

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

EPHESIANS 4:32 • TV-016B

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By

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Ephesians 4:32

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

I’m reading from the book of **Ephesians 4:32**. I would like for you to take your Bibles and read along with me; will you do that, **Ephesians 4:32**.

I’m speaking on the subject: **“FOR CHRIST’S SAKE.”**

“And be ye kind, (the apostle writes) one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

Now, here are three words, *“For Christ’s sake.”* Now you’ve heard them spoken often. And I imagine you’ve heard them most of the time spoken in wrath and blaspheme, but never, never in all the world, were there three more instructive, meaningful, and precious words spoken, than these three, *“for Christ’s sake.”*

These three words are the foundation of the Gospel, *“For Christ’s sake,”* not in return for your works, *“For Christ’s sake God hath forgiven you,”* not because you’re better than your neighbor but, *“For Christ’s sake God hath forgiven you.”* Not because you walked a mile barefooted over broken glass; *“For Christ’s sake God hath forgiven you.”*

Not for your deeds and decisions and duties, *“For Christ’s sake God hath forgiven you.”* That’s what it says, *“God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you”* because Christ loved you, because Christ

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

EPHESIANS 4:32 • HENRY T. MAHAN

died for you, because Christ intercedes for you, and because Christ is the Father's own Son. *"For Christ's sake He forgave you."*

These words, *"For Christ's sake"* are the most vital words in prayer. What did the apostle say to the laid man at the gate called *"Beautiful"* when they came upon the man who was crippled and had never walked?

This is what they said; *"We command you in the name of Jesus Christ to rise up and walk."* In whose name? *"In the name of Jesus Christ to rise up and walk."* These three words are the vital words in prayer. Our Lord said, *"Whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, for Christ's sake, it shall be done."*

There is one God; you know that and I know that but do you know; There's one Mediator between God and all men, Jesus Christ the righteous? That's the only one, the man Christ Jesus.

There is one God and there are many men. There's one Mediator, there's one great High Priest, there's one through whom we come and through whom we pray and for whose sake we receive mercy and that is Christ. He is not just an influence in your life; He is your Mediator, your High Priest.

These three words are the key to the Scriptures. I taught our young people in Bible school some few days ago and this was the theme of our morning studies. The Old Testament is the story of salvation through Jesus Christ in picture and in type. The New Testament is the story of God's mercy and God's salvation to sinners through Christ in person.

And back in the Old Testament when Abel offered the blood of the lamb; that was Christ. Back in Egypt when they put the blood on the door and God passed over it at midnight and spared the firstborn; that blood was Christ. He is our Passover.

The rock which Moses smote in the wilderness from which water came forth to satisfy and quench the thirst to the people; *"That rock is Christ."* That's what the Bible says, *"That rock is Christ."*

"Moses lifted up the brazen serpent." Who is that brazen serpent? That's Christ.

"As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

All of these happenings, these types and these sacrifices are but pictures of Christ, *"For Christ's sake."* In Acts 10:43 Luke wrote: *"To Him give all the prophets witness."*

Christ said, *"Moses wrote of me, Abraham saw my day and was glad."*

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

EPHESIANS 4:32 • HENRY T. MAHAN

And then, “*For Christ’s sake*,” this is the password to the throne of grace. Yes, we are told, “*To come boldly before the throne of grace that you may obtain mercy and find grace to help in your time of need.*”

But wait a minute; by whom do we come? “*Seeing we have a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with full assurance*” because Christ is there. Don’t come without Christ. Don’t come without the High Priest. **John 14:6**: “*No man cometh to the Father but by me.*”

So these are three of the most meaningful, instructive, and precious words to be found anywhere in God’s Word, “*For Christ’s sake.*” And these three words open heaven’s doors to the penitent, believing, sinner.

If I should die this moment, right now, and I should stand before God almighty and He shall say to me, “Why should I let a wretch like you into my kingdom, into my glory, into my presence?”

“Why should I let a vile creature, a fallen son of Adam who’s broken the law in word, deed, imagination, thought, attitude, motive, in every area; why should I let a guilty, filthy, wretch like you into my kingdom?”

What would you say? Well, those folks in **Matthew 7** said; “*Lord, we preached in your name and we cast out devils and we did many wonderful works. And I shall say unto them, depart from me, I never knew you; you are workers of iniquity.*”

Selfish works are works of iniquity. Works that are done to earn a reward, a return from God, are works of iniquity. “*Anything that’s not of faith is sin.*” That’s what the Scripture says.

Well, I would not plead my righteousness because God’s already said, “*My righteousnesses are filthy rags.*” And Job said, “*If I justify myself my own mouth would condemn me.*”

Well, if God said, “Why should I let a wretch like you into my kingdom?” I wouldn’t plead my baptism because Simon Magus tried that and it didn’t help him. I wouldn’t plead my office in the church because Judas was an apostle and it didn’t help him.

And I wouldn’t plead my tithes and my offerings because Ananias and Sapphira gave about fifty percent I think and it didn’t help them. What could I plead? I’ll tell you what I would plead. He said, “Why should I let a wretch like you into my kingdom?” I’d say, “Lord, for Christ’s sake, for Christ’s sake.”

Take away that foundation and the whole house comes tumbling down. “*For Christ’s sake*,” that’s the rock of prayer. That’s the rock of the Gospel. That’s the rock of healing. That’s the rock of hope, “*for Christ’s sake.*”

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

EPHESIANS 4:32 • HENRY T. MAHAN

**“My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and His righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But holy lean on Jesus’ name.”**

I want us to look at these three words now for a little while, *“For Christ’s sake,”* and see what the Holy Spirit will give us out of these three words, *“For Christ’s sake.”*

First of all: These three words are the motive for God’s mercy.

Secondly: These three words must be my motive for service.

Thirdly: These three words must be our motive for every grace which He shows us.

First of all: *“For Christ’s sake;”* that’s the motive for God’s mercy!

It says that plainly right here; it says, *“God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”* There it is! Everything that God has done for the sinner is doing for the sinner or will ever do for the sinner is, *“For Christ’s sake.”*

David loved Johnathan. They were the closest of beloved friends. Johnathan knew that David would be the king. He knew that his father Saul would be destroyed and he probably along with him.

And so one day out in the field they made a covenant. Johnathan said, “David, you’ll be the king, not I and not any member of my family. God’s withdrawn His Spirit from my father and you’re going to be the king.”

“But I want you to make a covenant with me. And I want you to promise me that after I’m gone and Saul’s gone, if there’s any left of my house, any of my children, would you show mercy to them for my sake?” And David said, “I will.”

Well, Saul was killed and Johnathan was killed and David took the throne. And here in all of the glory and splendor and majesty of the carnation of the new king; David remembered a covenant that he’d made with his dear beloved friend Johnathan.

And he sent for his servants and they came and he said, “Is there any of the house of Saul or Johnathan still living?” And one man stepped forward and he said, “Yes; there’s a boy whose name is Mephibosheth but he’s a cripple, he’s a pitiful cripple.”

“And he lives down in the house of Lodebar, a place of no pasture, no bread.” David said, “Go and fetch him.” So they went down into the house of no bread, no pasture, and they brought poor, lamed, ragged, Mephibosheth to the palace, king David.

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

EPHESIANS 4:32 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Put him down there on his lifeless legs, powerless legs, in front of this great monarch who had recently ascended the throne. And David looked down at him and said, "*Mephibosheth; you're going to be one of my sons. Bring forth the finest clothes and put on him. And put a ring on his finger. And sit him at the king's table and he shall eat with me as long as he lives.*"

And Mephibosheth was astounded and amazed. And he looked up at David on the throne and he said, "Why, would you in all of your wealth, power, majesty, and greatness, why would you even consider me, a lame, broken, pitiful, shell of a man? And why would you do this for such a dead dog?"

David said, "Mephibosheth; I'm doing this for Johnathan's sake. I love Johnathan. And because of your relationship with Johnathan, you're his boy, and therefore you're mine."

And I'll tell you this sinner; God almighty looks down upon the dunghills of this world and He sees you and He sees me. And there's nothing good about us and nothing lovely about us. There's nothing commendable about us.

But God shows love and mercy and grace to us, "*For Christ's sake,*" because of our relationship with Him. He is our representative and He's our Lord. And that's why He does it, "*As God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*"

And any time you feel high and exalted and haughty and lifted up and you feel there's anything in you that would call forth mercy and love from a holy God; you just remember how far apart you are from God by nature, further than a worm from an angel, further than a wiggling maggot or a wallowing sow from the angel Gabriel. That's how far it is and infinitely further.

"*God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you, for Christ's sake.*" God shows mercy to us for Christ's sake because of who He is. Who is Christ Jesus? Well, He said, "*I and my Father are one; I and my Father are one.*"

"*He thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*" That's who He is. Johnathan was David's friend and Johnathan was David's equal. And I'll tell you Jesus Christ is the friend of the heavenly Father for He is His equal.

That's what the Scripture said, "*He thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*" In fact "*He's the brightness of God's glory. He's the express image of His person. Unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given. And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the Prince of Peace, and the everlasting Father.*"

"*God was in Christ. The Word who was with God and was God and by whom all things were made became flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld His glory.*"

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

EPHESIANS 4:32 • HENRY T. MAHAN

God shows mercy to us, “*for Christ’s sake*” because of who He is. Listen to the voice of the Father who said, “*This is my Son; hear ye Him (you listen to Him).*”

You better listen to Him: “*If the Word spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received the just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation which at first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed by them that heard Him.*”

God shows mercy, “*For Christ’s sake*” not only because of who He is but because of what He’s done. Listen to this Scripture in **Philippians 2:7-9**; “*He made himself of no reputation. He took upon him the form of a servant. He was made in the likeness of men. He being formed in fashion as a man; He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore, God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name.*”

Why does God show mercy for Christ’s sake, because; “*He made himself of no reputation? He was made lower than the angels for a season. He was numbered with the transgressors.*” He became our representative. He identified Himself with us.

He did it willingly, He did it deliberately and He did it fulfilling a covenant. He said, “I came to do the will of my Father; that’s what I came to do. I came to carry out a purpose, an eternal purpose, an eternal covenant.”

“*And then He was made in the likeness of men.*” He took a human body. He was actually born of a woman. He actually came down here to this earth in human flesh and was made under the law and put himself in subjection to His own law. He took our place before the holy law of God.

And He humbled himself and died on a cross. He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, not death on a field of honor, but death between two thieves on a cursed and cruel cross. He took our sins in His body. He took our guilt.

He took our horrible, humiliating, degrading, flesh. And it was so repulsive to His holy nature that the blood turned its course and came through the pores of His skin and He cried, “Father, I’m going to die under the weight of this wretched load if you don’t help me.”

Wherefore, He became a sin-offering. He gave His life for us, wherefore; “*God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name.*”

And here’s the precious thing; all who are in Christ, all who believe in Him, when He died we died, when He was buried, we were buried with Christ. When He arose we are raised with Him and “*Seated with Him in the heavenlies.*”

That’s right! He’s our representative. “*For Christ’s sake;*” that’s why God forgives you, because of who He is and what He did; listen to me, “*For Christ’s sake.*”

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

EPHESIANS 4:32 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Go back before the foundation of the world. We were chosen in Christ. That's what the Bible said. *"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies according as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world."* That's what it said.

We were chosen in Him. We were redeemed in Him. We were accepted in Him. We are loved in Him. We are seated in Him. And when He comes we are going to be like Him.

God shows mercy *"For Christ's sake"* not only because of who He is and what He's done but because of what He's doing. *"Wherefore He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."*

God shows mercy for Christ's sake because right now on the right hand of the Father He's there as our Advocate, Mediator, Intercessor, our Lawyer, pleading our cause. And he doesn't plead our works and our merit and our righteousness; that would be a poor case wouldn't it? He pleads His wounds, His wounds for us.

They tell me back during Caesar's reign in Rome that there was a young man found guilty of some sort of crime against the country. And they brought him before Caesar's court there with the other soldiers and captains and mighty men, the judge and the jury and Caesar were on the throne.

And this young man was brought before him charged with some crime. And Caesar was going to pronounce sentence upon him. And just before he did there was a soldier who stepped out from the ranks, a veteran.

He had no arms. They were both severed above the elbows. And he stood before Caesar and he said, (whatever they call Caesar, your majesty, our worthy king and lord) he said, "This man's my brother and I stand here pleading for him asking mercy."

"And I plead not his worthiness and his merit but I plead my wounds which were suffered in battle while fighting for you in my beloved nation." And he held up those two armless stumps and he says, "Are these not payment enough to set him free?"

And our Lord Jesus Christ at God's right hand; we're guilty and we're worthy of death. We ought to be sent to hell; you know it and I know it. But our Lord stands before the throne of glory as our Advocate and He pleads for us.

He doesn't plead, "Now he's going to be a good boy." God knows better. "He's going to do the best he can. Lord; he'll serve you." And He stands there and He holds forth five wounds, scars in His hands and His feet and His side and He says, "Are these not enough, are these not enough?"

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

EPHESIANS 4:32 • HENRY T. MAHAN

“Who is he that condemneth,” Paul said, “It is Christ that died, yea rather, is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession.”

See how Paul proceeds in that argument? He starts out here and he says, *“Who is he that condemneth?”* He challenges heaven, earth, and hell. *“Who can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”*

“Who can condemn us? It is Christ that died, yea rather, (much more) He’s risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, (the one who died and was buried and rose again). He is even at the right hand of God, (who also, much more, who prays for me) and makes intercession for me.”

Let me give you this and move on; *“For Christ’s sake;”* that’s God’s motive for mercy, the only foundation.

Secondly: But *“For Christ’s sake”* is the motive for our service!

Now Paul said, *“The love of Christ; (I want you to listen) the love of Christ constraineth me.”* If He died for me I ought to live for Him. *“It’s the love of Christ,”* Paul says, *“That motivates me. It’s the love of Christ that encourages me.”*

When you talk about witnessing and giving, preaching and praying, and living for God, sharing, and all these things; it’s the love of Christ that motivates me, worshipping God. I do not serve God to gain a reward at the Judgment seat in glory. Do you?

I do not serve God out of fear of losing a reward at the Judgment. I do not serve God in order to inherit eternal life. I don’t serve God because I’m scared not to. *“I’m serving because I love Him,”* Paul said.

He sat down beside Peter there and He said, *“Peter; do you love me?”* And Peter said, *“Lord; you know I love you. Then feed my sheep.”* He asked him the second time, *“Peter; do you love me? Lord; you know I love you; then feed my sheep. Peter, do you love me? Lord; you know all things, you know I love you. Then feed my sheep.”*

That’s the motive for service upon which our Lord challenged Peter. I’m tired of hearing people challenged to go to church so you can break a record. It makes me sick to my stomach. I’m tired of hearing people challenged to give money to the church so we can go over the top in 1976.

I’m sick and tired of hearing people challenged to live for God because Jesus may come and catch you in a place you don’t want to be caught. Isn’t that a rotten motive for serving God?

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

EPHESIANS 4:32 • HENRY T. MAHAN

When I think what men have done for discovery sake; they've sailed uncharted seas, they've fought disease and wild beasts and starved to discover a new world. When I think what people have done for their country's sake; they've gone to war, they've bled and they've died to preserve a government, an idea or a constitution.

When I think what people have done for science sake, while they burn the midnight oil and study and have given their health to discover cures and causes I ask myself, if these people can do that for discoveries sake or countries sake or conscience sake or science sake, what shall I do "*For Christ's sake?*" Hum?

History records that the old Moravian Missionaries; (you won't believe this but this is true, maybe we don't have enough grace to understand it), but they actually sold themselves into slavery so they could preach to the slaves.

Some of them actually had themselves committed to the leper colonies and became confined there so they could preach to the lepers. "*Be ye kind; (this is the motive for every grace), be ye kind, tenderhearted, forgiving.*"

He says, "*Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking, with all malice be put away from you, and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving, even as God for Christ's sake forgave you.*"

You want to learn to love; go to Calvary. "*Greater love hath no man than this.*" You want to learn to forgive; get to Calvary. "*Father forgive them, they know not what they do.*"

You want to learn to give? I'll tell you how to learn to give; you go to Calvary where Christ gave Himself; "*He who was rich for our sakes became poor,*" utterly poverty stricken. He gave everything; He gave His life; "*That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*"

You want to learn how to be humble? Go to Calvary. There hanging naked on that cross is none other than the Son of God himself, "*Who humbled himself and became obedient.*"

Do you want to learn how to be gracious and merciful? Then you go to the place where you receive grace and mercy, Calvary!