

## Articles and Sermons :: love endureth absolutely all things! John Wesley

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Excerpt From Wesley's

Sermon 22 - Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:5-7)

SERMON 22

UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT

16. And when it can no longer believe, then love "hopeth all things." Is any evil related of any man? Love hopes that the relation is not true, that the thing related was never done. Is it certain it was? — "But perhaps it was not done with such circumstances as are related; so that, allowing the fact, there is room to hope it was not so ill as it is represented." Was the action apparently undeniably evil? Love hopes the intention was not so. Is it clear, the design was evil too? — "Yet might it not spring from the settled temper of the heart, but from a start of passion, or from some vehement temptation, which hurried the man beyond himself." And even when it cannot be doubted, but all the actions, designs, and tempers are equally evil; still love hopes that God will at last make bare his arm, and get himself the victory; and that there shall be "joy in heaven over" this "one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance."

17. Lastly. It "endureth all things." This completes the character of him that is truly merciful. He endureth not some, not many, things only; not most, but absolutely all things. Whatever the injustice, the malice, the cruelty of men can inflict, he is able to suffer. He calls nothing intolerable; he never says of anything, "This is not to be borne." No; he can not only do, but suffer, all things through Christ which strengtheneth him. And all he suffers does not destroy his love, nor impair it in the least. It is proof against all. It is a flame that burns even in the midst of the great deep. "Many waters cannot quench" his "love, neither can the floods drown it." It triumphs over all. It "never faileth," either in time or in eternity.

In obedience to what heaven decrees,  
Knowledge shall fail, and prophecy shall cease;  
But lasting charity's more ample sway,  
Nor bound by time, nor subject to decay,  
In happy triumph shall for ever live,  
And endless good diffuse, and endless praise receive.

So shall "the merciful obtain mercy;" not only by the blessing of God upon all their ways, by his now repaying the love they bear to their brethren a thousand fold into their own bosom; but likewise by "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory," in the "kingdom prepared for them from the beginning of the world."

18. For a little while you may say, "Woe is me, that I" am constrained to "dwell with Mesech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar!" You may pour out your soul, and bemoan the loss of true, genuine love in the earth: Lost indeed! You may well say, (but not in the ancient sense,) "See how these Christians love one another!" these Christian kingdoms, that are tearing out each other's bowels, desolating one another with fire and sword! these Christian armies, that are sending each by thousands, by ten thousands, quick into hell! these Christian nations, that are all on fire with intestine broils, party against party, faction against faction! these Christian cities, where deceit and fraud, oppression and wrong, yea, robbery and murder, go not out of their streets! these Christian families, torn asunder with envy, jealousy, anger, domestic jars, without number, without end! yea, what is most dreadful, most to be lamented of all, these Christian Churches! — Churches ("tell it not in Gath," — but, alas! how can we hide it, either from Jews, Turks, or Pagans?) that bear the name of Christ, the Prince of Peace, and wage continual war with each other! that convert sinners by burning them alive! that are "drunk with the blood of the saints!" — Does this praise belong only to "Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth?" Nay, verily; but Reformed Churches (so called) have fairly learned to tread in her steps. Protestant Churches too know to persecute, when they have power in their hands, even unto blood. And, meanwhile, how do they also anathematize each other! devote each other to the nethermost hell! What wrath, what contention, what malice, what bitterness, is everywhere found among them, even where they agree in essentials, and only differ in opinions, or in the circumstantialia of religion!

Who follows after only the "things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another?" O God! how long

? Shall thy promise fail? Fear it not, ye little flock! Against hope, believe in hope! It is your Father's good pleasure yet to renew the face of the earth. Surely all these things shall come to an end, and the inhabitants of the earth shall learn righteousness. "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they know war any more." "The mountains of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains;" and "all the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdoms of our God." "They shall not" then "hurt or destroy in all his holy mountain;" but they shall call their "walls salvation, and their gates praise." They shall all be without spot or blemish, loving one another, even as Christ hath loved us. — Be thou part of the first-fruits, if the harvest is not yet. Do thou love thy neighbor as thyself. The Lord God fill thy heart with such a love to every soul, that thou mayest be ready to lay down thy life for his sake! May thy soul continually overflow with love, swallowing up every unkind and unholy temper, till he calleth thee up into the region of love, there to reign with him for ever and ever!

John Wesley