



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Galatians 1:1-5

"The Great Emancipation"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are beginning the exposition of Paul's letter to the Galatians. It is, of course, the opinion of almost all of the students of the New Testament that this epistle may well be the most Pauline of all of his epistles. In fact, some have even said that it is even more Pauline than Paul, whatever that might mean. It is an epistle of great significance, and in view of the fact that in these messages I will not be devoting a great deal of time to questions which scholars might be interested in, but which do not have in every case, great significance for us. I would like to introduce the Scripture reading with just a few words about the background of this epistle.

There were people who lived in France, known as Gauls. Those of you who, as I studied Latin many years ago, know that Gaul played a great part in Caesar's book, which many of us have studied. The Gauls, several centuries before the time of Caesar, had in part migrated to northern Asia Minor, and there they had settled. That is the reason that Galatia was given to the name where these names had domiciled themselves. Galatia means simply, "the place where the Gauls lived." The Romans, however, when they came in transformed the situation. They rather, than called that particular area Galatia, and areas where other ethnic peoples were by different name, reorganized that part of Asia Minor, and as a result of their reorganization, there came to be a large province in which

were the Gauls of the country of Galatia, and other peoples as well. So that Galatia came to be a term that could have two forces. You would have to ask if someone had asked you about Galatia, "Do you mean the country of Galatia, where the Gauls live? Or do you mean the Roman province, which was much larger and incorporated other peoples?"

As a result of this the question of the origin of the Galatians Epistle has come into origin. When Paul addresses his letter to the Churches of Galatia, did he refer to the churches that were located in northern Asia Minor where the Gauls had originally settled, and where the Galatians lived. Or did he use the term Galatia in the sense of the Roman Province? Now, if he used it in the sense of the Roman Province, then it would include the churches of southern Asia Minor, which the apostle had founded on his first missionary journey; the churches of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. The history of which is given us in Acts chapter 13 and 14. Scholars have debated this for a very lengthy period of time, and generally speaking, English-speaking scholars, due to the influence of Sir William Ramsey, a Scot, a student of the New Testament, but primarily an archeologist, who contended that Galatians was written to the southern Galatian churches, not really Galatians, but within the province of Galatia.

Most of the English-speaking people have followed Sir William Ramsey, and feel that the apostle, when he wrote to the churches of Galatia, is following what is known as the South Galatian Theory. That's an acronym, and wrote his epistle to the churches that he had founded on his first missionary journey. Scholars on the continent have taken the other view point, generally, and have felt that the apostle wrote the epistle to churches that were located in Northern Asia Minor, and thus have been proponents of the North Galatian Theory. We will, just for the purposes of the exposition, assume that the apostle wrote this epistle to the churches that he founded on his first missionary journey. We know that wherever the churches were, they were founded by the Apostle Paul. He says that later on in the letter. So we will assume that.

Now, if that is true, then Galatians was probably written very early in Paul's ministry. The chances are that he wrote it sometime during the years of 48, 49 AD, and therefore the Epistle to the Galatians might well be, probably is, the first of the Pauline epistles. It therefore gives us a very good understanding of the apostle's theology at this earlier stage in his ministry. And it lets us know, of course, that he was sound then, too. Then we will follow then that particular understanding, and we will also understand that the apostle was seeking to counter individuals who had come in among his churches, and had sought to teach the individual who had come to Christ through his preaching, that it was not only necessary to believe on Jesus Christ to be saved, but it was also necessary to be circumcised.

In fact, it would seem that the doctrine of the Judaisers, which is the term that we will use of them, is the essentially the doctrine of them that came down from Judea according to Acts chapter 15, and taught the brethren in Antioch, and said, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Questions have arisen over all of these points, but we will follow that particular view point. I think it is the simplest. It is the truest to the evidence that we have. And I commend it to you. But I would hope as you read through, if you find things that seem to suggest qualifications of what I have said, well that is one of the reasons we study the Bible. Of course, to understand the historical background will help us in understanding the content of the epistle itself.

With that as a kind of introduction, let's turn now to Galatians chapter 1, and let me read verses 1 through 5, Galatians 1:1-5. The letter was written then to the southern churches of Asia Minor in the years 48 or 49 AD, and it is to refute the teaching of the Judaisers who insisted on circumcision as a necessity for salvation. Paul writes, "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead ;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ." You'll notice if you have the Authorized Version that that second from is italicized, which

means of course that it is not in the original text. The one preposition does duty for both God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, linking them together very closely.

The apostle continues. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil age," the word is not world, but age. This means something like a world. And being a world, it therefore covers the particular mood and currents and disposition of thought that were characteristic or are characteristic of any age. Our age, we say. So it from that that the Lord Jesus came to deliver us, Paul says, this present evil age. He does not mean, of course, that we are taken out of the world. But that while we are left here, we are delivered from this present evil age. Thus Christians are people whose citizenship is not of this particular world, but is of heaven. We are not of the world, though we are in the world. That's the idea back of Paul's statements.

Now, notice the last words of verse 4, "according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Let us bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] We give Thee thanks, Lord, for this beautiful day, for this wonderful season in which we think of the ministry of the Lord Jesus in such a special way. We thank Thee that he took to himself an additional nature, and as the Son of God came as the incarnate Son and lived in our midst a life that glorified Thee, that fulfilled all of the commands of the eternal God in heaven, all of the terms of the covenant of redemption, and then ultimately offered himself as a sacrifice on the cross at Calvary for the people of God. We thank Thee that his name is called Emmanuel, and that his name is called Jesus, for he saves his people from their sins. How marvelous to be one of his people, and to know the forgiveness of our sins. Truly Lord, Thou hast been marvelous in abundant grace to us. And today we give Thee thanks, enable us to put our priorities where they ought to be, in the worship of the Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today in the first of our series of studies in the epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians is "The Great Emancipation." Galatians is Paul's most explosive letter. It is one of the most important documents in western history. Deeply disturbed by the defection of the disciples that he had brought to the faith, the Apostle Paul, contrary to his usual custom, abandoned his amanuensis in writing to them. In the 6th chapter, in the 11th verse he says that he wrote to them with his own hand. So in a labored, scrawling, sprawling hand, he wrote the *Magna Charta* of spiritual liberty, as it has been called. It is probably a doctrine for the United States of America, and especially those who have had some spiritual relationships, as the Reformation has been for the Western World.

Luther, as you know, considered this epistle the hallmark of the teaching of the Reformation. It was the anchor of the movement that he, under the power of God, was enabled to start. His wife's name was Katie, and he said this Galatian epistle is "my own Epistle, to which I have plighted my troth. It is my Katie von Bora." It has been said by some that Galatians has had a greater practical effect upon us in the United States than the Declaration of Independence, our Constitution, or even our Bill of Rights. Now, I am speaking for people who have had some contact with the things that are found in the word of God. We are fast, incidentally, becoming a nation with very little contact with the things that are found in the word of God. But in our part of the country we still have a strong influence from the word of God, because our forbearers, for the most part, had a very strong relationship to the things of the Bible.

If you ate ham or bacon this morning, or any other morning for that matter, it is because of truths found in the Epistle to the Galatians. That is, if you have a spiritual background. Before the time of our Lord's crucifixion, the people of God were not able to eat pork. If garments of mixed material are being worn, nylon for example, then you have been affected by the truth that is set forth in the Epistle to the Galatians. In the Old Testament period, a person could not wear garments of diverse materials. All clothing

had to be of one material. It had to be of wool or linen, not wool and linen. So we have been affected by the truths of the Epistle to the Galatians if we should have on, for example, a suit that is part wool, and part some other type of material. In the kitchen we use any pot or pan for any use to which we might put it. But our Jewish neighbors, if they are orthodox and keep the Law of Moses, have one set of pans for meat and another for anything cooked in milk. Because the Old Testament says in Exodus chapter 23, "Thou shalt not see the kid in his mother's milk."

So what freed the world from the bondage of kosher cooking? Well that was the truths that are set forth in the Epistle to the Galatians. Galatians then is an important document for us, even though we may not realize it. Galatians is the kind of rough draft of Romans, and the apostle violates all contemporary counsel when he deals with the truths as he does in Galatians. We are told, and have been told for a generation or so, that you should not ever say anything negative. We have even had songs that became very popular like, "Accentuate the Positive, Eliminate the Negative." And we have had preachers who have allayed a great deal of stress upon the power of positive thinking.

I mentioned in the Believers Bible Bulletin that that stirred up one evangelical student enough, particularly when it was accompanied by some of Mr. Peale's other unorthodox utterances that enabled him finally to come out with this very amusing line, "For myself I find Paul appealing, and Peale appalling." [Laughter] *The Power of Positive Thinking*, well I am sure that if the Apostle Paul had looked at the title of that book he would have said, "That's interesting, but it's not all together biblical."

When you read the Bible, one of the first things you notice is the fact that there is a great deal of negativism in it. In fact, right at the beginning of the Bible, when God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and put them under probation there, he gave them on little negative line. He said to them, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it. For in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Now, it is a sad thing that Adam

had not had placed in his hand a little book called, *The Power of Negative Thinking*, it might have helped him a great deal.

And then when we go on to the Book of Exodus and listen to the Ten Commandments, we note the refrain, "Thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt not." The Bible is full of the negative. Machin used to say that "one could not really know what a positive was if it was not accompanied by a negative." So the idea that the negative is important for us is certainly harmonious with the teaching of the word of God. So if we were to put the Epistle to the Romans by the side of the Epistle to the Galatians, we could say, I think, with a great deal of truth, that Romans tells us what the gospel is, the power of positive thinking. And Galatians tells what the gospel is not, the power of negative thinking. And putting the two together, we get God's thinking on spiritual things.

There is a simple structure to this epistle. We will just try to keep from being too academic by simply saying, you may divide the Epistle to the Galatians into three parts. The first two chapters give us the personal side of the epistle in which Paul defends his apostleship. Then he sets forth in chapters 3 and 4, his doctrine of justification by grace. And finally, in chapters 5 and 5, he stresses the ethical implications of the doctrine that he has just preached, as it pertains to the Judaisers claims that we must not only believe in Jesus Christ but be circumcised in order to be saved.

Turning to the epistle itself, and I think we do learn more about an epistle by turning to it, itself, we notice first all, Paul's reference to the author and its recipients. Notice, he writes in verse 1, "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead ;) And all the brethren which are with me." Now, right here at the beginning the apostle brings before us the first of the two principle subjects that meet us at the outset of this epistle. And it is apostolic status. Evidently the opponents of the apostle had cast dispersions upon him, and his right to speak for Jehovah in heaven. And so, he begins right at the beginning to say something about himself.

Now, usually the apostle does not add a great deal to the mention of his name. It was the custom in ancient times to begin a letter with your own name, like Paul, and then simply "To John, greeting." That was the way letters ordinarily began. So when a person adds other things, it is a little out of the ordinary. Here, the apostle says, "Paul, an apostle," and then gives us an extended description of things that concern himself. This extended description of himself points to his desire to defend himself. So evidently, enemies had cast dispersion upon him. They had said things like, "This Paul is not one of the twelve." He was not an apostle when the twelve were called by the Lord Jesus Christ. He was not even an apostle at the time the Thomas was chased to take the place of Judas, who went to his own place. He's a Johnny-come-lately. He's a new kid on the block. Or he's an upstart, or he's a parvenu. At any rate, he's someone new and therefore he does not have the authority of those in Jerusalem.

"Now we come from the traditions of Jerusalem and the twelve. And we say to you that you not only believe in Christ, but you must be circumcised in order to be saved." So the apostle here, right at the beginning strikes out at those who question his authority. He calls himself an apostle. An apostle was one who was sent forth for a specific task or duty. Now, it could be used in non-religious settings. We might say, "An apostle of a business firm" or an "apostle of a person" or an "apostle of an institution." But of course, in the spiritual sense, it is a reference to the fact that the apostle claims that he was one who was sent forth by our Lord.

Now, in other places he tells that he was an apostle who was made an apostle by the risen Christ. He said in 1 Corinthians chapter 9, in verse 1, "Am I not an apostle, have I not seen the Lord?" So he considered apostles to be individuals who had seen our Lord in his resurrection, and who had been called by him. He regards himself as having a unique status. And incidentally, there are people today, who say that they are apostles, but they do not meet the qualifications of the twelve or of the Apostle Paul. Now, it is true that in the New Testament the term is used of Barnabas. But in those cases the

reference is ordinarily to an apostle of the church. We might, for example, in Believers Chapel send someone out on a mission from us, and we could call them an apostle, but they would be an apostle of Believers Chapel.

Now, an apostle of Jesus Christ is something else entirely, and that is what Paul claims to be. And in this sense, he had unique authority. He had a unique status. And also, in this sense there are no successors. In order to make this even plainer, he says that he is an apostle "not of men." Now, notice the plural. He says, "I am not an apostle because I was sent forth by a group of men. I have not been sent forth by the twelve. Or to transfer it to our present day, "I am a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, not because I have been ordained by a body of men commissioned by the synod to do that, or by the Presbytery. I am an apostle not of men. Sent forth by no synod. Sent forth and authorized by no committee on the minister and his work."

Furthermore, he says that he was "not of men, neither by man." There was no one individual who laid his hand upon me and sent me forth. Transferred to our day, "I am a man sent forth by God, not because the Pope has laid his hands upon me. Not of men, neither by man." So the apostle alludes to the fact that there were individuals who were, at that time, representatives of religious bodies. He says, "No I am not a representative of a religious body. Nor am I a representative of any individual man." Men did gather round me, call upon me to kneel before them, gather around me, place their hands upon my head." Incidentally, there are some good things about this. I'm not ridiculing everything that takes place in this way. "Laid their hands upon me, and said 'Abracadabra, Hocus Pocus, Paulus Apostolis es. Paul you are an apostle.'" He did not become an apostle like that. That's what he means, just something like that.

He says that he is an apostle, "through Jesus Christ, and God the Father." Now, you'll notice if you look carefully here, that that little preposition translated "by" in the Authorized Version, occurs before Jesus Christ, but not before God the Father. There is one preposition here, "through Jesus Christ and God the Father." The fact that the one

preposition is used, rather than two, "by Jesus Christ and by God the Father," links Jesus Christ and God the Father together in a much more intimate way. The implication of this is that the Son is not inferior to the Father. He is an apostle, "not of men, neither by man, but through by Jesus Christ. Now, we would not want to ground the doctrine of the trinity on these scattered references here in the salutation of the Epistle to the Romans. But you can see that all of this is in beautiful harmony with his doctrine of the Christian triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The three person who subsist in one essence. So it is an apostle, through Jesus Christ and God the Father.

Someone might say, did he not say an apostle "not from men, neither through a man, but through Jesus Christ, and you might expect him to say from somebody, like God the Father." But he says through God the Father. Obviously, if God the Father, the ultimate source of all spiritual being, is the instrumentality by which Paul came to his apostleship, he is also the source. There is no person beyond him, so if he is the instrumentality, he is also the source. So he is an apostle, "not of men, neither by man, through Jesus Christ, through God the Father." To sum it all up, Paul is saying, "I am a God-sponsored apostle."

Now, of course, we do not have apostles today, and we do not have anybody today who has the authority in the Christian church that an apostle had. We have elders who meet as a body and exercise discipline. But even they do not have apostolic authority, for apostle's appointed elders in their day. So what I am going to say is by way of application. We do not have apostles. I do not write inspired material. My material is so far from being inspired that the secretaries in the church office can find mistakes in it. What I want to say is this, that if a person feels that God has given him a spiritual gift to teach the word of God, then he should have a comparable sense that God has sponsored him in the ministry to which he has been called, and to which has been given him. In other words, every one who stands up to teach the word of God should feel, and I don't mean that we are looking for a feeling in the experiential sense. He should know deep

down within that it is God who has called him to preach and teach. And furthermore, you in the audience should know when a person has been called of God, and when a person has not been called of God. You should be able to recognize that.

The other day one of the young men came into my office. He had heard another of the young men teach the word in one of the classes. He had had some questions about this person. And he came in, and during the course of our conversation about him, he said that he had enjoyed the message and the ministry, and then he made this simple statement, "There is no question but that he has a gift." That's what I am talking about. It should be something that is recognizable by the saints of God, and known by the person who believes that God has called him to teach.

Now, the apostle might have left it at "through Jesus Christ and God the Father," but there are a lot of people who talk about "I believe in God." But when you talk to them it's evident that they don't know anything about Christian doctrine. It is not enough to believe in God. There are Christian people who say, "I believe in God." They think that that's the same thing as being a Christian. It is not. A Mohammedan can say that. A Hindu can say that. And they are not Christians, and they would be the first to admit it. The apostle adds, "Through God the Father, who raised him from the dead." That little clause is designed to stress that the God who called Paul, is a particular God. And furthermore, it stresses the dignity of the Son. "God the Father, who raised him from the dead." So Paul is an apostle of the risen Christ, through the authority of the only genuine God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other God, but this God, the genuine God.

Now, this is all very important, for a great deal of what is going on in evangelicalism today. For there is a great deal of stir in evangelicalism. There are people who question Paul's authority. An outstanding professor, in fact recognized in his day until just recently as probably the outstanding New Testament professor in the western world, wrote a commentary on the Epistle to the Romans a number of years ago. But in

our years, at least my years and he said in the course of his introduction to the Epistle to the Romans; he said, "There are occasions in which I have thought that Paul was wrong in what he said. And I have not hesitated to say so." Now, Paul claims authority for what he gives. And he tells us later on in this chapter, he does not lie. So you can see what we have here is a confrontation between the Apostle Paul and the modern Professor of New Testament. And there is going to come a day, at the judgment seat when the judge is going to instruct the Professor in who was right about authority. And we have no doubt about the issue of that confrontation.

Another very well-known present day scholar has said that the Apostle Paul was a person occasionally who was influenced by his rabbinic background. And therefore the things that he said must be modified in that way. There are times when the apostle taught things that we cannot accept; therefore we can trace them to his rabbinic teaching. And consequently we do not have to follow him there. Again, that professor, too, will find that he will have a short lecture on authority at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. And his views will be modified, for that particular one about whom I am speaking is a Christian man. Then there are those who say that the apostles and the teaching of the Bible is not really the ultimate authority. The ultimate authority is the church. Is it not the church who has given us the Bible? Ah, how foolish! We would not have a church if we did not have the truth contained in the Bible. It was the preaching of the gospel through our Lord Jesus and the apostles that brought the church into existence. And the fact that a church recognized later on the documents of our New Testament as inspired of God does not mean that the church offered the Bible. It is the doctrine of the apostles that is responsible for the church's life. And always, the apostolic teaching stands above the church, judging the church. And not vice versa.

So Paul here is claiming a vast authority for the things that he is saying. And furthermore, he says, "And all the brethren which are with me. In other words, I'm not alone in my view. I am not a fellow like Johnson down there in Dallas who is kind of

unique. I have all the brethren with me in what I am saying. Notice that, he is claiming that he has a kind of backing that includes all of the brethren who is with him. So he is not preaching something that is unique or creative or different. He's preaching that which the saints believe. "All the brethren with me," they support him. Notice however, that they are brethren, not apostles. He doesn't say all the apostles, they are brethren. That's what we are, he's an apostle.

Now, the recipients are churches of Galatia, we have said something about that in the introduction to the Scripture reading, so we pass it by for the greeting. Here the Greek and the Hebrew unite, for grace is Greek word and peace or shalom is a good Semitic word. These two things, grace and piece kind of summarize the Soteriology of the Pauline good news. Notice the order, it is always grace first. Then peace. No one ever has peace with God who does not first know the grace of God in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, since the apostle is speaking to Believers, he is saying that the grace that God for believers after they have come to know the grace of God in salvation, and peace that always follows from grace, be with you. It is something that we experience throughout the whole of our Christian life, the grace of God and the result is peace.

Now, the origin of this greeting he traces to God the Father, and again our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, Christ's grace is indistinguishable from the Father's. Notice he doesn't say, "From God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ." But again, "From God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ," linking the two persons of the Godhead together as the source of this grace. So we cannot speak about Christ's grace as through it were different from the Father's grace or even lesser in value than the Father's grace. It is from our Lord Jesus Christ, from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, what about the ground of this thanksgiving. I love this 4th verse. I could have preached for two hours on this 4th verse. "Who gave himself for our sins?" Have you noticed in this epistle that the apostle does not commend the Galatians at all? Look

through his other epistles and in almost every one of them he commends his recipient. He describes their faith and their love that they have shown to the saints and things like that, but he doesn't say anything about the Galatians, because he's disturbed about the Galatians. It's as if I were to take a six months trip into Europe or to Timbuktu and I should come back to Believers Chapel six months from now, and I should find that you have all become strong Arminians. [Laughter] And also, in danger of falling into a doctrine of salvation by works, of which Arminianism is especially susceptible. I would be especially disturbed over this. Of course, I couldn't do what an apostle could do; by nevertheless I would be greatly disturbed. So the apostle is disturbed over doctrine. He knows that doctrine is fundamental to life. And it's important to him, what people believe. It is important to us in Believers Chapel what you believe. Don't mistake us. It is important to us that you believe sound doctrine. That is why we proclaim it to you.

Now we also believe that you should practice sound doctrine. But we believe that it is very important that you believe sound doctrine. So here, no thanksgiving. He turns immediately to the great event that displayed the grace of God and issued in the peace that they enjoy. And did you notice how right at the beginning of the epistle he turns to the cross then? A cross is the place where Paul hangs out. It is his haunt. He is there constantly at the cross. And here he brings us to the second of the burdens, which appears right here in the opening salutation, it is the gospel of grace. Calvin said, "If those Galatians has appreciated the gospel of the cross, they would not have been tempted to go off into these alien aberrations from the faith." And that is true. If you are satisfied with what Christ has done in the cross, then you are not attracted by the inventions, and by the supposed new truth or break through that others may claim to have.

"Who gave himself for our sins," let's look at it for a moment, because here the battle is joined. First of all, he speaks of the act of atonement. He says, "Who gave himself for our sins." Now, I don't want to labor this, because we have talked about this a

good bit in the past. It's evident that Paul's statement gave himself as a reference to a voluntary act on our Lord's part. The fact that he gave himself for our sins is evident that it was a penal act that he performed for it is for our sins. And the fact that he gave himself for our sins, suggests that it also is a satisfaction of the divine requirements against us. And the fact that he gave himself for our sins, I have some words in the notes to support this, the fact that he gave himself for our sins inevitably means that this penal satisfaction that the Lord Jesus voluntarily offered to God the Father, was a substitution satisfaction, it was for our sins.

Now, this is not only an exposition of the doctrine of the atonement, but it is a confession on Paul's part of his infinite indebtedness. Look at him; he's saying that Jesus Christ gave, at a point in time he gave himself voluntarily as a substitute for our sins, a penal satisfaction, to God. So evidently it was our sin that brought Christ to the cross. It is a confession of our infinite indebtedness, because our indebtedness, my dear Christian friends, required the death of the second person of the trinity. Now, if that is not infinite indebtedness, I do not know what infinite indebtedness is. That is your debt, and if you are not a believer in Jesus Christ it is your debt still, and you have it to pay some day. So he gave himself for us. No wonder Calvin said, "So glorious is this redemption that it ought to ravish us with wonder."

What was the purpose of the atonement? He says, "That he might deliver us from this present evil age." Deliver, that's one of the key notes of the Epistle to the Galatians. The gospel is a rescue. It's emancipation from a state of bondage, deliverance. It's an Entebbe kind of deliverance, not a Larnaca type of deliverance. No offense against the Egyptians, but it's just different. It's a successful deliverance that the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished. Incidentally, the word deliver is found a number of times in the Book of the Acts. It usually is a reference to deliverance from the power of something, not the presence of something. So he is talking about the power of this present evil age as it relates to the presence of sin.

And finally, he states in verse 4 the source of the atonement, he says, "according to the will of God and our Father." Now, that is a most beautiful little clause. There are people who incidentally say, "I think of God the Father as a harsh God, as one who is very far away. I find it very difficult to pray to him, but I love to pray to Jesus Christ, because I find him very near to me." Well, look at this text, do you not see that the Son gave himself for our sins that he might delvers us "according to the will of God and our Father." We do not, and we cannot say, that Jesus Christ is a loving God, whereas the Father is a harsh God. How foolish this work that our Lord Jesus did, how great the manifestation of his love toward his people is the work of God the Father, through the Son. His death is no accident. It is not traceable to our will; our rescue is not traceable to our will. It's no human plan. It's not dependant upon legal obedience. This is a blow to conditionalism.

If you'll allow me just a moment or two. There are good people, they are friends of mine, I want to say very plainly I do not regard them with anything other than the spirit of love. There are individuals who say, "I am a Calvinist, but I am a four-point Calvinist." Now, I respect an individual who says this. I think, however, that it is a very inconsistent position. Richard Watson, probably the greatest of the Arminian theologians said, "It is perhaps the most inconsistent theory to which the varied attempts to modify Calvinism have given rise. Here are individuals who claim to believe in total depravity, unconditional election, invincible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. But they do not believe that Jesus Christ came to die for his own, but rather for every one."

Now, let me ask you to look at this text. If we say that Jesus Christ intended to die for all men, then his intention was frustrated, because both of us will grant that not all people are saved. I think, of course, what happened is the best judge of what God intended. In other words, the result will tell us what he intended to do. But if Christ intended to die for all men, if we say that he gave himself for everyone, then his intention was frustrated. The frustration of his intention is offensive, in my eyes; I say it in love, to

the perfections of the Son of God. To think that the intention of his is frustrated, to me, limits our understanding of the Son of God.

Furthermore, if we say that died in order to save all, we cannot speak then of a substitution that was effectual. The substitution was ineffectual. It was not really a substitution at all. For, even though he has done what he has done, it is possible for heaven to have further claims against individuals who are not saved. So the substitution was not really a substitution, the work was not really done. The purchase did not secure salvation for all for whom he made it. Heaven's claims are not really met. It is not then a finished work, logically.

Now, what is this? This is dishonoring to the work of our adorable substitute. So the idea that Jesus Christ could die for all men and yet not be effective in his intention is dishonoring to the Son of God, dishonoring to his perfections, dishonoring to his work as substitute. And furthermore, if you reflect about it for a moment, it should shatter your confidence and assurance, because if it is possible for God to be frustrated in one of his great works, the worked of the atonement, how do you know that he cannot be frustrated in the other promises he has given us? Is it really true then that he does all of his pleasure, as the word of God tells us? You can see that this then would be most damaging to my assurance and hope that he will really save me, who has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, I say that in love, I say that because I would like to recover some for an understanding of the gospel of the grace of God that will most honor and glorify our great God. If you shall happen to be of the contrary opinion, I hope that you will not be upset by that. There are probably other things that we disagree about. And it is possible, of course, that I am wrong in two or three other things. Though I think I am right in this one thing, you understand. You still may be right in more things than I, but I hope we remain friends. But we understand each other I hope.

Now, the apostle then has said, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil age." You'll notice that the "us" for whom the sins were given are the ones who are delivered according to the will of God and our Father." Naturally, "To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." To the Father belongs the glory of our salvation, and notice it is forever. "To whom be glory for ever and ever." Because this salvation, my dear friend, that we have is a salvation that lasts forever and ever and ever.

Now, let me sum up what I have been saying. There are three stages in the divine action here according to one of the commentators. There is, first, the atoning, rescuing death of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is secondly, authoritative witness through the apostles. And, third, there is the gift of the grace and peace, which Jesus Christ has won. There is therefore then, no salvation by the works of the Law or by human merit. If Jesus Christ has given himself to deliver us, then we don't need to keep the Law regarding circumcision in order to be saved.

So, I say, let the negatives ring out. Are we saved by good works? Are we saved by religion? No. Are we saved by ritual, ritual of baptism or sitting at the Lord's Table? No. Are we saved by culture? Are we saved by education? Are we saved by the church? Are we saved by some great act of philanthropy? No. The Apostle Paul puts it most plainly in the 2nd chapter in the 16th verse. He says it about three times when he says, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

It has been said that Christianity can be expressed in three simple sentences. Christ took my hell, or I deserve hell. Christ took my hell. There's nothing left for me, but heaven. When we analyze those three statements, I deserve hell. Why, there's the doctrine of the nature of man. There's the doctrine of the fall of man. There's the

doctrine of the holiness and justness of God. When we say secondly, Christ took my hell; there is the doctrine of the love of God. There is the doctrine of the atonement. There is the doctrine of the propitiation and redemption. And under the third, there is nothing left for me, but his heaven. There is the doctrine of his assurance and the doctrine of our future hope.

Augustine said, "Oh Lord, deliver me from the lust of always vindicating myself." How true. You know, the man who taught me theology many years ago, was a man that I have revered through the years, a four-point Calvinist. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer used to say to us that when the time came for him to get to heaven, he could just imagine himself going up to the pearly gates. And he would say to us, "Now when I arrive at the pearly gates, I want to be able to say that I have no trust, but trust in Jesus Christ. And when I arrive there, and the angel comes out and says to me, 'Lewis, in what are you trusting?'" He said, "I will say, I'm trusting in Jesus Christ alone. And if the angel should say to me, 'Now, Lewis, wait a minute. Weren't you a good Christian man?' I want to be able to say, I do not trust in anything but that which Jesus Christ has done for me. And then he might say to me, 'But Lewis weren't you a preacher, and didn't you preach faithfully for many years?' I want to be able to say, I trust only in Jesus Christ. 'Now Lewis, you were even president of a theological seminary.' I want to be able," Dr. Chafer used to say, "to be able to say at that point, I trust only in Christ in what he has done for me. And turn away from heaven if necessary."

Now, I think that that's the kind of attitude the apostle is seeking to set forth in Galatians. Our trust is in what Christ has done and in nothing else. No work of religious ritual. No work of human attainment. No human merit. No keeping of the Law, only in Jesus Christ. In what is your trust? Are you trusting only in him? May God the Holy Spirit bring home to you your own sinfulness, of Christ's good work in our behalf. And may, by the grace of God the Holy Spirit, in invincible grace, you be brought to the acknowledgement of the Son of God as your only trust. And then I hope that with Paul,

you will make the cross your own haunt throughout the rest of your days. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for the privilege of the proclamation of the good news concerning the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil age. According to the will of God the Father. How wonderful, Father, that we are able to understand by Thy grace the source and the dynamic of all that we have. Deliver us, Lord, from the lust of self-vindication. And help us to cling only to our blessed Lord, and his work for us. Go with us as we part. For Jesus' Sake. Amen.