

A GREAT DOXOLOGY

"Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever." Revelation 1:5-6.

The Apostle John was in sore trouble. He was banished to the Isle of Patmos because of his devotion to Jesus and his testimony for the Lord. His heart was filled with fear for the churches he left behind in Asia Minor. In the midst of his gloom and fear, God gave him a wondrous vision of the candlesticks and the glorified Christ in the midst of them. This vision scattered his fears as the sunrise scatters the fog in a valley. Then, he proceeded to write to the seven churches of Asia which are representative of the churches elsewhere. He first saluted them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Somehow John could not deliver his message until he had relieved his heart of a joyful doxology. The very mention of the name of the Lord Jesus fired his heart, and this song welled up in it. This grateful doxology, which is one of several recorded in the Book of Revelation, lauds Christ's love and speaks of deliverance from sins. It is not a song which came down from heaven, but one which ascended to heaven from the earth.

Many things about Christ might have attracted the attention of John, but the thing that amazed him most was that such a glorious Person should love sinful people and do so much for them. In the text, John mentioned three facts about Christ:

I. Christ Loved Us.

"Unto Him that loveth us" points to one outstanding fact and that is our Lord's attitude toward us. To render the word "loved" with the word "loveth" is in absolute accord with what is true concerning the love of God for us. God's love for us was not only a past love; it has not spent its energy and ceased to be, but it still continues and will do so throughout all the ages of eternity. God did love us in the past, yea, from all eternity. And His love in the past was manifested and expressed in the gift of His only begotten Son and in His sacrificial death upon the Cross. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

There is no way of describing the love of God. There is nothing to which we can compare it. Let us note certain things about His love:

1. It was unmerited.

We were not entitled to it. We had no claim on it. We had no right to expect it. There is no righteousness, no merit, nothing in any of us or in all of us put together that would recommend us to the love of God, either before or after we became Christians. It is unmerited love.

2. It was unsolicited.

We were so busy about other things that we did not have any thought of or any time for the love of God. We were not soliciting or reaching up for God's love.

3. It was unwanted.
It is hard to understand how anybody can resist, reject, and refuse the love of God. People will listen to anything and everything except the love of God. They just don't want it. They are not interested in it, and, when we begin to press upon them the claims of His love, they ignore our talk, or they refuse to place themselves in the way of His love. For those of us who are now Christians, it was not easy for the one or ones who led us to Christ to convince us of the need and value of the love of God in our hearts.
4. It is unending.
The love of God will follow one to the very brink of hell and stand there with bitter, mournful tears watching him sink into the burning pit.

Love is the most powerful thing in the world. It is more powerful than money, knowledge, or anything that human beings have, but there is one thing love cannot do. It cannot compel love. It cannot make anyone love in return. All it can do is to give itself. All it can do is to sacrifice. All it can do is to suffer. All it can do is to agonize. All it can do is to plead. All it can do is to weep. It cannot constrain. It cannot coerce.

There is no limit to God's love. It is unending. Our fathers and our mothers may forsake us. Our friends may turn against us. We may become the lowest of the low and the vilest of the vile, but the love of God will reach down to us and seek to bestow blessings upon us.

One reason why the gospel never grows old is because it is the message of love. Christ loved us condescendingly. He loved us lavishly. The greater the degree of love the more extravagant it is. Christ's love for us is spontaneous. It does not require anything in us to draw it out towards us. Love flows from Christ as naturally as light and heat from the sun. His love for us is unselfish. With our love for each other there is generally a mixture of selfishness. Christ does not love us because He expects something from us in return. He loves us as we are. "He saw me ruined by the fall, He loved me notwithstanding all." His love goes out to give and not to get. The fact of Christ's love for us has been abundantly substantiated.

"Oh if there's only one song I can sing,
When in His beauty I see the great King,
This shall my song through eternity be,
Oh what a wonder that Jesus loves me."

II. Christ Liberated Us.

"Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His own blood" refers to the redemptive ministry of Christ.

1. He liberated us from the penalty of sin.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). By His death on the cross, Christ has loosed us from the penalty of sin. That is something for which to praise God. That is something to rejoice over by day and by night.

2. He liberated us from the power of sin.
His love loosed us from the pollution of sin, from the power of sin, from the hold that sin had on our hearts and minds and souls and lives. Christ does not save us and then let us go. He keeps us. He walks with us and talks with us and abides in our hearts and minds and souls and lives. He lives in us, and causes us to will and to do after His own good pleasure. None of us could resist the devil for one minute were it not for the power and presence of the indwelling Christ.
3. He will liberate us from the presence of sin.
One of these glorious days we shall be loosed from the presence of sin, so that Satan will be left far behind, so that temptation will no longer afflict us, and we shall be with our Redeemer, where we can sing His praises forever and ever.

It must be remembered that this liberation from sin is accomplished by Christ's blood. The blood of Christ is the price of the believer's redemption, the ground of his forgiveness, the basis of his justification, the procurer of his peace, the means of his access to God, the means of his cleansing and the basis of his communion with the Lord. Liberation from sin is the result of His love for us.

"Wonderful, wonderful Jesus,
In the heart He implanteth a song;
A song of deliverance, of courage, of strength,
In the heart, He implanteth a song."

III. Christ Lifted Us.

"Hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." This is the third note in John's doxology. Christ has lifted us from abysmal depths to transcendent heights.

1. He lifted us into salvation.
John said of the Lord Jesus, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12). When we accept Christ He lifts us. Our ambitions are changed, our aspirations are sanctified, and our hopes are lifted up until the vision of God's great glory revolves before us.
2. He lifted us into satisfaction.
Paul said, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"
3. He lifted us into service.
Christ "hath made us kings." We can now reign over ourselves, which is a dominion that can be gained only by grace. Christ

"hath made us priests unto God." A priest is an intercessor or go-between. This refers to our prayer ministry as Christians. What a privilege! What a ministry! What an exalted position-- priests unto God! As kings we are to rule and as priests we are to rescue.

It is a glorious privilege to be a servant of Christ. Most Christians do not appreciate it as they should. The child of God who is serving Christ has the loftiest position on this earth. The biggest job you can have, the greatest honor that God can bestow upon you, and the loftiest position to which you can be elevated in this life or in death is to be a faithful servant of Christ.

To each and every unsaved person listening to me, God is offering you this love, this liberation and this lifting upon your personal acceptance of Christ as your Saviour.