

Paul H. Dixon
The Mercy of God
October 23, 1978

Unedited Transcript

Paul H. Dixon:

Thank you, brass ensemble. It's been going like that all through Friday and Saturday. On Friday night, you got us a homecoming queen. It's Karen angel, here. Would you stand please, Karen. Oh, I can see her. Yes, there she is. I'll tell you. That's great. Thank you.

Paul H. Dixon:

I don't know how I missed that smile the other day. I've known that smile, known Karen for many years, grateful for her testimony. Congratulate her, as well as the others. Fine young ladies. I also am so grateful for all the Lord did for us on Saturday. Wasn't it just beautiful weather? I'll tell you. I wish we could package that one up for next homecoming. Don't you? Just lovely weather and the parade, the floats. I know we had a big crowd out to see everything. Appreciate all the people, Myron Youngman, others, who put so much work into it. And then, as we came to the inauguration, I'm so grateful for our choir. Magnificent, the job of our choir. And again, our wind ensemble, just exceptional sound, great testimony. And then, all the men who came in to speak, Dr. Younger, Dr. Wiersbe, Dr. Stall, the contributions, they made. Everything so well said. So fitting.

Paul H. Dixon:

And many people have commented on the great blessing of the inauguration. Many people from the community, many people from outside the area. Some of our friends who came from the other universities. I think some 26 colleges and universities represented by presidents and those representing the presidents, and the testimony that was left for Jesus Christ. But, I must say that one of the things so many people commented about were, they said just hearing those students sing that song, Christ is all I need. Some said we were moved like we have never been moved before, just by hearing those young people sing that. And, so we're grateful for that. And, for your testimony and the contribution you made during this very important time in the history of this college.

Paul H. Dixon:

In the light of what is happening and has happened, I would like to direct your attention, this morning, to the hundred and third song. Would you turn there with me, please?

Paul H. Dixon:

I should like to begin reading with the first verse. Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me. Bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all his benefits. In my Bible, I've circled the all in verse one, the all in verse two, and the two all's in verse three, who forgiveth all thine iniquities who heal it, all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth the with loving kindness and tender mercies, who satisfieth thy mouth with good things so that the youth is renewed like the eagles.

Paul H. Dixon:

I should like to speak, very simply, on the subject this morning, the mercy of God. Webster has defined mercy as the compassionate treatment of an enemy. Someone has said, grace views man without merit. Mercy views him as miserable. I believe we need a fresh appreciation of the mercy of God at a time like

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this. It's very interesting that in verse four, we are told the quality of God's mercy. It is tender. In verse eight, we have the quantity of God's mercy, when it stated he has plenty us in mercy. In verse 11, we have the depth of God's mercy, for as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them, that fear him. And, in verse 17, the bread of God's mercy, but the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them, that fear him.

Paul H. Dixon:

David begins this great Psalm in a most unusual way. He begins by talking to himself. Do you ever do that? You won't admit it, because generally we think someone who talks to himself is a little bit flipped. If we go up to a traffic light, next to us would be seated someone talking like mad. We look over and there's no one else in the car. And we go, he's out of it. Did you know that talking to yourself is a great thing, psychologically and spiritually? Who knows you better than you, other than God?

Paul H. Dixon:

And, what David does is he just takes himself in hand, and gives himself a good old fashioned preaching to. I don't know about you, I appreciate pastors, all my pastors God's given me in my life, and all the preachers, and those who feed me and instruct me. Every once in a while, I need a preacher who just tells it like it is and puts it on the line and says, "Hey, Dixon, you'd better straighten up". I need that. Sometimes, maybe as preachers, we don't do enough of that. So, what we need to do is preach to ourselves.

Paul H. Dixon:

David was discouraged. Does that surprise you? David was discouraged many times. David was down. Does that surprise you? You read the Psalms and David was often down. Where did we ever get the idea that a Christian, a truly spiritual Christian, is never discouraged, is never down. I think God preached to you, perhaps one day this year, on when you want to get away from it all. You ever feel like that? Just want to get away from it all. Did you know that there were times when David wanted to get away from it all, and Jeremiah wanted to get away from it all? And, all of us have our time. Sometimes, we can't even understand it. Maybe it's the weather that affects us, but we're down and we're discouraged. David was that way.

Paul H. Dixon:

So, he starts preaching to himself and he says, "bless the Lord, David, bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me". Bless his holy name. There's the solution. When we find ourselves at this particular juncture, bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all his benefits. And then, he reaches down into the pork barrel of God's benefits, pulls out a handful, selects five. Puts them on a chain and hangs them around his neck to remind himself of the choice, mercies of God.

Paul H. Dixon:

I'd like for us just to reflect upon those briefly this morning, the first mercy he mentions is in verse three, the mercy of forgiveness. Who forgiveth all then iniquities. Forgiveness stands at the top of God's list of mercy. And, when David enumerated the mercies of God, he put forgiveness and salvation right at the top. There's nothing to surpass it. It is not only the greatest of God's mercies, it is the earliest of God's mercies in our lives. Nothing else is as important to God, and should be as important to us. The king queen of England were in Washington. A man by the name of Chief Whitefeather, an Indian, was invited

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to sing. He had a beautiful voice for the king and queen, and he stood before them singing, "I'd rather have Jesus". At the conclusion, the king said, "I would too".

Paul H. Dixon:

JP Morgan boasted in his will that he had found forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Far greater than any wealth. Far greater than stocks and bonds, and the millions that could be left to loved ones and friends. On JP Morgan's list was the mercy of forgiveness of sin and salvation. I recall, one day, hearing a man preach by the name of Max Cohen, a Jewish Evangelist. Any of you, did you ever hear Max Cohen? Could I see your hand? Did anyone ever hear this man? Some of you, a few of you. He's gone to be with the Lord. Max Cohen. His wife, beautiful singer, Violet Cohen. I wish we could have her sing for in chapel sometime.

Paul H. Dixon:

Max, a converted Jew. He said, once a year, I'll never forget this, he said once a year, I go to St. Louis. And, I walk down the street in St. Louis, where I was walking when I was handed my first gospel track. And, then I go into that little storefront building where that Jewish missionary sat down with me and gave me my first witness. And, then I go to that church where I heard that preacher preach the gospel, and I go back to that study where we knelt and he took his Bible and let me to Jesus Christ. And, he said, I do that once a year.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, it is not possible for most of us to go back to the place where we were saved, necessarily once a year. But, we can go back in our minds, again and again, and again, to that place where God found us and saved us, and we realized the mercy of forgiveness. Have you experienced it? Are you satisfied that, you know Jesus Christ is your savior? If not, may you look back upon this day, October 23rd, 1978, and on the campus of Cedarville College, where you experienced the mercy of forgiveness.

Paul H. Dixon:

The second mercy on David's list was the mercy of good health, who healeth, all thy diseases. I'm greatly concerned about those who had placed the constant emphasis upon divine healing. People ask me, Brother Dixon, do you believe in divine healing? Most definitely. It's some of the divine healers that I have a problem with, not the healing. I'm convinced that all healing is divine. I do have a problem with those who would say, oh, we want you to be healed, but you don't have enough faith. It's foreign to the word of God. You read your Bible. Some people were healed in the Bible because they exercised faith. Others were healed in the Bible because someone else exercised faith for them. Others were healed in the Bible and there's absolutely no mention of faith whatsoever. It was a sovereign act of God. And, some were not healed in the Bible, and that was also a part of the plan of God.

Paul H. Dixon:

But, what I would remind you and remind this preacher this morning, is that we are here today with healthy bodies and able to function, and that's of God, and let's not take it for granted. The problem is, when we get the flu, or we have to go to the hospital, or we're set aside. And then, we remember the mercy of good health and thank God for it, and ask that God would return it to us. But, let's thank him every day for these healthy bodies and use them. Use them for his glory.

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Paul H. Dixon:

Then he mentions the mercy of preserving us from death. Verse four, who redeemeth thy life from destruction. Did you receive a blessing from Mayor Womack? You'll not hear any more gospel than you heard from that man in his testimony on Friday night. We had some unsafe parents, unsafe friends present, and we thank God they heard the gospel.

Paul H. Dixon:

But, the only explanation for Mayor Womack being here, to use that voice for God's glory and to give that testimony, is the mercy of God. You just don't have a plane crash like that and have it explode, and have what happened to him, and live apart from the mercy of God. How many of you have ever had a time in your life when you were almost killed? Maybe, it was almost an automobile accident, or possibly something else. But, you can look back to a time where you could have very well been in eternity, but you're alive now. Could I see your hands, if that's been your experience? Isn't that amazing? Perhaps 50% of the congregation.

Paul H. Dixon:

I remember when I was in college, I loved to fish. And, having a big TVA lake there, frequently, whenever I could, I'd get away in the afternoon for an hour or two of evening, crappy fishing. Sometimes, that's one of the things I like to do just to get away. This afternoon, if it doesn't rain, I'm going to go out in the woods and I'm going to squirrel hunt for a couple hours, just to get away from it all for a while. I was out fishing, this particular day, returned to school, and suddenly realized one of my rods and reels was still on the fishing bank. I jumped in the car, had a 53' black Dodge. Sharp, kept polished all up, you know. Don't hey, hey, listen, don't laugh. Those 53' Dodges were rods. I mean to tell you. You, you don't think so? You don't think it was like a Camaro or Firebird?.

Paul H. Dixon:

Listen, I mashed down that accelerator. I let my foot up, and I'd have to wait until I'd hear a "click". That's a pin dropping in that shifted gears. [Grinding sound 00:16:54] "Click". [Grinding sound 0:00:00:16:57] Really, really hot. I'm going down highway 58, I'm doing the speed limit, that time it was about 65. I'm doing every bit of it going down highway 58. All of a sudden, this lady turns right in front of me going to a grocery store. You know, no air conditioning, my arms out the window. I'm driving one. I see this coming. I kid you not. I started singing. You know, Womack talks about his singing, you know, in the plane. I started singing. Not as good, but I start singing, Lord I'm coming home. Man, I did. I knew that was it, because as soon as she turned in front of me, she went into shock and stopped. I mean, right, straddled my lane. I mashed the brake, and that car went into a spin. Here I am. I never even grabbed with both hands. What's the use?

Paul H. Dixon:

I got right up to her, somehow. That car went into another spin, the opposite way. My front end just came to her front end. I spun all the way around, went into another spin, and had one wheel hanging over a concrete abutment, and had just missed a telephone pole. I calmly get out of the car. I said, lady, people are all on the roads. They've all pulled off. They're watching this happening, man. They don't want to miss it. I did, but they didn't. I said, lady, what are you doing?

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She said, and this is a classic, "I gave a turn signal". I said, "thanks a lot", you know. There's only one explanation for not being killed in that wreck. For mayor Womack, not being killed in that plane crash. And, you in that particular accident. The mercy of God, who redeemeth thy life from destruction. The point you are here, I'm here. God wants to use us. Every minute counts. We can't play around. We can't fool with sin. We can't waste this year at school, this quarter, these studies, our time in this study, we have to get down to business. We must be serious. God has preserved this for a purpose. It's mercy.

Paul H. Dixon:

Then, he mentions the mercy of loved ones and friends. Who crowneth the with loving kindness and tender mercies. Now, I am not dogmatic, because I'm not sure this is what David is talking about. But I think so. What does he mean when he talks about crowning us with loving kindness and tender mercies? Genesis 39:21 says, but the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, listen, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Paul H. Dixon:

Daniel one nine, now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love, with the prince of the Eunice's. Go through the Bible. God gave a very special relationship to Nehemiah and the king. Esther and the king. David and Jonathan. God has given us the love of parents, Mother, And father. For some of us, husbands and wives, and children, and friends. And, if we're not careful, It's another one of God's choices, mercies that we take for granted. Let's not fail to thank him today for crowning us with loving kindness, and the tender mercy of loved ones and friends.

Paul H. Dixon:

Then he concludes, in verse five, who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that the youth is renewed like the eagles. And, that's the mercy of food. We put our feet under a table, generally, three times a day, and thank the Lord, and ask him to bless the food. And yet, so many times this seemingly meagerest of God's mercies. Yet, so meaningful. We take for granted. I remember one time, being at a camp, and we made a mistake. We asked one of the campers to pray for the food. Little nine year old boy. I was in the Virgin islands that summer, working with this camp. I was a college student. A little boy bowed his head, said Lord, thank you for this food. It isn't very good, but thank you for it, anyway.

Paul H. Dixon:

We need to thank God for every meal, for every hamburger, for everything that God gives us that keeps our bodies going. Because, this is another one of God's choices, mercy. The conclusion of the matter, How can we sin against such a God? How can we live careless lives with such a God? Everything we have that's good, God gives it to us. To him be glory. It is no wonder that we find those in the bible sinning and saying, against the and the only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight. We hear them saying, how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against such a God? We have a merciful God.

Paul H. Dixon:

Some years ago I was in New York. I was preaching and there was a man we wanted to see, saved. He came to several of the meetings. He would sit on the end of the aisle when I'd give the invitation. Some nights, he'd step out in the aisle, and then he'd step back. Went into his home and witness to him, but he still did not receive Christ. And, the pastor would say, I can't understand it. He gets so close, and then he backs off. This has been this way for years. Concluding service, I praised, gave the invitation, he still

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did not respond. The people were going by shaking my hand. The love offering check had been delivered.

Paul H. Dixon:

And, he walked by and he shook my hand. He said, "sir, you know, I almost came tonight. I almost surrendered to Christ tonight". I said, why didn't you? He said, "because I am a failure". He said, "I have failed in everything in my life. I failed in my job. I failed with my family. I failed in school. I failed in the army, and this is the only thing left. And, I know that I will fail at this as well."

Paul H. Dixon:

I said, now let me make sure I understand what you're saying. You're telling me that you're a zero. Is that right? He said, yes, I guess you could say that. You are telling me that you are nothing, is that right? Absolutely. Oh, I said, give me your hand. I said, I'm so glad to meet you. I said, this is refreshing. I said, you're the very one Jesus Christ came to save. I said, in fact, if you'll get saved tonight and keep that attitude, God can do something with you. The problem with most people is, they know there're nothing when they receive Christ. Then, they start thinking there are something and God can't do anything with them.

Paul H. Dixon:

He looked at me in a state of shock. He said, you mean that God wants me to come to him like this?. I said, absolutely no confidence in yourself, whatsoever. I said, you want to talk about it? He said, yes. I'd like to. I took him aside and I let him to Christ. And he went down, I remember he, grabbed me first. He was a big man. And, he started hugging me. He was weeping. He said, oh, he said, this is wonderful. He said, I'm so glad. I said, thanks a lot. Let me go.

Paul H. Dixon:

We go downstairs, grabs the pastor. We all pray together. We rejoiced together. He goes out the door. There's this big snow on the ground. I can still see it, us. We go to New York. He's going through the snow, and I heard him say, me, me. He saved me. He saved me. And, can we not all say that today? Totally undeserved. Think of it. All these mercies, for me, for you. Let's pray.

Paul H. Dixon:

Thank you, father. We owe it all to you. To you, be all praise and glory. Everything we have and everything we are. We are reminded who maketh the, the different from another. What hast thou that thou does not received. Now thou its received it, why does thou glories, if thou haths not received it? God, we praise you. Bless our students, our faculty. Help this message to have a continued impact in all of our lives, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Have a good day.