

John 1: 17 and 18; “In the Bosom of the Father”, Sermon # 4 in the series – “That all May Honor the Son”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on December 30th, 2012, in the Morning Service.

As we approach another New Year we should pause and take stock of our lives as Christians; those of us who would dearly love to glorify God with whatever days and years we have remaining to us. We need to ask ourselves: Am I consciously studying to please God my Father through the grace which my Lord Jesus Christ has given me? Am I really being changed by the view of Christ which is conveyed to me here in the gospel of John; of what it really took for One who was full of grace and truth to purchase my salvation? God the Son had to become a man in order that He might render to God a perfect obedience on my behalf. He had to suffer punishment in my place on the cross. But praise be to God, He did, and He was raised from the dead. Jesus calls us to learn of Him; to receive of His grace, and to learn to live out the truth of His Word the Bible. It is neither easy, nor is it automatic to live out the truth of God’s Word. “No one has seen God at any time.” But it says here: “The only begotten God (That is; God the Son) who is in the bosom of the Father, has declared Him.” We can only consistently lead a life which is glorifying to God, as we better come to know God through our thinking about what He has done, and what He is doing for us, through our Lord Jesus. It says here that the Lord Jesus “is” in the bosom of the Father, not simply that He “was” in the bosom of the Father. Oh, I know that it is certainly true that He was in the bosom of the Father in eternity past, but God knows that I need to know this today, this very morning, that He is also presently now in the bosom of the Father. What does this phrase mean? In what sense is the Lord Jesus Christ presently in the bosom of the Father? That is what I would like to attempt to explain to you now in the context of verses 17 and 18. The only-begotten Son being “in the bosom of the Father” declares to us, first of all, the truth that the law coming through Moses cannot save any person from their sins. And 2nd – It declares to us that the great love that exists between the Father and the Son is the basis of the believer’s always being loved.

1st of all – The only-begotten Son being in the bosom of the Father declares to us the truth that the law coming through Moses cannot save any person from their sins. (Verse 17)

“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” There is a dichotomy which is presented to us here between law and grace; between Moses and Christ Jesus. Let’s think about the law for a few minutes. The law, with its divisions into the ceremonial, judicial, and moral laws, was given to Israel as a nation, through Moses. They were given these laws through God’s having spoken to Moses on Mt. Sinai. God gave to Moses these wise and holy statutes; these precepts and ordinances. He gave them to Moses to give

to the children of Israel to observe, so that they would show forth the fact that they were His peculiar people whom He had chosen over all the other peoples on the face of the earth, in those Old Covenant times. I want you to look at this a little more closely with me. Turn with me over to Exodus 19, verse 1. "In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai." "For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness." "And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.' "Now therefore, if you will indeed keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is mine." "And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." "These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." "So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the Lord commanded him." "Then all the people answered together and said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do.'" "So Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord." "And the Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever.'" Notice how God had appointed Moses to this great position. Notice the words that God used with Moses; "that they would believe in him forever". Believing in Moses would be believing God's Word to them. And notice how faithful Moses was in all of his house, as it says in the book of Hebrews. The law came through Moses.

If we were to read the remainder of this chapter and the next chapter we would find God coming down on the mountain and giving Moses the law amidst fire and smoke and the mountain quaking. We need to understand certain things from this. The reason that God had set His love upon them, and had delivered them from their bondage in Egypt was so that they would serve Him and worship Him. God raised up Moses to be their earthly leader, a ruler and deliverer of God's covenant people. God gave them this law, in particular, so that He might declare His holy ways to them. They had agreed to "do all that the Lord had spoken". But the people did not understand their own hearts, or their need to receive grace and truth from God Himself. They thought that they could do this in their own natural strength. God, in coming down at Sinai, and in giving Moses His law was showing them that His righteousness and holiness were very great, much greater than they ever thought. Let me ask you if you have understood this mighty truth? Do you perceive just how great and awesome and holy is the Lord our God? In giving Moses the law to give to the people God was showing them that His righteousness was like the mountains of God, and His judgments were a great deep, as it says in Psalm 36: 6. His ultimate purpose in giving the Law was to show Israel by shadows and types that His purposes in righteousness could only ultimately be

fulfilled in His Son, Jesus Christ. Through Him would come the fulfillment of all of God's promises concerning grace and truth; He who would be descended from Abraham, the first Hebrew. Salvation would be "of the Jews", as Jesus says in John 4: 22. But Moses could not give the people salvation. It is important for you to understand that no mere man can give you salvation; only Jesus Christ who has grace.

I think that it will be very helpful to your understanding if you can see that when God chose the Jews to be His Old Covenant people, He was also giving to them His holy law as a reiteration of the covenant of works which He first gave to Adam, the first man, in the beginning of the creation. He was showing them that the knowledge of good and evil was something that they could not handle by themselves. The law says, "Do this and live." God calls Moses up to the mountain to be the earthly mediator of God's Old Covenant people. He gives Moses instructions on how he is to sanctify the people (verses 11-14) He told them to wash their clothes. He told them to put boundaries around the mountain and to carefully draw near the mountain, and not to come near their wives. (verse 15) All this was in preparation for God's coming down on the mountain and giving them His law. When God descended to the mountain on the 3rd day, God gave instructions to Moses not to let the priests and the people break through to gaze at the Lord, because many of them might perish. (verse 21) When God came down, it says in verse 18 of Chapter 20, all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and they trembled and stood afar off. They said to Moses: "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." The law engenders fear of the power and majesty and justice and holiness of God coming against you. It faithfully represents His glorious righteousness and His hatred of sin. But it cannot take away our fears when we fall so far short of God's glory.

Let us also see how quickly the people found that they could not live up to the righteous expectation of God. Turn over to Exodus Chapter 32, verse 1. "Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, 'Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.'" The law had come to them through Moses, God had drawn near to them to give them His holy law through Moses, and yet they were already sinning against the first commandment and acting as if Moses was not their appointed prophet. This awesome God displaying His awesome glory, which they had seen and perceived at a distance, was rejected in favor of a golden calf. Verse 2 – "And Aaron said to them 'Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.'" "So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron." "And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf." "Then

they said, "This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!" "So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it." "And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord." "Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings, and the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. Those very people who had previously said to Moses, "All that the Lord has spoken, we will do," now find themselves setting up the image of a golden calf to worship it as the one who delivered them from Egypt.

You see, it was going to take a perfectly righteous person to fulfill the righteousness of God. Moses was not that man, even though he knew the Lord and in one place it is said of him that he was "the meekest man in all the earth". Even though they had received such a great revelation of God, and it came to them through such a great prophet, it was far from enough to save them. There is only one Person who could be perfectly righteous and that was Jesus Christ our Lord. Only Jesus could say, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets." "I did not come to destroy but to fulfill." (Matthew 5: 22) Our Lord Jesus was the only One who could keep the covenant of works. He was the One who was shadowed forth in many of the things which the people were commanded to do through Moses. The law was never given in order that men could be saved by trying to keep it. It was given in order to show men how great God's expectation was, and is, of seeing perfect righteousness in His creature man. If a person sees that they do not have the ability in themselves to keep God's holy law, then they might also see their absolute need of salvation in Jesus Christ. The law came through Moses, but Moses could save no man from their sins.

2ndly – The only-begotten Son being in the bosom of the Father declares to us the love of God for all of His Elect people.

"The law came through Moses." "Grace and truth came through the Lord Jesus Christ." In the Old Covenant times, the people, in order to be saved, had to believe in the works of God on their behalf, and in the promise of the coming Messiah which was revealed to them in many ways. Moses was the one whom "God made a ruler and deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the burning bush." This, Stephen declares in Acts 7: 35. It will be good for you, if you can take it in, to understand that this Angel was none other than the Pre-Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ. He was the One who was giving grace and help to Moses in his ministry to Israel of old. When Moses came down from the mountain and saw the idolatry and the immorality of the people, it says in Exodus 32: 19 – "So Moses' anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain." He did this to show the people what they had done in their sin. They had broken God's holy law. Moses could show them their sins, and convict them of their sins, but He could not give them the gift of salvation. Through the law comes the knowledge of sin. But through Jesus Christ comes grace and truth. Even as great and as good a man as Moses needed grace;

the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let me show you this. Look over at Exodus 33, verse 1. “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Depart and go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying ‘To your descendants I will give it.’” “And I will send My Angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.” “Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.” “And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments.” This is the voice of God, speaking in terms of many of these people being “under law”, not under grace. This is God exercising His glorious attribute of Justice in relation to these sinful people whom He had done so much for.

But Moses had found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Look at verse 12 – “Then Moses said to the Lord, ‘See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people.’” “But You have not let me know whom You will send with me.” “Yet you have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.’” “Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight.” So the Lord said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name." “And he said, "Please, show me Your glory.” “Then He said, ‘I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you.’” “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” “But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” “And the Lord said, ‘Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock.’” “So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.” “Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”

This prayer of Moses’ ought to be the prayer of every Christian. “Let me know you”, and “show me your glory”. Every true Christian has received Christ’s finished work of His fulfilling the law on their behalf, and they have believed that He has died for their sins at the cross so that God’s justice can be satisfied in regard to them. It is Christ’s completely satisfying God’s justice in His perfect obedience to God’s law and His sacrificial substitutionary sufferings on the cross that merits favor for you with God. That is how you are saved. When you believe in Jesus, His perfect righteousness is imputed to your legal standing in the sight of the perfectly holy God. “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8: 1) You have been reconciled to God. When you trust in Christ’s finished work of being punished at the cross in the place of you the sinner, the transaction is made between you and God which is called conversion. You exercise faith and you are justified. God adopts you as His child and seals you with His Spirit. When you believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, to show

forth His complete satisfaction with Christ's work of redemption, then the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit into your heart to give you the assurance that a work of His grace has begun which will never stop until you are brought to heaven and the perfection of His work in you, in glory. Jesus Christ is full of grace and truth. It is the love of God which sent His Son into this world. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The Son's being "in the bosom of the Father" is a picture of the love of God for His Son, first of all. It is on this basis that He shows continual love to the Christian. In sending His Son into the world, the Father was sending His very heart. The gospel of Jesus Christ tells of the Father's love for Jesus first, and for those sinners who will believe it, second. Turn with me over to John Chapter 5, verse 16. Jesus has just healed the man by the pool at Bethesda. He had had this infirmity for 38 years. He did not have the power to put himself into the pool at those times when an angel of the Lord came down and stirred the water, and whoever was able to get in would be made well of their disease. No, this man is a perfect picture of those whom the Lord desires to save. He was impotent even of using the means to effect his own cure. You need to understand that your salvation from sin is not only finding forgiveness from the guilt of your many sins, but it is a matter of having the power to be healed of the dread disease of your heart which led you to commit those sins. Jesus was keeping all the commandments of God's holy law, and so He healed this man on the Sabbath. Verse 16 says, "For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath." "But Jesus said, 'My father is working until now, and I have been working.'" "Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." Then Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner." "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel." You see, this is where it all begins; the love of the Father for the Son.

It is on the basis of the Father's love for the Son that all the work of redemption was begun and accomplished. It is on the basis of this love of the Father for the Son that this great work of Christ's redemption is faithfully applied to all of God's Elect people. The Son is, even now, in the bosom of the Father. He was loved in eternity past. He was loved in the Incarnation. He was loved during His entire life of obedience to the Father's law. He was loved and in the Father's bosom even when according to His strict justice He had to pour out His wrath upon Him at the cross. If this is the case, then do you see dear Christian, that this is the reason why God's love never varies in regard to you. Nothing shall be able to separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus because the Father has accepted

you because you are “in Christ”. Not only has He accepted you, but His love will continue to surround you and be exercised toward you even in the midst of your worst failures to keep His commandments. I am not saying by this that God will permit you to practice any known sin. No, if you have received the New Heart, you will not be able to do that. But since the Son is in the bosom of the Father, He will chasten you where you need it, because He loves you. He will give you the comforts and encouragements of the Holy Spirit to sustain you in your greatest situations of distress and difficulty. His love will never cease or wane because the Son (your Savior) is in the bosom of the Father. He is at the Father’s right hand, but spiritually speaking He is always in the bosom of the Father.

It is God’s love for Christ which the basis of your sanctification and your being united with other believers in spiritual unity. John 17: 20 and following: Jesus says, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that all may be one, as You Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.” “And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and loved them as You have loved Me.” “Father I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” “O righteous Father!” “The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that you sent Me.” “And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” You see, the Son being in the bosom of the Father is the basis of our whole salvation from beginning to end. It is the basis of the Son being given in the Incarnation. The Father’s love for the Son is the basis of the Son being delivered up for us all. It is the basis the Son’s declaring the Father’s name to His brethren before He went to the cross and afterwards in His resurrection. The only begotten God (theos) who is in the bosom of the Father has declared Him. He has (Exegesato); He has exegeted Him. He has satisfied the Father’s justice and has personified in human flesh His love, His truth, and His grace. He has drawn out the meaning of God to us. He has interpreted Him.