

Verse by Verse: John 3:16, Romans 6:23 By Lloyd T. Anderson

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All right. In 10 seconds, we'll go right ahead.

Good morning, Radio Friends, this is Thursday morning and what a joy it is to understand that a new day has dawn for each one of us and we can live it to the glory and the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ. We personally have not received a letter from Dr. Talbot, and I'm sure that he is getting along. Dr. Talbot, I might say, always gets along. The people love him and he always has a great ministry, my friend, wherever he goes.

I do want to call your attention this morning to two wonderful verses. One of them found familiarly in John 3:16 and the other one in Romans 6 and verse 23. Someone has said that these two words are the two classic words whenever you begin to study the truth of eternal life. "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." And then Romans 6 and verse 23, "the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Now I put in the word "free" because that, my friend, gives it an open, true translation.

You see, there is here an insistent thought, that a proper translation of John 3:16 makes it to read "for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth should IN HIM have eternal life." The gift of God is eternal life IN and THROUGH Jesus Christ our Lord. And you and I will never be able to understand the subject of everlasting life if we do

not understand the platform and the progress and the truth that lies contained in this wonderful direction. It is a biblical doctrine which can only be understood when it is experienced in your life and my life, my friend, as a personal experience. Therefore, sometimes this problem of everlasting life as a study is commonly mysterious to a good many people, commonly misunderstood, and very often, by some, very commonly rejected.

I read somewhere of a gentleman, a very benign appearance and kindly disposition, who seemed to live in the perpetual sunlight of graciousness and love and that particular direction. It was his happy privilege to busy himself day after day, continually keeping alive the springs of cheer in other people and in himself. He came to be known, on many of the boats that plied the Pacific Ocean, as one who was a happy individual. One day, the story goes that a group of gentlemen on one of the Pacific steamers were meeting together in a discussion, and for want of something better to discuss, they got to discussing the Christian doctrine of God's grace.

Finally, one of them said, "We're not able to define God's grace; surely this gentleman of the sunny disposition and the happy heart and the eternal spring will be able to define it for us." And you remember, they sent for him to see whether he would visit them and give them a definition of the grace of God. With a perplexed brow, the man shook his head, and he said, "Gentlemen, that is utterly beyond me. It is impossible for me to define what you know is grace. What I have may be a graciousness of manner, perhaps a bit of sweetness of spirit. But I know nothing, and I have no experience of the thing that you know is God's grace."

Now there was one individual on board and in the group who said, "I believe there is one man on board this ship who is able to tell us what it's all about." And they sent down to the engine room and they brought up the second engineer who lived his life in the ship, all unknown to man and away from the companionship of his fellows on the voyage. They asked him that momentous question. And even though his face was streaked with dirt from the engine room, he lighted up with a radiant smile and he said, "Out of a glorious experience in my own personal life, I am able to tell you one thing; that the grace of God is the energy of divine holiness, issuing in love to the sinner, in an effort to rescue him from his state of sin and restore him to perpetual and unbroken fellowship with God." And I thought, my friend, that was a wonderful definition.

And I want what I say today to be a challenge to your own heart. I want you to realize what the gift of God, which is eternal life, is able to do in your life, and in your heart, and in your soul. That there may be a new meaning and a hearty and honest inspiration of spirit, in the blessed consciousness of God's presence, in that you have come to understand what it means to be really born again of the Spirit of God. For I think we need to keep in mind, my friend, that eternal life is the crisis of a new birth. It's the experience of a new life, and the expression of a new and a wonderful fellowship.

Now it is around these three ideas that I would like to gather as a wonderful cluster of the grapes of God's truth a few things that might prove to be a blessing to your own soul. Now, with great care, I'm going to stay away from the expression "everlasting life," and even from the expression "salvation" momentarily, in order that it might be very clear to you today.

Anderson: Verse by Verse: John 3:16, Romans 6:23

As you come to the doctrine of eternal life, as it displays itself in the crisis of the new birth experience, we need to be reminded of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in John chapter 3: "Truly, truly, I say unto you, except ye be born again, ye cannot enter into life." Except ye be born anew, except ye be born from above, ye do not have everlasting life. And as far as I know this morning, or have been able to discover, the only means in this wide, wide universe of ours, by which life comes to be is by birth; by generation for physical life; by regeneration for spiritual life; by creation, procreation and re-creation.

Life is born, and there is no other means by which life comes to be. And when we come to consider eternal life, my friend, we are simply ushered into the realm of the supernatural. And we are made to understand that there can be no eternal life apart from new birth through Jesus Christ; the birth of the eternal being, the birth into eternal life, the re-creation of life, the communication of something which before was not there that gives to life a new quality, and gives to it a substance that did not previously exist. It is the thing that differentiates those who have received it from all of those who have not received it. This is the very gift of God. This is eternal life. This is the supernatural communication of life. That is the impartation of a new and divine nature to man. And in one of the Scriptures we read, the free gift of God is eternal life.

God's free gift.

Now I cannot press the word too far. You see, eternal life in its initial stages and in its wonderful essence is the gift of God without reference to man. It is without reference to man's participation, without any reference to man's cooperating relationship, without any favor or accommodation or any association or any effort on man's part at all. Born, ushered into the realm of spiritual life, as

Anderson: Verse by Verse: John 3:16, Romans 6:23

a child is born into the element of physical life without any real choice of his own. The child's parents bring him into being. And being there in the element of life which we call the air or atmosphere, the boy, the girl, the child, the little one is in contact with that in which he may live upon the condition of his own responsiveness to it.

It is only when those organs which have been created for the use of the air are put to the usual exercise, when lung inhalations and exhalations begin that the child truly lives. You may take the child ushered into the element of life, give him all of the tender care and provision for his needs. But if he will not breathe, my friend, he is not alive. In other words, if he does not take hold of the element of life into which he has been introduced, that little child has no life. He lives only as long as he draws the breath of life. Now God has done His utmost to bring people into the element of life by which they breathe. If they do so, they may live. God brings human souls into the element of spiritual life by the same analysis. When He introduces them into contact with Jesus Christ.

Now I do not speak now of the man Jesus, but I speak of Jesus, the Christ of God, who has made unto us wisdom and redemption and sanctification, to Him who is our spiritual life. Now Christ is the element of life eternal. Christ IS our spiritual life. In Him all life exists. And when the eternal God brings a human heart and a human mind and a human soul into contact with Jesus Christ by faith, when His name is preached in the public assembly, when you see Him reveal His mercy and power to save men, wherever your quick and moral faculties touch Jesus Christ, my friend, you have been brought by that first stage of birth into the element of a new life.

Anderson: Verse by Verse: John 3:16, Romans 6:23

And when by the grace of God in your own soul, you begin to take hold of life by spiritual responsiveness to Christ; when you say He is mine, I now receive Him as my own personal Savior, and by faith you DO receive Him into your life and into your heart, and your sins are taken away, my friend, it's wonderful. When you let go of yourself in order to take Him, and when you yield yourself to Him, you are made alive with a life which is life eternal. Oh, if we could only teach it in utter simplicity. Though I am dealing this morning with the deepest of all truths, I pray that you may not miss what I have to say.

Therefore, let me say this, that there is no other way for you to live a spiritual life except by giving yourself in response to the element of life which is in Jesus Christ; so that there shall come into your life the very divine nature of God Himself and of divine life. So that now, you have God's nature, which is just as dynamically paradoxical as if by a miraculous means you should take a hypodermic needle, and you should take that needle, thrust it into a dog, and take into that dog with the needle the nature of a cat, so that that dog would no longer bark. But now he would begin to meow like a cat. You have given the dog a new nature.

So, my friend, in a loftier, more spiritual sense, when Jesus Christ becomes an individual savior, we become the recipients of a brand new nature. It's the nature of God. If you have the Son of God, you have life. If you have not the Son of God, you do not have eternal life. And until Christ shall come into your life and that perfect consciousness of His own presence, you have no life. You remember it was Jesus who said "I am come that she may have life and that she may have it more abundantly."

Anderson: Verse by Verse: John 3:16, Romans 6:23

Now, you and I, as believers in Christ, certainly know that we are alive because our minds and our bodies are functioning. Our social coordinations are perfected. Physical powers move in harmonious relationship. And walking and thinking and eating and drinking and merrying and sorrowing and suffering and rejoicing; all of these things are normal to us. We do all of the things that we know as life. And many people are living what they believe is a glorious life. Yet Jesus said "I am come that ye might have life." He it was who said, you remember, "I am the life, the resurrection, AND the life. I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. He that hath the son hath life. He that hath not the son hath not life."

It is not enough, my friend, for you to be a member of a church. It is not enough for you to have been baptized, or to take the Lord's Supper, or to be even morally upright and good. It is not enough that you even pray and read your Bible. It is not enough for you to have high ideals and give yourself the sacrificial service to both God and man. You must be born from above. "Ye must be born again." And except Jesus Christ be formed in you, and unless you now receive the divine nature of God, you cannot truthfully be said to be a Christian.

Now another thing comes in this connection. The new birth is not only a divine communication demand, but my friend, it's wonderful to know that the new birth, this impartation of God's divine nature to you, is an instantaneous experience. It happens in a second of time as between the soul of man and his own God. I know perfectly well this morning, as a pastor and as a minister, that there are many, many stages of divine preparation for this instantaneous thing. There are experiences and conditions that must be met; that there are certain quickenings of

conscience and stimulation of mind, and touching all those faculties by which response is made to the Spirit of God.

But, my friend, when the experience itself happens, it is in the twinkling of an eye; a moment of contact; a moment when all barriers of sin are swept to one side, when the last reach of the human soul is yielded in response to the Spirit of God. That moment, this transcendent, wondrously illuminating, divinely transforming experience, is accomplished in your heart. It is instantaneous. Now, I put a great deal of emphasis upon that fact because frequently men and women have said to me, I have been a Christian all my life. I grew up in the church. I have kept the law. I keep the golden rule. I do not know a single thing that I would have to do to change my conduct if I did join the church.

Now, I'm not so much concerned this morning with a man joining the church. I do not happen to be among those ministers who is desperately, desperately, DESPERATELY anxious about how large numerically his church grows. But I am more anxious that the people who join the church of which I'm pastor are truly Christian people. That is my chief concern. Oh, I'm concerned this morning that no man shall ever take the name of Christ upon his lips. Until he has been born again, until he has received this divine nature of God, because he has reached out by faith and received Christ to be his own savior; until there has come into his own soul, that mighty consciousness of God that comes from the dynamic spiritual shock, touching the soul of man into a quick incense of his own transformation, and his own new nature, and his own renewed being.

Anderson: Verse by Verse: John 3:16, Romans 6:23

The story is told that a number of years ago, a man was standing by watching an electrician working on a switch. The man required hours to make the meter right. He put it into the right place, connected a wire there with a wire here, and more than all, safe-guarded by careful effort any possibility of a grounded wire or contact with any inflammable surface. He began now to put in certain sockets. But after a while, after hours of laborious effort, there came a moment when he took one end of the wire and inserted it in the socket. He attached a fuse, and instantly, there was a great light. There was the operation of a dynamic energy that had been waiting, stored up yonder in the powerhouse for that one focal point of contact.

And so it is, my friend, that you may spend your whole life studying the word of God. You may spend your whole life being in association with other Christian men and women. But you are never saved. You are never changed. You are never born again. You have no eternal life. Until with all of the preparation that might have gone before, you may touch God through Jesus Christ, and my friend, it's an instantaneous touch. It is only then through Christ that the divine fuse, that you have entering into your own heart eternal life.

Now, let me try another illustration, if I might. Supposing we have here a man who applies for citizenship in the United States. He complies with the American Naturalization Act. He forswears allegiance to his old government. He cast in his lot with us. He builds a home. He enters business. He contributes to our causes, and he even wins the confidence of his fellow man. But he is NOT YET an American citizen. He takes out his first and second papers. And after a while, there comes a moment when, as an alien citizen, he must take the oath. And he has the word confirming his citizenship pronounced upon him. And his citizenship, my friend, is

Anderson: Verse by Verse: John 3:16, Romans 6:23

accomplished in an instant and in a momentous single act of time. No matter how much went on before by way of preparation. And unless you, too, have come to that place spiritually where you know there has come to you God's response to your preparation, pronouncing you a child of God, you are still not in the kingdom of God and you do not have everlasting life.

If it should ever be your privilege to travel to Italy and visit the city of Milan, you would discover three great arch doors in the great cathedral of that Roman city. Over one, there is a wreath of roses, under which is chiseled these words in the Italian language "All that which pleases is but for a moment." You turn to the arch on the left, and over it is the cross, and under that the words "All that which pains is but for a moment." And then you stand before the great central arch, and you read this inscription "That only is important which is eternal." Yes. All that which pleases is only, but for a moment. All that which pains is only, but for a moment. But that only is important, which is eternal. And that, my friend, is my message this morning.

And oh, could we but see it? I am profoundly concerned to ask you a question. Have you ever received new life in Christ? I am not asking you, have you join the church? I have not asking you, are you moral and ethical and righteous and fine? I'm not asking you about the Ten Commandments or the Golden Rule. I am asking you this: Have you ever received Divine Life in Christ? Have you ever been born again? Do you know beyond any per adventure of a doubt that divine experience of life from God coming into you because you trust and believe in Jesus Christ? Have you something more than simply the outward semblance of faith? Have you something more than simple confession? Have you that trust and belief in Jesus Christ, which creates a profound consciousness within that God gave Himself to you in the fullness of His own

Anderson: Verse by Verse: John 3:16, Romans 6:23

love? Have you been born again? Do you know that you have passed out of spiritual death in to spiritual life? Oh, God help you to know it this morning. God help you to see, my friend, that this is an instantaneous experience. One moment you are lost; the next moment you are saved. One moment you are without life; the next moment you have life. One moment you're in darkness; the next moment you're living in the light. Why? Because in between, Jesus Christ becomes your own personal savior.

Isn't it wonderful? Wonderful to know. Wonderful to realize. Wonderful to behold. That Jesus Christ, in the life of a human being, makes all the difference in the world. "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." The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Do you have life? Do you know what it means to be found in Jesus Christ? Not having your own righteousness, but His. Not being clothed in the garments of the rags of your own ungodliness, but being clothed in the cloak of the righteousness of Christ our savior. How wonderful to be in Him.

"What more can He say than to you He hath said, To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled? 'E'en down to old age all My people shall prove My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love; And when horry hair shall their temples adorn, like lambs they shall still in My bosom be born." Yes. God is the shepherd. Christ is the shepherd. You and I are His sheep. And we would be led of Him. We would follow Him. We would do what He wants us to do. Why? Because resident within us, we now have God's divine life as an impartation from Jesus Christ.

Anderson: Verse by Verse: John 3:16, Romans 6:23

Well, we must bring our broadcast today to a close. We must realize that time moves quickly on soft feet. We must recognize that we will shortly be off the air. But through and in it all, my friend, will you continue to examine the word of God and then to examine your own heart, and or recognize whether or not you believe in Christ unto salvation? Our father, we thank Thee for the Great Bible Institute of Los Angeles; with its Bible college, with its Talbot seminary, with its Bible Institute, and with its graduate missionary school of Medicine. Oh, God bless every phase and every outreach of the work. For we ask it in Jesus' name and for His sake, Amen.