

PROGRAM #: FROM SERIES #208 -- SIDE B

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EVENT

THEME: Calvary Love

TEXT: 2 Cor. 5:13

(bad start then repeated)

It has pleased the Lord to give us a treat. I don't know whether you understand what I mean, but as our elderly sister Mrs. Glibons, was giving her testimony I believed you very much sensed that which is the essence of christianity. Here was a person trembling with excitement about something which happened when she was twelve. Isn't that a miracle? Have you ever known anything like that? That something hit you when you were twelve and you are so excited when you are in your eighties. Isn't that a miracle, and may I encourage young people tonight, you really are in for real living when you accept Christ. You'll never find any other experience, any other prop, any other excitement which hits you at twelve and excites you when you are eighty. I believe that was a remarkable testimony of it's kind, and my heart was melted, and my life was so lifted that actually I nearly said to Michael, "Why preach tonight?" (Laughter) Why preach tonight because you see, here we are absolutely in confrontation with the reality of the living Saviour. Here we are absolutely confronted with tangible reality that Christ can make people live and live abundantly.

I don't like to get over excited but I was really excited, and I am not ashamed of that kind of ⁿ_A Saviour who when you meet Him you go on living and life becomes more exciting until you hit the bottom of physical life with a tremendous excitement and a great burst into glory. That is real living, that is the spiritual life. We are going to talk about it tonight just sharing glimpses of glory tonight before we leave you. You see, we've been invited through the words of the New Testament to consider what it really means to find Christ realistically in every department and aspect of our lives, and as scripture clearly puts it, almost all the trouble, I'm putting it rather gently, but actually all the problems which have

pested humanity have their cause or their causes in the fact that man has yet to find a re-orientation for living. Did you catch another very, very sensitive point in her testimony? Did you catch that early part? That bitterness? That corrosion when life was just being worked on and being victimised by circumstances that in the end, she said ^{1/2} when she saw people smiling she thought they were just phony. That's how bitter life had become. It had become a victimised life. Oh what a tremendous Saviour.

When He came into that room without introducing Himself by name, He doesn't have to. He never introduces Himself in name, He introduces Himself in another way. Bless her she said, "He opened His palms and I saw the wounds." That's exactly what she needed at twelve. No one could have entered that life, liberated those twisted corners of life, set free those areas which had become completely smashed, set at liberty a bruised teenagers life. What power! Drugs. Bottles of intoxication. Smoking. Just superficial pleasure, what power. Only the power of wounded love could have penetrated an embittered life and set it completely free.

In the song you have sung, I now realise that you are not Methodists this evening, (laughter) because you see, you sung what we call 'The Methodists Psalm.' The song of Charles Wesley, 'And can it be that I should gain an entrance in my Saviour's death.' I, who helped to help to hang Him on the cross, can I also? That wonderful man. In fact, let me say to you, I'm very proud because they both the Wesley's were Anglican to begin with. (laughter) But they were liberated by the grace of God, that's why Charles Wesley wrote that beautiful passion hymn which thousands and millions have sung with excitement, a testimony, 'My chains fell off, my heart was set free, I rose, I walked following Him.'

In the second letter of Corinthians chapter 5:13, are these words.

I just read these words, share a little bit about the christian life. This tremendous excitement that you have just heard. You know, when she was giving her testimony, immediately my mind went back to the early days of St. Luke's gospel. An elderly person, a very faithful Jew by the name of Simion, who had been in temple all his life waiting, waiting, waiting for the redemption, waiting, waiting. He was more than eighty-five. On that particularly day when he entered the temple still waiting and praying, we read, he came guided by the spirit to this temple in Jerusalem, and into the door walked Mary carrying the baby in her hands, and as soon as she came in, the elderly Simion told by the Holy Spirit became so excited, the trembling old limbs with excitement and he couldn't stop, he walked where Mary was, took the baby from her hands, I'm sure Mary was a little bit worried whether these poor hands could hold the baby, and holding the baby in his trembling hands the dear old man begun to compose a song just as she did it. You have been singing the song, 'Now you can let your servants depart in peace for my eyes have beheld your salvation.' What a discovery. I suppose the Priests were surprised. For the first time, they had never seen Simion composing a song so quickly. Immediately the vibrations were set free and the old man, and the limbs were vibrating with excitement. My! The temple was full of music as the old man's voice went through.

And so Paul, another Jew. A Hebrew of Hebrews, a conservative pharisee trained in Jerusalem, very much of a bigot. Incensed with his own people, his own religion, his own standard, to the extent that humanity was dead as far as he was concerned. His religion simply took him in a cell. Now, there are many people whose religion has become a prison like Paul's. The religion of his father's, good as it was, ^{it} only helped to build a thick fence round him. It blinded his eyes to humanity, to the world, to men, to women,

and he had only one interpretation, either they were pharisees or non-pharisees, either they were Jews or non-Jews, that was all. That was all his world. It was in black and white, pharisee or non-pharisee, and if you don't fit into the category - good-bye. Out you go. Either you are a good Jew, a Benjamite, right in or you are outside, a Gentile, unwanted, non-Jew, out you go.

This is a man whose life knew no liberation, and now he is speaking, "For," says Paul, verse 14, listen to these words. "For us." Now Paul is no longer the same, he has changed, listen. "There is no escape from the love of Christ, or the love of Christ controls, urges us, there is no escape." There was a time when I couldn't escape from myself, everywhere I turned I was there, myself, myself, myself. I had become a victim of my self-centeredness. A real introvert, and that's what we all had become. Sin, for out of touch with God we all turn inward, and when that world of yours becomes yourself, it becomes a tiny, little, miserable world. And then this man says, "For us, there is no escape from the love of Christ." We are no longer victims of ourselves as we were, but now we have become slaves of eternal love. We were slaves of self-love, oh, what a victim when you are like that. When you are center, when the center of your life is 'self-love' in quotes, you never hear. You can only hear yourself. All other people may speak, may say anything, the world round you may change, you never change, you never listen, you never see, only in the terms of yourself.

When we are like that my dear friends, then we are the worst human slaves ever. You see, when you are enslaved by other powers or tyrannies, or tyrants, you resent it and you may escape. But how can you escape when you are a slave of yourself? By killing yourself. That's the only way of

escape. Either you have to get rid of the tyrant, and you are the tyrant, therefore how do you do it? Kill yourself. In other words, it hangs with you, it keeps with you, oh, the struggle to get free. And Paul says, "Another power entered into the arena," and he calls this power, "The love of Christ." We now are no longer slaves of our self-centeredness, we have actually been set free and now we are eternal slaves of eternal love. And so we go on. "For we have reached the certainty, or the conclusion that one Christ died for all men." Is that Paul speaking? Paul thinking that Christ died for all men Jews and non-Jews, Gentiles, all sorts, Africans, Chinese? This man is not Paul. Something drastic has taken place. He could never think like that before. This is a different man, he is now saying, "All men were so precious before God that God loved them and sent His Son, and the Son loved them and He died for them all." What a change. The world has become wider and wider and wider, and men are popping up all over the place, you see, and their heads come up and they are no longer "Gentiles" in quote, they are men, men, men, women, boys and girls, everywhere. Of course, they have different colours, praise God for that, in order to break monotony. (laughter)

Of course, we use that differently. Because of our unredeemed nature we think that culture, colour, race are things which we must use to create walls over which we can never relate. Never. The eternal God made it that way that we may communicate better. So, He died for all and therefore, all were dead. What does that mean? All were utterly helpless to help themselves, that's why He died. The death of Christ speaks about us, we, it's speaks that we couldn't lift ourselves. That we simply in alientation with God, apart from God we became utterly helpless, victims of our circumstances, victims of men, victims of appetites, victims of desire, we lost our abilities

to live, and we simply became victimised men and women existing but not living. Simply going in circles, trying and failing, trying and failing, no way out until He came. He died for all, the reason is we all were as good as dead bodies, dead in trespasses and sin, helpless to help ourselves.

Alright, so now what happens then? So, He died for us. Oh, how beautiful. This is the essence of christian life. So, He died for us. Listen. This is how we were delivered. And therefore, all through life men must no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again for them. A complete liberation. Because He died on the cross of Calvary, in dieing He set men free from their hooks. They were hooked on themselves. My self was my center and now in dieing He cut the chain on which I was hooked, and set the captive free to begin to live no longer for myself, but for Him who died and rose again for me. What a change. What a complete turn. I was facing inwardly, now I am released face outwardly. I was centering on myself now the center has been completely removed because it wasn't a good center. When I am my own center I become eccentric. The center for humanity is not me, it is God. It is when the love of Christ takes the center that we stop becoming eccentric and we become normal. We become then men with a center. Christ-centered instead of self-centered release comes, and then we are unhooked like Paul, and then what happens then? Then the consequence of this is this, that when men have completely been set free by my love, by the love of Christ, by the self-sacrificing love on Calvary, when that experience takes place as in my sister and among you all, life can never be the same. Impossible. The spirit of God penetrates the entire man, every department is invaded by that love. You simply can no longer, can never be the same. Your attitude undergoes evaluation. Your values are completely re-valued. You were looking at men ^{from} ~~with~~ a completely

different value, now men are being looked at from the stand point of Christ's love and that is revolutionary. Once you begin to see life from the stand-point of Christ's love life takes on a completely new light. Circumstances, they change they become opportunities to use for the glory of God. It's tremendous. Even sickness, I have seen Saints including my own mother-in-law, my wife's mother.

Twenty years suffering, converted by the grace of God when she was sixty-five. Every time you came to the room of that sufferer, it was a room full of glory, no complaints. She knew how to interpret pain and she used to say to us when Mera and I went early in the morning to see her, and sometimes she hadn't slept for two days, she used to say instead of saying, "Oh how miserable, oh how painful," she used to say, "My dear children, I have had two lovely nights of personal interview with my Saviour." (light laughter) Isn't that beautiful. Two nights, what you'd call sleepless nights, she said they were special nights of personal interview with the Saviour, and she would be singing and yet in pain. That's what christianity is all about, the center has changed, values have changed, men are given a new ability, and Paul says, "The consequence of this experience is this that from now on we evaluate no man no longer on purely human standards." We no longer look at men as simply whites, blacks, pinks, browns, greens if there are some. (laughter) That has completely changed. Yes, bless them they have got their colours given by the Father, praise God for that. If you meet the brown ones, praise for the brown. If you meet the white one, alright praise for the white. We Africans don't think there are white human beings, (laughter) because it would ^{sc}fighten anyone to death if you were as white as your shirt. Your colour is watered down purposely by God so that it may look more beautiful. (laughter) So we call you completely

different colours, because we in Africa if you say, "I'm white," we think oh my, just like a white shirt? That would be terrible, but we think you have a better colour, I won't tell you the name. (laughter)

However, these colours, and these cultures, and these languages, and these differences, we no longer look at men from those, those are superficial. Men are more important than the superficial, the external. Christ did not just die for the colour, He died for the man inside the colour. Christ did not die for a white man, or a pink man, or a brown man, he died for men, which is tremendous, you see, and in dieing for these men and women then He gave them a completely new value. We no longer value them according to their race, or colour, or culture, or language, or status, no, those don't get there. We now look at them and through the love of Christ we say, they are men and women for whom Christ died. And because that is the case, all other values have changed. We are no longer taking advantage of each other, we are no longer exploiting each other, we are no longer using each other as utilitarians. We now look at men and we say, "I ~~now~~ meet him and by meeting him I am changed." "I meet her and by meeting her she contributes to my humanity. She is a precious person." People become very precious because Jesus died for them. It is the christian faith which makes us precious, apart from that we are just as, biologists call us, we are just species. (light laughter)

It's just Jesus and His cross which changes the value, and you know, when the cross of Jesus and His love hits hard, then denominational differences also subside. You are not theology you are a Christian. If you thought you were theology then you have to look again. Theology is a means of expression, you are more than that. You are a person for whom Christ died. You see, the values are changing. You see the values even on money,

money has changed. It's no longer money to possess me, it's money to be possess by a human being liberated by the love of God to be used for the sake of building humanity and building other men and women. It's a completely new look, denominationally, socially, racially, if only christians entered into this at the grass root I tell you churches would be different places. And also societies would be different societies. And also, communities would change, and the rich would share. Do you know why christians share? They did not do it as a doctrine, it was out of flowing love for each other. They became more valuable than possessions, than cars, than houses, than bank accounts, than degrees in Universities, and men became more precious. And age does not create a barrier either. I have seen young people hand in hand with old people. Did she look old when she was giving her testimony? She looked a teen-ager. (laughter) Now in fact, she was more excited than many teen-agers. You see, this is the kind of life we are talking about. "Because when a person is in Christ," says Paul in this passage, verse 17, "That person becomes a fresh person completely."

I hope you husbands and wives, I hope you children in the church, you christians, mature ones, I hope you are going to catch a fresh vision of the Saviour which makes christianity fresh day by day. Stereotyped christianity is not in the New Testament at all. In the New Testament christianity is compared with new wine. Ever fresh. Flowing day by day. Love fresh because it comes from the Saviour. Fellowship fresh because it comes from the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit comes and He finds people who have ^{completely} lost their colour. By the way, one day an Asian gentleman passing through, he was introduced in America somewhere, and the gentleman who introduced him said, "My dear Christian friends, I am very, very privileged to introduce to you our coloured brother to speak." And this Asian got up and he said,

"I am very, very glad that I am going to speak to colourless people today."

(laughter) But you see what I'm trying to say, christianity gives us a completely fresh colour, a christian colour, in other words, we are so stale, so stereotyped, so gray in life that we need a fresh touch of God in order that we may begin to show the wonderful fresh colour of those who love Jesus. And they are beautiful when you see them. No matter where you meet them you simply can not get away. You may not like them, but they impress you as people redeemed, freshened, renewed, restored, and their relationships speaks about that.

I want you to be practical this evening. It's no good hearing these messages and say, "Oh, they came and they talked. What a lovely message." It's not going to be a lovely message in the church, it's going to be a beautiful message if your relationship which was strained back home becomes fresh tonight, and you can go to sleep like a baby, saying, "Yes, we were just at the breaking point, but now relaxation has come. The Spirit has intervened, the love of Christ has taken hold of my breaking life, put it together, I am quite fresh.

An English girl, way in Africa, we were preaching, she was a missionary, and she was completely brought into a fresh relationship with Christ. There were masses of Africans and this dear English girl got up to give her testimony, and she was so excited in giving her testimony. She was an actress before she became a missionary, young about twenty-eight, and she said, "I don't know what to say," but she said, "Today I feel like a little bird with little wings about to fly," and she nearly flew. (laughter) You could see, she was so free, you thought she was going to take to wings. That was an experience of liberation. She was beginning to breathe as a fresh person, for when a man, when a woman, when a family, when a business

man is in Christ, they become completely different. All the things, all the relationships, all the stereotypes, go and they are fresh everything. I like the way Paul puts it, "Everything has become new."

Has everything become new? I don't simply mean, "Oh yes I was born again." There are many people who have experienced the initial experience of being born again, but my, their homes could^{not} be more miserable. Yes, talk about people biting each other. Galatians were born again, and Paul says, "Wait a minute, be careful that you don't consume each other by biting each other." Christians! They needed a fresh touch, they needed to understand the fruit of the spirit, love and peace and joy, and kindliness, and healed relationships. I must leave it here. This beautiful experience has got enemies which can also be dealt with, and I'm going to leave that part to my dear brother Michael to fit in as God will lead him in the Spirit. Michael. (clapping)