not, but God can see who a person really is. God can see if you love Him and believe in Him or not. To understand and truly believe this is a great blessing. I hope each of you understands and believes in your heart, your inner thoughts and desires.

In the story of the Rich man and Lazarus, many people would have thought God loved the rich man and he had it all. People would have thought Lazarus looked as if he was on the outside looking in. People would have thought God must not really love Lazarus because he had such a bad life. But in reality the rich man's heart was far from God and Lazarus' heart was close to God.

You see, appearances can be wrong.

The passage in Romans we read together deals with the same idea. The passage talks about those who call themselves Jews. Do any of you consider yourself a Jew here today? Do you know what the word Jew means? Those who praise God. What does it mean to praise God? Praising God is not just singing praise songs, it is wanting to honour God in all your life. Wanting to show and tell God and others how much God means to you. It is showing that you love God.

Paul, the writer of Romans, starts this passage off by saying, “if you call yourself a Jew than you would want to do what pleases God.” He means that if you call yourself people who praise God (for that is what being a Jew is) then show it in all areas of your life. He is challenging those people who have the Bible and claim to want to praise God to do what your name says.

In the first chapters of Romans, all the people of the world are split into two groups: those who have the Bible and claim to be people of God, and those who do not know the Bible or God in a clear way.

Here in this passage we read together, Paul (the author of Romans) is saying if you have the Bible and call yourself God’s people, you have to have a heart that loves God. The people that Paul was writing to must have thought that, because they were Jews by nationality, their sins were washed away and their lives

automatically were pleasing to God. They thought, because our baby boys are circumcised, we are in with God and we are automatically good enough to go to heaven.

With this way of thinking, the commandments of God are not looked at to show us that we are sinners and need to have our sins washed away. Paul, the writer of Romans, tells them and us that that way of thinking is wrong. No one can be a special child of God with his or her sins washed away by just going through a ceremony or looking good on the outside or being part of a special group. In fact, a person has to admit they are not good to have their sins washed away. A person has to admit they do not deserve to be part of God’s people to be part of God’s people.

Let me give you an example that I hope will help you understand what I am saying. If a person regularly goes to AA meetings, will he or she automatically be clean and stop drinking? I think you know that is not true. Just showing up will not do it; the person has to have a change in attitude, an acceptance of the principles of the program. That person has to believe that his or her drinking is wrong and they cannot stop without God. This takes a change of attitude towards drinking and their natural abilities.

In the same way, if you go to church and get baptized, that ceremony or simply going to church does not mean that you are born again. Showing up at church and doing the right things are

good to do, but they will not wash your sins away and make you right with God. Your insides have to be affected by what the Bible says so that you believe what the Bible says. Only then will your sins be washed away. Only then will you look good to God. Good enough to go to heaven.

Paul, the author of Romans, is saying that being a Christian is much more than going through a physical ceremony or sitting through church services. To be a Christian or a person who wants to praise God means you have to have a heart that loves God and desires to praise God.

This begs the question; were you born with a heart that loves God and desires to praise God? The Bible says each person is born sinful and so when each of us was born, our hearts were not wired to praise or honour God, but to go away from God and praise the things or pleasures of this world.

That is why Paul in verse 29 says our hearts need to be changed. Something has to happen to us on the inside in order for us to really praise and honour God. If you pretend to praise God, God will not consider what you are doing as praising Him. He will not consider what you are doing as good at all.

But how can our insides be changed so that our desires change and we begin to love God and praise God from the heart? This change can only be done by the work of God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit works in people's hearts with the Bible.

When a doctor works on a heart, he or she uses instruments to make the heart better. The doctor can only fix things that are physically wrong with the heart and his instruments are all physical. God the Holy Spirit works on hearts not with physical instruments but with a Spiritual instrument, the Bible. He works the truths of the Bible into a person's heart so that that person believes the Bible. What are the truths we need to believe? That is a long answer but I think John 3:16 is a good summary: "*God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, so that whoever believes in Him will not perish in hell but have eternal life.*" To get a better understanding of the truths of the Bible, please keep coming to the Sunday services and the Bible studies we have here at Streetlight.

You might ask, when does God the Holy Spirit work in our hearts? When we do two things:

1. When we pray to God; asking for the Holy Spirit to work in us.
2. When we take time to get to know what the Bible says.

How would you know if God the Holy Spirit were working in you? When you start to trust what the Bible says about Jesus Christ and this knowledge brings you comfort and a desire to thank God in prayer and praise. When this happens to you, you can be certain that the Holy Spirit is working in your heart.

I am not saying you have to know everything or have no doubts, but when you *start* to trust what the Bible says about Jesus

Christ, your heart is changing. It is when you start to believe that Jesus Christ came from heaven to this earth to die for your sins and that Jesus rose from the dead and is now in heaven preparing a place for you, that your heart is being changed by the Holy Spirit.

Praising God does bring about a change of heart, but the Holy Spirit brings this change by working in you to trust what God says in the Bible. Praise is only a by-product of the change the Holy Spirit has done. When God the Holy Spirit is changing a person's heart, that person will begin to praise God. Remember, praise is not just singing praise songs, but showing that you love God and want to honour Him and wanting to show and tell God and others how much Jesus Christ means to you.

I hope each of you sees the need to praise God. I think that you would agree that the praise God loves comes from your heart. Is that the praise you want to offer God? I hope you trust that you can truly praise God only if the Holy Spirit is working in your heart. So I hope God the Holy Spirit will work in each of you and that you will pray for the Holy Spirit to work in you.

Each of us should continue to ask the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts so that our praise will continue to be pleasing to God. That is what the last statement in Romans 2 is talking about. When someone is truly praising God, he or she can only do that because God the Holy Spirit is working in him or her. If you have difficulty praising God through the week, ask the Holy Spirit to

work in your heart. God tells us that he loves such a prayer. If you have trouble praising God in your homes or at work or with your friends, then ask God the Holy Spirit to work in you. Remember, praise is just not singing praise songs but showing you love God throughout the days of the week. It is wanting to show and tell God and others how much Jesus Christ means to you.

God loves it when you admit to Him that you have a hard time praising Him and want God the Holy Spirit to work in you more and more so that you can praise Him better and better. In fact, when this is your desire, you are looking good to God. May each of us admit that we need improvement in this area and ask God the Holy Spirit to work in us more and more.

September 30, 2007
Pastor Paul Aasman

Romans 3:28 “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.”

Faith Alone Will Conquer Our Pride

Reading: Romans 3:21-31
Text: Romans 3:28

It should be coming clear to you that one of the basic reasons Paul wrote this book is to make us humble before God. Pastor Doug pointed out last week that every mouth will be silenced before God. That is the function of the law: to humble us

so that we know we have sinned. We need to learn to bow to God's majesty and say to him that we can make no claims, we deserve nothing.

What a good thing that would be, if every one of us here were to become humble.

For let me ask you this: Do you like arrogant people? Do you like people who think they are entitled to privileges others don't have? Do you like people who look down on you and think they are better than you? Of course not. I hate it, too. For it isn't true - the next person is not better than you. A policeman may not think himself to be a better person than a street person, because if he does, then he can beat him or throw him in the lake if he wanted.

But it's not true: Nobody is better than the next. We all are created equal, the image of God. And we all have become sinners, and damnable in the sight of God.

Have you had enough of boastful people in your life? God has had enough too. God says nobody has any right to boast. He says so in the Bible. Romans 3:9 says, "*Are we any better? Not at all!*" No, I'm not better than you (though I often think I am), and you're no better than me (though you often think you are).

Our passage puts an end to boasting, once and for all, at least to you who have faith in Jesus Christ. Paul says in verse 27, "*Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On*

that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith." (vs. 27)

Boasting is excluded because we can't earn the right to even breathe or live. Remember, God's law silences the whole world. Totally silences. Nobody has the right to even live anymore. We have all sinned against him and the function of the law is to show us that.

But only Jesus Christ can teach us to be humble. How? Does he beat us into humility? No, he humbles us by his love. Out of love, he overcomes our sins. Even though we were his enemies, he died on the cross to pay for our sins. Salvation came, not by anything we have done, but only by what he has done.

Paul says in verse 23-24, "*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*" We were justified freely by his grace. Freely. Remember the song? Freely receive Jesus Christ, freely receive life from God, and freely receive salvation without price. Freely receive it by faith.

You don't need to do anything. God has done it all. With his love, he has overcome our sins. All we need to do is believe. It is like opening your hand and receiving God's gift of mercy in Jesus.

God's love humbles us. Let us humbly accept Jesus Christ and put our faith in him. You will receive the most precious thing, life itself, without charge. God will give it to you. And as you

receive it, give it freely. If I can be saved by God's grace, then anyone can. Boast to others about how great God's love for you was, because though you sinned so much, yet he saved you.