

[Message] For the Scripture reading this morning, we want to turn to Romans chapter 12, verse 9 through verse 12. Now in the light of the fact that we are just having four verses for the subject of exposition today, I would like to take the liberty of reading again from the first verse of the chapter to include those verses in our reading for this day. The apostle writes in Romans chapter 12, and verse 1,

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

For those of you who were here previously in the messages, I'm sure you remember that we tried to make the distinction between the decretive will of God and the preceptive will of God. The decretive will of God being that will of God that determines all things. The apostle writes in Ephesians 1:11 about the God of Holy Scripture who works all things according to the counsel of his own will. His decretive will determines everything that comes to pass. We cannot know his decretive will except only incidentally. We do not know it in its entirety. We actually do not know it in its entirety so far as the world or particularly so far as we are concerned. We know certain things that have been prophesied and therefore we know that it is his will of God that they come to pass. They form part of his decretive will of God and to that extent it has been revealed to us.

But the things that transpire in our own individual lives, other than the fact that believers shall one day be conformed to the image of the Son of God, shall be resurrected, shall enjoy heaven and the presence of the Lord, shall enjoy the kingdom of God upon the earth, aside from those things specifically revealed in the prophetic word, we do not know the decretive will of God for us until it comes to pass. Then we know that it was the decretive will of God that came to pass. The decretive will of God we know after it has come to pass. His preceptive will of God, the thing that pleases him, well, that is set forth in Holy Scripture and we are reading features of the preceptive will of God. The will of God as expressed in his precepts, his commandments, the things that he says please him. Now we read with verse 3,

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with liberality; he that ruleth,

with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.(And now we come to that portion we want to deal with in the message in a few moments.) "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cling to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; (which I'll have something special to say about that rendering, business, in a few moments too) fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing diligently in prayer;"

[Prayer removed from audio]

[Message] Our subject, as we continue our exposition of Paul's letter to the Romans, is "Love That Can Hate and the Law of Christ." As we've been saying for the last two Sunday mornings, the apostle has been expounding the righteousness of God through the epistle to the Romans but beginning with the 12th chapter, he has begun to expound it concretely and not simply theoretically. He inculcates duty as the true product of doctrine. He inculcates practices as the issues of principles. And he claims in the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans that it all begins in the spiritually offering of our bodies to God and it is seen in humble service to one another, to whom we are united and from whom nevertheless, we differ in gifts. One of the puritans was Thomas Watson. He once said "Faith deals with invisibles, but God hates that love which is invisible." Another of the puritans said, "Affection without action is like Rachel: beautiful but barren."

The remainder of chapter twelve contains an injunction to deep, unaffected and practical love. But it is the kind of love that manifests itself in action. In fact these words are very similar to the words that our Lord spoke in the Sermon on the Mount. One of the headings of a book written by a former pupil of mine is "The Law of Love Applied." And that I think is true to this section. But the kind of love that the apostle speaks about is quite different from modern love. Modern love plays great stress upon the love of God but very little, if any stress, upon the holiness and justice of God. Love has swallowed up all of the other virtues, or attributes, that make up the character of God. And the result is often a kind of sentimentality that does not have the vitality and the vigor and the strength of the divine love.

The love of God is a love that loves but nevertheless is a holy love. That is a love that hates sin but loves his will. The love of God is a love in which justice also is a distinct feature of it. We are seeing in our day, and over the past, really, about the past century, such an emphasis upon the love of God that the holiness of God and the justice of God is thought now to be meanness and hardness. But the Bible is quite different. The Bible lays a great deal of stress upon love but it is love in the truth. It is love in holiness, and it is love in justice. And it is not true love if we do not have justice. It is not true love if we do not have holiness. And certainly it is not biblical love if it is not love in the truth. Love today has turned out to be nothing much more than the love of sentimentality as we often hear in music.

Now our text today a word to say about that and Paul says it with three triplets of graces. And we are going to look at them in that order. The first triplet teaches there is a love that can hate. In fact, this triplet of graces expresses the fact that we are not really loving if we do not have a love that can hate. Listen to what Paul says. The apostle says

in verse 9, "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil (hate that which is evil); cling to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another."

Now here we have the believers' response to the mercies of God. Paul has said that the Christian offering is the foundation of life. It's the foundation of the preceptive will of God, the life that pleases God. He said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." That's the Christian offering. The Old Testament saints offered animal sacrifices. We offer the living sacrifice of ourselves. That's the Christian offering and it's the foundation of a life that pleases God. The method of achievement of the will of God is by transformation. He says, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." And that, he says in the verses that follow, is conditioned upon the exercise of spiritual gifts.

Now, of course, this is general and it is very important, for the general things are important. They lay out the landscape for us. But the apostle is now going to speak very specifically. So in the 9th verse, he begins with, "Let love be without hypocrisy." Here is the more specific exhortation, the more specific series of exhortations that tells us just exactly what it is to present one's body a living sacrifice. Unfeigned love is that with which he begins.

Now the apostle is not giving us something that is to be linked with him alone. The apostle, Peter, gives us the same thing in the 1st chapter of his epistle speaking to readers, he said, "Seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren." Unfeigned love, "Let love be without hypocrisy." What he means is genuine love is not the love of the man whose words are smoother than butter, as the Old Testament says, but whose true feelings are drawn swords. We've all known people like that. They come to you. Their words are very smooth. You would think, if you were not a discerning person, they must love me, be very fond of me. But really, they're not fond of us at all. Their true feelings are not, as the Psalmist says, "Words that are smoother than butter." But their true feelings, the Psalmist says, are drawn swords. It is amazing how people can come to other people and speak nicely and gently and sweetly to them when they really, deep down within, feel an intense hatred of them.

The apostle says, "Let love be without hypocrisy." Let it be unfeigned love. Well, how can a person have unfeigned love? Well, the context tells us; it suggests that unfeigned love comes by the renewing of the mind under the melting influences of the mercies of God. That's what he began with, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." Just take a good look at your own past for the Scriptures tell us that we were, before we came to know Jesus Christ as Savior, we were sinners. We were under divine guilt. We were, under divine condemnation, miserable sinners. Every thought in spiritual things that we had was contrary to the will of God. And in wonderful grace, contrary to our disposition, when we were actually rebellious against him with wills rebellious against him. He, in his spirit, came to us. So moved upon our hearts through the mercies of God that he made the unwilling, willing and brought us into the relationship with him that means eternal life. Think of what you were and then let love be without hypocrisy, because it is sure, as

the apostle will say in a moment, that that other person is likely in honor to be preferred to you. So let love be without hypocrisy.

Now next, in the second of this first triplet, the apostle says, "Hating evil, cleaving to that which is good." Is that an irrelevant interruption? Oh no, it's not an irrelevant interruption. It is essential, as essential noblesse love as sincerity. A person cannot truly love if he does not hate evil and cleave to that which is good. I'd like to suggest to you that the cleaving to that which is good is the ground of the hating evil. In other words, to hate evil, we must truly love that which is good. And I think this precept reveals character differences. There are some people who find it almost constitutionally impossible to hate evil. They are too sweet, too sentimental, too nice. They find it very easy to love that which is good but they find it very difficult to hate that which is evil. They do not have sufficient iron in their bones of spiritual bones of spirituality which can only come to us by virtue of the teaching of the word of God. This text, as well as the one just previous, speaks out against spurious love, love that is hypocritical. But also it speaks out strongly against unprincipled toleration of that which is to be avoided. So cleaving to that which is good and, therefore, hating evil.

I'd like to suggest to you that our society today, as I suggested earlier, is a society which has come under great influence from the love of God. We are, in our society, the beneficiaries, and I would put that in quotes, the "beneficiaries of liberal theology." A liberal theology that has over emphasized the love of God to the exclusion of the holiness and righteousness of God, and our whole society is permeated with it. Almost everything that we do is traceable back to a theological difference. Everything, ultimately, comes philosophically to theological differences. All of our individual actions flow out of what we think theologically. Today, the criminal, just to give you one example, the criminal is pitied rather than blamed. And there are a multitude and agencies rather that are so occupied in elevating wrongdoers that they lose sight of the biblical doctrine of punishment for the correction of evil. That is the product of liberal theology, that mode of thinking. And it has certainly permeated our society.

So the apostle tells us that it is perfectly good to cleave to that which is good. But it is also just as essential that we hate evil. You see, if we do not hate evil as well as love good, we do not understand God. The doctrine of God is impoverished. We lose sight of the kind of person he is and he is just as much holy, as he is loving. The Holy Scriptures present him in this two-fold light. He is a great God of love who, in his magnificent, distinguishing grace, saves sinners. But at the same time, he is a great, just and holy God who does not save sinners at the expense of his justice and righteousness. But in the cross of Jesus Christ carries out his judgment upon sin but carries it out upon the Son of God in order that his purposes of grace and mercy might be realized in the hearts of the redeemed. We do not understand God if we do not understand these two sides of our great God. Furthermore, we don't understand what's happening in the world. His rule, or reign, of the affairs of this whole earth are totally misunderstood if we do not realize that there comes a time when he will lay his hand upon our wicked vessel and use it to chastise those who are more righteous than they are.

Now this is evident in the Old Testament. It's also evident in our time. It explains why he will raise up one nation and why he will allow that nation to perform a task that means ultimate chastisement for others where the word of God may be more fully proclaimed, because his people are turning away from him. He is a holy God; he is

a righteous God. It is just entirely possible that in time, he shall raise up an instrument and chastise our congregation even by an instrument that is not as righteous or holy as this particular congregation may be. You see we do not understand God, we do not understand the world, if we do not understand that he is both a God of love and also a God of judgment and holiness.

The greatest of illustration of almost all of the virtues is naturally our Lord Jesus Christ. On his untriumphal entry into Jerusalem, as he reached the top of the hill and looked out over the city, he said, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem. Thou that killest the prophets and stonest them who are sent unto thee. How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings? And ye would not." Now that is a great text on the deity of Christ. Let's just suppose for a moment that I should one day travel to Washington, DC, and on a little promontory over that place or on the Lincoln Monument, or something like that, I might look out over the city and say, "Oh Washington, Washington. How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings?" And you would say, "Well, Dr. Johnson's gone around the bend." [Laughter] But here is person who actually can say that he would gather all of that city under his wings. That is something that only a God can do. But notice he cries out, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem. How often would I have done this?" The love of a mother hen for her little chickens, the love of a mother for her children or a father for his son, that's nothing compared with the love of God in Christ Jesus for the saints of God.

But that's one side of our great God. The other side is found in the very next verse. "Behold our house is left unto you desolate." Why? Because they have violated the righteous and holiness of God and the only thing that God may do in such a circumstance is to execute the judgments of his wrath. So he is a God of love but he is a God of wrath. And therefore, his saints who are related to him are to hate evil and they are to cleave to that which is good. And the apostle in the third of the triad says, in verse 10, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another."

Now this is a more restrictive love. This is the special kind of love within the family. That word translated here "kindly affectioned", in the Authorized Version, is a word that refers to family love. It's the love of a mother for a child. It's the love of a father for a son. In fact, it's family love. It's the thing that binds together a family. There's probably not a single person in this room not a member of some family that has some member of that family that you kind of wish was a member of my family and not yours. But nevertheless there is a love of family that binds you together. And, in spite of the fact that they are a disgrace and a reproach to your family name, they are a part of your family. And there is a certain measure of affection that goes out to them just for that.

Now the apostle looking out at the Christian family says, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." In other words, in the family of God, there is to be a love like family love. Now I want to ask you to turn again to another illustration which I think is the finest illustration of what this means that I know of. It's also a biblical illustration. The Lord Jesus, before he gave his great sermon on the parables, while he was talking to the people, some of his friends came to him and said, "Lord, your mother and your brethren stand outside and they wish to speak

to you.” I can imagine that our Lord, in his human nature, since his brethren were not believers at that time, “Well perhaps there is a movement now of the spirit of God that they may be turning to him.” But when they said, “Thy mother and thy brethren stand outside desiring to speak with thee,” he answered and said to those who told him, “Who is my mother and who are my brethren?” And then he stretched out his hand toward all the disciples and he said, “Behold, my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.”

This was the Lord Jesus Christ’s way of saying there is a love that exists among the saints and a family relationship among the saints that is more significant, it is deeper than the deepest of family love. It is greater than the love of a mother for a son. It is greater than the love of a father for his children. It is greater than the love of a brother for a brother or a brother for a sister. It transcends all of our human relationships. It is the love of the saints for one another, for this is the family of God that shall persist out into the ages of eternity. And when family members who had come to Christ are left behind, perhaps never forgotten, but perhaps left behind. And we enter into the New Jerusalem, the new heavens and the new earth; it is this family that shall be our family. No greater family than that. So brothers sisters, be kindly affectioned one to another, in honor preferring one another. You are my family. I am your family. This is Paul's view of the Christian church. It's that close, it's closer than blood; magnificent, preferring one another, no squabbling for the chief seats in the synagogue, nothing like that, family love.

Now, the second triplet, the apostle speaks of whole-hearted service in the 11th verse. Notice again, it's a kind of triad of graces, "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." This is the Christian offering. This is what it means to give ones body as a living sacrifice to the Lord God. It means to be not be slothful in business. It means to be fervent in spirit. It means to serve the Lord. Now, that word "business here" is not really the word business. It's a word that means diligence. But let me say a word about "business," because that is one of its applications. We are to be not diligent in our business. Of course, if you're in business, whether male or female, you're to be diligent in your business. Everything that you do is either reproach or a credit to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Not slothful in diligence." But I'd like to suggest to you that some men are all fire for their business, and some women are all fire for their business. But they're all ice for the faith of God. They spend long hours in order to succeed in their business. They spend a few rare moments in order to succeed in the life of God. They concentrate with the most intense concentration on how they may advance or how they make more money. And it's perfectly all right to do that in its proper priority. But if we spend long hours of concentration on how to make more money, if we work long hours in our business, what does our Lord have? "Not slothful in diligence."

And I say to you Christian men, business men, and you Christian business ladies, according to the word of God, if you belong to this great family, the first interests of each one of us is to be the family of God. "Not slothful in diligence," diligence for the right things. The time is coming when you'll regret the life that you have lived. Christian fervency, he says, "fervent in spirit." What a magnificent thing that is. The Greek text says, "Boiling in spirit." There was a man who was converted and came to the Christian church by the name of Apollos, and there he ministered the word of God. The text of Scripture said that he stood up in the church meeting and he began to teach the word of God accurately. But he knew only the baptism of John. He was an eloquent man. He

was a wordy man, the Greek text says. But wordy in the sense that he knew how to use his words. He was an eloquent man. He was mighty in the Scripture. Evidently he was a master of the Old Testament Scriptures. And he stood up in the meeting, and he taught the way of God.

And there were some Christians sitting in the audience who knew more than just the way of God and the baptism of John. They listened to him; they appreciated what he had to say. But finally, the wife whose name was Priscilla, for she evidently took the lead in this. There are some indications of that. She punches her husband and she said, "Quill," his name was Aquilla, but that's what she called him. [Laughter] She said, "Quill, have him over for supper. He needs some Christian fellowship. And so they had him over for supper. And the text of Scripture says that they instructed him, it's the word for catechizing, they instructed him more accurately in the Scriptures. And he grew very bold, and he stood up and proclaimed that Jesus was the Christ. He was a man, the text of Scripture says, using these very words here, he was "fervent in spirit." He had a fire below that made the soul's depths boil in earnest, no painted fire. We've got a lot of painted fire in evangelicalism today, and people are talking about speaking in tongues and performing miracles and that kind of thing, but it does not issue in solid Christian work. Divine enthusiasm, Apollos had.

Divine enthusiasm is what Paul is speaking about here. Enthusiasm, a Greek word that means simply, "in God," so to be in union with him is to be enthusiastic, divinely enthusiastic. Indolent emotion is worthless, but the Bible speaks a great deal about true emotion. True emotion is the kind of emotion that is fruitful. Our "fervent" Christianity today in certain outlying circles of evangelicalism is not what Paul is talking about. He's talking about a genuine deep form of Christianity, stressing the great doctrines of the faith and the application of them and preaching them with the fire of the Holy Spirit. How can a person possibly be cool in the light of the mercies of God? "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God." How can we sit and live the same kind of life, if we come to know the mercies of God? How can we not be different? Make an impact on our friends and family for Jesus Christ.

Think of the Emmaus disciples. It had been a very disappointing weekend for them. Jesus Christ, in whom they had trusted, of whom they said, "We thought that he was the one who would have redeemed Israel." And now, he was in a tomb, soon to be empty. They even had heard reports that the tomb was empty, but so discouraged and defeated, because discouraged with Jesus Christ; no greater discouragement than discouragement with Jesus Christ, arising, of course, out of ignorance of him. They were making their way on the road to Bethany, eight miles to Jerusalem a stranger came up along side, engaged then in conversation. They said, "Don't you know what's been going on? Don't you know what's been happening over the weekend?" And it was, of course our Lord. He knew everything, knew far more than they what happened, knew also the significance of the cross death there. Well, he began to open to them the Scriptures. In fact, it's almost as if he were going into a house that had not been occupied for a long time, and he went in throwing open the blinds, opening the windows, letting the fresh air in, letting the light in, beginning at Genesis and on through the Scriptures he expounded unto them in order the things that had to do with the Messiah. And taught them how the Messiah must suffer and must die, and also must be raised again from the dead, the sufferings and the glories of the Messiah. When they got to their little place eight miles

away, they went only eight miles from early morning, because the disciples didn't yet know of the resurrection until sun down. Eight miles, that's all.

I used to say, in the days of the freedom marches, that a good freedom marcher would make at least fifteen miles a day. They could only make eight, why? Because they all, as this stranger expounded to them the Scriptures they were amazed and thrilled beyond imagination. They punched each other. They listened. "We've never heard it like this in all of our life." Maybe the greatest sermon ever preached by anyone, in which the preacher was the Lord Jesus Christ, and the theme was the Lord Jesus Christ. The one who brought it home in application was the one in whom the sermon spoke. Well, they reached home, and they said, "We can't wait until we get back to Jerusalem," after he faded out of their midst. And they knew who it was, and they went back to Jerusalem and what did they say? "We now know the intricacies and details of the doctrine of the resurrection body." Well, that's important, of course. What kind of body I shall have when I get to heaven. Paul tells me a little something about it. It would be interesting to know that fact, but what did they say, they said, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us along the way?" Not prayer, some people go over and they get on their knees and they pray, "Oh God, give me fervency of spirit." And they get up and they say, "Prayer doesn't really work. I don't have it." The text of Scripture says, "Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us along the way," not while we talked with him.

Prayer is extremely important, Paul says, "continuing diligently in it," but reading the Scriptures and learning of the mercies of God is more important for us at a particular time. "Did not our hearts burn within us?" How do we obtain a fervency of spirit that makes a difference? Through the Scriptures, through the reflection upon the mercies of God, that's how. How can a man be cool in the light of the mercies of God? That's one of the mysteries of human existence, and Paul doesn't stop there. He says in the third of the triad of this second triplet, he says, "serving the Lord." You know, the text here, in some of the manuscripts reads, "serving the time." For Greek word *cairos*, which means "time or season" is very similar to the word *curios*, which means Lord. Well, we are not timeservers, and Paul does not want us to be timeservers, he wants us to be serving the Lord. That sets the spirit boiling to realize that we are serving the great taskmaster, the greatest of all taskmasters in our master. And we, my dear Christian brothers and sisters in the family of God, we have the privilege of serving the Lord. Just think of that, serving the Lord. Why should we be diligent, well, the greatness of the work itself should make us diligent. To be the president of General Motors, hah, that's not a task that can compare with serving the Lord. Time will pass in the ages of the future that is to come, you'll meet me on the street and you'll say to me, "Do you remember General Motors?" And I'll say, "What? I've forgotten all about that."

But serving the Lord, how great that is. The greatness of the work, the greatness of our enemy, for he is after the souls of men, the brevity of the time, for we have just a short time; just a short time, oh my dear Christian friend. Don't miss the opportunity that you have to serve the Lord. The gravity of the issues, these are the greatest issues of all. They touch our eternal destiny. But the greatest reason why I serve the Lord is, to put it in the words of Paul, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." That's enough to make me want to serve him. "He loved me, and he gave himself for me." Throughout the ages of eternity, I shall never forget the manifestation of his grace.

There is a very interesting story about Mr. Churchill; I love it ever since I read it. Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Ashkelon, but I ran across it in a sermon by a somewhat liberal preacher. Mr. Churchill, after the fall of France, and the English had escaped across the channel with their allies, and just barely had made it. He gathered the Parliament to gather to explain to them the gravity of the situation. He explained to them that Hitler now was in total command of all of Western Europe. And then he said to the British Parliament, "The whole free world is dependent upon England now." And he waited for a few moments for his words to sink in, and he said to the entire Parliament, "Gentlemen, I find that rather exciting." I find it most exciting to be able to serve the Lord, "Fervent in spirit serving the Lord." What more exciting endeavor, in your business, in your home, among your friends, in your family, to serve him. There is no greater task.

It is all right to work for General Motors to pay for the time that you're going to spend serving the Lord. That's all right, let General Motors pay the tab for service to the Lord; but serving the Lord, how exciting. "I put the Lord always before my face," the Psalmist said. Oh may God grant in Believers Chapel that that be the attitude of our family. Not of our family here, our Christian family.

The third triplet, the apostle states in the 12th verse, "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer." This is the only verse in this entire section, incidentally, which has to do with Christian duty that refers to the inner secrets of the Christian life. Paul says we should be joyful because we're hopeful. Joy is not a matter of circumstances. I sat down with one of you not long ago. You had lost a member of your family. I won't say who, what, I don't want to reveal too much to be too personal. I sat down the thought that maybe I could say something that might encourage you. But instead you encouraged me. You had joy in the midst of tragedy. Joy does not depend on circumstances; joy depends upon the grasp of the Lord God that has been given us by the Holy Spirit. Not so much our grasp of him as his grasp of us. It does not depend on temperament. Some people are effervescent, but that's not Christian joy. Some people are laughing and joking and their laughing is very much like the crackling of the thorns in the midst of the fire. The writer of the Ecclesiastes said, "That's not true joy." Joy is a matter of faith.

The apostle in this very epistle speaks of rejoicing in hope of the glory of God in the midst of tribulations. Joy is the product of the knowledge of the fact that we have an omnipotent Father, a Father who controls all of the affairs of life. And listen, may I remind you of something you read not long ago in one of our bulletins, while the earth's huge pillars stand, you have enough reason to abide firm in your faith, the same God who directs the earth in its orbit, who feeds the burning furnace of the sun, and trims the lamps of heaven, has promised to supply you with daily strength. Well, he is able to uphold the universe, dream not that he will prove unable to fulfill his own purposes. Remember what he did in the days of old, in the former generations, remember how he spoke and it was done, how he commanded and it stood fast. Shall he that created the world go weary? He hangs the world upon nothing. Shall he who does this be unable to support his children? An omnipotent Father, that's enough for a bundle full of joy, but we have more than that. We have a divine providence that under girds all of our steps; can even take us on flight 666, safely to our destination. We have an abiding presence of the second person the trinity who said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the

age." And we have a heavenly home prepared for us by this same second person of the trinity.

Why should we not be joyful? We have such a tremendous hope in the Christian faith, and it surer than the sun and moon and stars and this earth itself. The apostle says enduring in tribulation. Of course we shall endure in tribulation, for we have this hope, and we have this joy. Tribulation is inevitable. You will find that every Christian sooner or later will have tribulation, because Jesus Christ said you would. He said in me you have joy, in the world you shall have tribulation. Why? "For the world has hated me, and the disposition of the world is the same today, it will therefore," he says, "hate you." And so if you are representing the Lord Jesus Christ, you will find that you will experience the hatred of the world; it's just the continuation of the world's quarrel with your master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this audience there are some of you who are in elementary school. When you say a word for Jesus Christ in your little first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh grades, there will be people in that class who will be angry with you. Say a couple of more words, they'll be twice as angry. And in high school, those of you in high school, you will discover you stand up for our Lord Jesus Christ, you will experience the hatred of the world. In college, in your business, among your friends, you cannot, if you're related to him, escape that which Jesus said was going to be yours.

Now, we want it to be not because we have displeased the Lord, but because we have pleased him. We cannot escape it, and we shall endure in the midst of that tribulation. William Temple, one of the believing Archbishops of Canterbury said, "Not all that the world hates is good Christianity." Some of the things the world hates are spurious, claiming to be Christian. But he went on to say, "But it does hate good Christianity and always will." That's right. It always will.

And finally, Paul concludes with "steadfast in prayer." And as we look to him, reflecting upon the mercies of God that we read and study of in Holy Scripture, earnestly committing our cause to him in that way, we shall experience what it means to offer our bodies a living sacrifice, but not until then. What a contrast is present between the practice of Christians and these precepts of Paul. May God speak to us, each one individually, and may, in measure at least, we make the offering of our bodies.

Now, if you're here this morning and you have never believed in Christ, you cannot make the offering of your body. You need our Lord as your own personal Savior, you need to come into the family of God, and you may do that as you recognize Christ as the atoning sacrifice for sinners. As you acknowledge your own sin and flee to him in rest, your existence upon the offering that he made for sinners. Come to Christ, rest upon him, and receive eternal life. Then give him your whole body as a living sacrifice for the glory of God.

[Prayer] Our heavenly Father, we are so thankful to Thee for these words of exhortation that have come from the apostle. Give us Lord that fervency of spirit. Enable us in wonderful grace to offer our bodies a living sacrifice by means of the mercies of God. How can we remain cool in the light of them? O God, perform mighty miracles in the lives...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]