



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Galatians 1:6-10

"No Other Gospel"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading for today is from Galatians chapter 1, verse 6, through verse 10. This is the second in our series of studies on this remarkable epistle which Martin Luther called his wife. Verse 6,

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Now, let me say a word about this word "accursed." It is a word which we know in English as anathema. It is a word that is ultimately a representation of an Old Testament expression herem, which refers to that which is devoted to, ordinarily, destruction. Since that was the most common usage of the term, it came to mean that which was devoted to destruction, because it was hateful to God. And that is the background of this word. The expression "Let him be accursed," means let him be

devoted to destruction, because he is hateful to God. That's the precise meaning of the expression. "As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Now, Paul was a man who was accused, I don't understand how, he was accused of being a time-server. That is a man who moved with the breeze. The kind of man that was dominated by expediency. He did do a few things that seemed to be expedient. He would not allow Titus to be circumcised but he permitted Timothy to be circumcised. And someone who did not understand might say, "You see, in one situation he acts one way, and in another situation he acts another way." So he was accused of being the kind of man who moved the circumstances. He sought to curry favor. And what ever people wished, that was what he preached. Well, he answers this. He answers it in many ways, but he answers it specifically here. There's a great deal of stress in the original text on the word "now" in verse 19, and so I will try to read it that way. "For do I seek the favor of men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

I won't say anything about this in the message that follows, but that expression, "the servant of Christ," is a remarkable thing for this Hebrew man to utter. All of the Old Testament saints thought that the expression "the servant of the Lord" was probably the highest calling that a person could have. If a person was the servant of the Lord, he was a human representative of the great servant of Jehovah the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah who would come. You may remember from reading the Old Testament that God speaks of the prophets as "my servants, the prophets." So the servants of the Old Testament were the servants of the Lord, the servants of Yahweh. And every Hebrew man thought that the servant of the Lord was the highest title that a person could have. The servant of the Lord, no greater calling. To be a President you would have to stoop from that, as far as they were concerned; that happens to be my opinion, too. I think to be a Prime Minister is, for a man of God, to stoop to take a lower position.

But the Apostle Paul, who was brought up in that environment, speaks of himself as a servant of Christ. You can see in his mind that Jesus Christ stands on the same plane as the Lord God. In fact, Jesus Christ is the Lord God for him. That's why, he as a Hebrew man with this great appreciation for the expression the servant of Jehovah, does not feel that he has taken a downward step at all when he calls himself the servant of Jesus Christ. For Jesus Christ is the Jehovah of Israel.

Now let's bow together for a moment of 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 the 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 is 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 wonderful 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 exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians is "No Other Gospel." The early roman writers have given us a very clear picture of the character of the Gauls who had migrated from France to Northern Asia Minor. They spoke of them as having sharp and quick minds, of being very impressionable people. They spoke of them as being men characterized by prompt and

vigorous action. That was the good side of the Gauls. But on the other side, they spoke of their inconstancy, or their treachery, of their quarrelsomeness, of their ease of discouragement. Julius Caesar, whom many of us read many, many, many decades ago, in his Gallic wars mentions the instability of the Gauls and complained that almost without exception they were driven by a desire for change.

It's this feature of the Gauls that manifests itself in Paul's letter to the Galatians. Right here in the opening paragraph he says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from the one that called you into the grace of Christ." This combination of warm-hearted impulsiveness and fickleness has led some to speak of the Galatians as the Americans among the churches. Or perhaps we should speak of the Americans as the Galatians among the nations. Now, I don't want to push this too much, because obviously if you have been listening to the opening message of the Epistle to the Galatians, and reading the material, you may have remembered that I suggested to you that the apostle was not writing to the northern Galatians, but to the southern churches that he founded on his first missionary journey. And there would have been, no doubt, some Gauls in them. But for the most part, it was not the place where the Gauls lived. But is it a striking fact that the recipients of this epistle do manifest the character of the Gauls, as they are pictured in ancient literature.

The principal point that the apostle makes is not, of course, that, but that there is but one gospel. That one gospel is the primitive gospel that the apostles proclaimed. It's a gospel of grace. It's a gospel about Christ. It's a gospel about his penal substitutionary work. It's a gospel that's the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes. As the apostle said in the sister Epistle of the Romans. Amid the changing years, according to the Apostle Paul, there is one unchanging gospel. It never changes, and even though an angel, or the apostle himself, should preach contrary to that message that he had first given them, then the apostle says, "Let him be accursed." These are some exceedingly strong statements that Paul makes. I'm sure that if you examine this statement and think

about it, get beyond its familiarity, you'll realize how it must have struck the Galatians. "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Let him come under the judgment of God. Let him be regarded as hateful in the sight of God. That is strong language.

Why such unyielding and strong-handed language, one might ask. Well, there are two simple answers to that, I think. In the first place, the apostle perceived that the glory of Jesus Christ was at stake. To make it necessary for men to supplement what he has done in shedding his blood on the cross, is to degrade what he did, for he said, "It is finished." It was the same as saying we must improve on what he has done. It was to declare that the cross is redundant, that it is superfluous, or it's not sufficient. We must do more. In Paul's own words, as he puts it in the next chapter, "I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." The very thought of improving on the work that Christ has done, or adding to it or subtracted from it, is preposterous to the apostle, and to men who have professed his salvation.

And Paul saw, too, that the ultimate destiny of the souls of men is at stake. We sometimes lose this. We get so familiar with attending church, and sitting in the congregation, and listening to somebody talk, and sooner or later the whole thing becomes something that we move through as if it were custom. And we fail to keep constantly before us that to hold false views about the gospel of Jesus Christ is to hold false views about the deepest question that could every face a man.

Now, we are living in days of very strange economic principles. We are living in days in which we are seeing the results, in my opinion; incidentally, what I'm saying now is opinion, and not the truth. But we are living in days in which we are seeing, in my opinion, the results of Keynesian economics. It's a very sad situation. And the result is that we are looking at the newspapers, and we are seeing every day that the dollar is weaker, the dollar is weaker. Our politicians have been doing things in Washington,

pulling the wool over our eyes, in my opinion, and the result is that we've let them do it, and the result is that we are now suffering the consequences.

But let me assure you that that is not really the ultimate question that faces us. That doesn't really make, in the light of eternity, a whole lot of difference whether we follow Keynesian economics or the economics of Ludwig von Mises or Fritz Hayek. It really doesn't really make all of that difference. I might have a few more dollars in my pocket if we were wiser, but in the ultimate, it doesn't really make essential difference what kind of economics we follow. It doesn't really make a great deal of difference what kind of psychology we follow. The ultimate question is the question of our relationship to the Lord. And that question is so great that it overshadows all other questions that face us. Now, don't think for one moment that I don't think that those other questions are important. But they don't compare with this question. They pale into insignificance in the light of the relationship of a soul to God throughout all eternity. And that is what Paul knew that the gospel dealt with, and consequently, when someone spoke contrary to the message that he gave, he realized that it was a serious matter. And I am sure that if we had the same appreciation of the death of Jesus Christ, and the same concern for the lost souls of men, we would feel just like the apostle. We might even say, "Say it again, Paul. Three times, not just twice." "Let him be accursed."

Well, let's turn to the text. "I marvel," he says, he's astonished at the Galatians' desertion, was amazed at what was happening to believers that he, himself, had brought into the family of God. It's as though they've become spell bound under the allurements of false teachers. As he puts it in chapter 3, verse 1, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" We could render that, "Who has put his evil eye upon you?" You notice that there is no thanksgiving. That is contrary to his custom. He usually says, "I thank God for your faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ and your love toward the saints. And something like that, but there is no thanksgiving here. He's as angry as I would be if I were to take a trip to Europe and come and find that half of the congregation or most of

it was seriously thinking about becoming followers of the Hare Krishna sect or disciples of Buddha or Mohammed. I would be very disturbed over that. And let me assure you that when I pass on, and if that ever happen, my ghost will haunt you, [Laughter] if possible.

Now, what made this worse for the apostle was the fact that it happened so soon after he had been there. You know, we are inclined to think that if we stand up and preach the accurate gospel, people will be saved. Now, we have sought to destroy that myth, because it is a myth. A man may preach the gospel in the purest way that it is possible to preach it, and the whole congregation may rebel against him, and stone him to death. That happened to the Apostle Paul, and it happened to our Lord Jesus Christ. That same kind of thing. It happened in the Old Testament. The clarity with which you preach does not determine the response to the gospel. Now, that's a requirement for response, but that does not determine it. In the ultimate it is the preaching of the gospel, plus the work of the Holy Spirit in moving upon the hearts of men, and as he sovereignly moves through the message, men are transformed. I want to give you an illustration of that later on, if we have time.

The same idea persists; it seems, in the preaching of the word, day by day. It is felt that if we teach the word plainly, and clearly, and accurately, then individuals will be surely nurtured in the faith, and brought to maturity. Not necessarily. Again, we have the need of the sovereign working of the Holy Spirit, and the responsiveness of the individuals to his ministry through the word. And even in the case of the apostle, who preached clearly the gospel to them, we read, he was astonished that they have been removed from him so soon after the apostle was in their midst.

Now, will you notice also that he says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that calls you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." In other words, to turn away from the gospel is to turn away from Jesus Christ himself, because the gospel is a personal kind of gospel. When a man receives the gospel, he does not simply give credence to a doctrinal statement. But he responds to that statement and what that

statement signifies. So when you turn from the gospel, you turn from our Lord. For he is identified with his doctrines. This, of course, stresses the fact that we must have doctrine. It's important, and it's important that we preach doctrine clearly and plainly without equivocation. Where that is obvious in the teaching of the word of God. So when we move from truth in propositional form, we move from him of whom that truth speaks. "I marvel that you are so soon removed from him, because you've turned from this gospel." That is very important. Of course, we have not truly responded to the gospel until we've entered into a relationship with him. And when we turn from it, we turn from him. Please remember that.

Now, Paul does not say that the Galatians have already turned. He says that, "I marvel that ye are so soon," the verb is in the present tense, "That you are removing yourselves." Or I'm thinking better, as J.B. Lightford rendered it, "you are turning renegade from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." This word was used of military defection. It was also used of political defection. It was used of religious defection. It was used of philosophical defection, but I think in the light of the total context, that the idea that they were like military deserters or spiritual turncoats, is the thought that best suits this particular context. And as they were listening to the Judaizers proclaim their gospel, the Galatians began to be persuaded, and they were in process, the apostle says, turning renegade from him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel.

Do you know that that is possible? Do you know that it is possible for people to respond outwardly, and evidently to the gospel of the grace of God, and then to be swayed toward another gospel. I remember about twenty-five or thirty years ago, when I first began to preach, there was a young man who had tremendous influence upon the young people of this country. He had meetings much larger than Billy Graham, and they were friends. As a matter of fact, they were associated together in some of the same type of activities, with the same organization. This man had far more potential than Graham



ever had. He was a man of intellect, a man of skill, a man of ability, a man of gifts. That man today is a prominent man in his country, but he has totally abandoned the gospel of Jesus Christ. He has turned renegade from the faith, an apostate from the truth. And publicly says that, and yet great crowds, thousands of young people came, answered the invitations, and evidently or ostensibly, became believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. "I marvel that ye are so soon turning renegade from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." So they had begun with the gospel preached by the apostle, and now they are moving on their way to this different gospel. What a trip to take.

Now, we must have a little bit of a lesson in Greek here. The apostle says that they are "turning renegade toward another gospel, which is not another," in my text. The word "another" is given twice, but as many of you may know, these two words are different in the Greek text. One of them is heteros, from which we get such words as heterodoxy. That is a false or different opinion doxy, coming from docheo, which means "to think or to suppose" so that heterodoxy is false doctrine. Contrary to orthodoxy, which is straight thinking; or heterosexual, different in sex as over against homosexuality. And that is the first word. The apostle is saying he has called you in the grace of Christ. "I marvel that ye are so removing from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto a heteros gospel. That is a different gospel, which is not however, he says, another.

Now he uses another word here that means another, but not another of a different kind, as the preceding kind, another of the same kind. Let me illustrate, I have a fountain pen here. It's a very good fountain pen. I like it, and if I were speaking to you about fountain pens I might say to you I like this pen. It's done me good service. Furthermore, most of my capital is bound up in it, its silver. [Laughter] And I recommend you buy it. And you might say to me, "Why, Dr. Johnson, would you go with me while I buy one like it?" And so I would go, and I would put this down on the counter of the establishment and say, "We would like another pen." And he would go and get one just like it. That

would be allos in Greek, another of the same kind. The apostle says that this gospel that they were moving towards is not allos, not another of the same kind.

Now, on the other hand, I might be very displeased with this. Let's suppose that I were. And I might go back to the store and say, "This pen will not write at all." And I throw it down on the counter and say, "I want another pen." They would get the message. I don't want one like this, I want a different one. That would be heteros, a different pen, a different kind.

Now then, Paul is saying, "I marvel that ye are so turning renegade from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto a different gospel, a gospel of a different kind, which is not another of the same kind. There are not two gospels of the same kind. There is only gospel that is like the gospel of Jesus Christ. To illustrate it in another way, many years ago, I guess about twenty, someone put this in my hands. If you are far enough back you might just take a glance at it. It does look something like a dollar bill. This, however, is some advertisement put out by some capitalistic enterprises who were objecting to a cooperative. I took it. I don't know whether I took it because I agreed with the philosophy, which I do, or whether I just got it. But I saw in it an illustration. It says here, "Cooperative commonwealth. You pay 'em we dodge 'em. Federal income taxes. In tax exemption we trust." [Laughter] "One tax free buck," is what this is. "Roses are red, violets are blue, co-ops dodge taxes why can't you?" [Laughter] It says on the side.

And the comptroller who has signed it is "Soak D. Public." And the treasurer is "E. Z. Pickins." [Laughter] And it also says, "This co-op buck has no federal or state income tax liability." Well you can see that that is a piece of advertisement.

I used to say years and years ago, we used to be able to say our dollar, we used the expression, "its sound as a dollar." We can no longer use that expression. We have just seen the dollar just depreciate in value almost daily. In the old days, however, we used to have silver certificates, and gold certificates. And if worse came to worst and you

became disturbed you could take that to the bank or to the treasury, and they would give you in gold one dollar or five dollars or whatever the denomination of the bill might be. Now, this is a counterfeit. This was, ideally the real thing. There is a great difference between the counterfeit and the real thing. And the difference you can spell out in this particular way. The counterfeit lacks authority. This bill does not have any authority standing behind it whatsoever. It's a counterfeit. It's man made. It's not government authorized. It's under the ban. It's under the anathema. And if it were really an attempt to defraud, the individual caught could be put in jail, sentenced to a prison term.

The same thing is true of the gospel that is unauthorized by God. It does not have authority. When a man stands behind a pulpit like this and says that we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved, and be circumcised and keep the Law, he's giving us this kind of gospel. It's lacking in authority. It does not have the authority of heaven behind it. And consequently the person who proclaims it and those who receive it will discover that it is under the divine ban. But not only that, it's lacking in quality. Now, in the old days, silver was the metal of redemption. And silver, even today, has value. There stood behind our dollars, silver, real value. But behind a counterfeit there was nothing. And the same is true of our false gospels. They are counterfeits. There is nothing behind them that can be called quality. What they proclaim is not a true redemption. That is, a real deliverance from the penalty and power of sin. And furthermore, this has little utility.

Now, you may get away with a good counterfeit. You may fool some people with a good counterfeit. Many people do. But I know I wouldn't have much luck in passing this off for a dollar. It would have no utility whatsoever. It's a counterfeit. The same is true with the false gospels proclaimed by men. The genuine dollar, the real genuine dollar that used to have silver or gold back of it, was worth one hundred cents. The counterfeit was worth nothing. It wouldn't buy anything. You couldn't spend it. You cannot spend a false gospel when you get to heaven. It is worthless. It is counterfeit.

You may think, you may rely upon it, you may really be fooled, but you will discover, if that is your hope, that you have no hope in the final analysis.

So Paul tells us here, there is only one gospel. There is no another gospel of the same kind. When a man says that you must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved, and you are saved through faith on the principle of grace. And another man says you must believe on Jesus Christ, who offered atonement for sins, and you are saved on the basis of grace through faith and circumcision and keeping of the Law, those are different gospels. They are not the same gospel. One of them is a counterfeit of the other, and it is lacking in authority. It is lacking in utility. It is lacking in quality. And not only that, it comes under the curse of God. Now, the apostle is speaking strong language, of course, and so am I. I like to be apostolic. You know, in reading through the Epistle to the Galatians, I challenge you to do one thing. I challenge you to read through this epistle and find the basis upon which the Apostle Paul differed with these men.

Do you know that if we had one of the men over here on this side, and the Apostle Paul over here on this right side of, and if I were asking them questions, I could probably engage in a dialogue with them something like this? "Paul, do you believe that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament?" "Yes," he would say. And I would say to one of the Judaisers, "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament?" They would say, "Yes." I would say, "Do you believe, Paul, that a man comes to the knowledge of God through the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross." And I would turn to this man and say, "Do you believe this?" They both would say, "Yes." I would say, "Paul, do you believe in the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ?" And he would turn to me and say, "Lewis, for goodness sakes, you know I do." And I would turn to the other man, and I would say, "Do you believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ?" And he would say, "I do." And I would say to Paul, "Now, Paul, how do we receive the benefits of this work?" And he

would say, "We receive the benefits of this work through faith." And I would turn to this man, and I would say, "How do we receive the benefits of this work." And he would say to me, "Through faith, and circumcision, and keeping the Law."

Now, that might seem as if that's a very small difference. But that difference is the difference between heaven and hell, according to Paul. Because that's the difference between grace and Law. That's the difference between free grace and a works salvation. That's why the apostle is so stirred up over it. In other words, the issue between the two was not the work of Christ. The issue between the two is the terms upon which that work comes to be ours. "In other words," Stott points out, "you must let Moses finish what Christ has begun. Or rather, you yourself must finish, by your obedience to the law, what Christ has begun. You must add your works to the work of Christ. YOU MUST FINISH CHRIST'S UNFINISHED WORK." Heaven simply will not tolerate this doctrine.

When everybody gets to heaven, we're going to discover that there's one thing characteristic of everybody in heaven. Do you know what it is? They are members of Believers Chapel. No [Laughter] No, of course not. They're Baptists. No, of course not. They're Presbyterians. No. No doubt there will be members from all of these denominations, and from these churches. There is one thing that will be characteristic of everybody who is in heaven. They will all have some appreciation of grace, of grace. They will know that they don't deserve to be there. They will know that they are saved through grace. And so those who believed that we must believe in Jesus Christ who died for our sins, and do some work, even one authorized by Scripture, such as circumcision was, or baptism, that's a necessity for salvation; or believe in Jesus Christ and surrender; or believe in Jesus Christ and repent in the sense of, repent is all right understood correctly, in the sense of be sorry, weep, mourn, at an altar before you're saved; or believe in Jesus Christ out of your own free will.

Now, I want to tell you something. I consider it one of the greatest privileges that a man ever had to stand up in front of a congregation and set forth the gospel of Christ. I

want you to know that I often get down on my knees, and I'm not trying to present myself as a holy person before you. I am not. But I want you to know that I get down on my knees often and ask God, "Oh Father, help to proclaim the truth as you would have it proclaimed." I am very concerned about that. I wonder how in the world that God ever got it into his mind to lay his hand upon me to preach the gospel. I remember that Mr. Teleca once said that "There will be no clergyman," I do not claim to be a clergyman, I don't like, I think clergyman is contrary to Scripture. You understand that. But this is what he said. He said, "I don't think any clergyman will ever be heaven who is not constantly astonished that grace was shown to him." That really came home to me.

Well, I want to tell you something. About a month and a half ago, I said something here behind this pulpit concerning giving. You know what I said. You know the position of the chapel, and you know my own position that giving is voluntary. That giving is not to be pressure giving, and so on. You know all of the things that I believe are biblical, and the things that I believe are unbiblical; all of the kinds of pressure that Christians put on other Christians in order to make them give. Write them letters constantly; enclose self-addressed envelopes, etcetera, etcetera. You know the whole bit. Well, I told you, I think, that the next morning a young man came in to see me and said, and told me the story of his background. I had known a little bit of it. He said, "You know, Dr. Johnson, I heard what you said yesterday. I have always given in church because I felt I had to give. I was pressured constantly by appeals." He said, "You know Dr. Johnson, I don't think I've ever given anything in my life. And I want to give." So he started to give me a check. And I said, "No, I don't take checks like that." That doesn't mean that I wouldn't accept a gift, but in this case I didn't. I said, "No." I wouldn't take that. "Give it to the church. Give it to the chapel." And so after a little bit he went into a room after the interview was over, and I happened to be standing in the office at the time when he came back, put a check down on the desk in front of the church secretary, and inadvertently she took it and said a check for such and such amount. I knew his

background, and I don't know what his bank account is, but I don't think he's a wealthy man, and it was a large check. It was a gift in gratitude, he said, in gratitude.

Now, this morning after the message in which I talked about free will, he's not here now, this same man came in there. He had written all over his bulletin. He said, "I must talk to you." He said, "Do you mean to tell me that everybody in the audience is dead in trespasses and sins, and that consequently they cannot of their own free will respond to God, but that God in sovereign grace works in a congregation and among people, and moves in their will so that they respond in their will by the grace of God to him and that this is the motive for the preaching of the gospel? Do you mean to say," He said, "This is the way that I understand it from what you said. Do you mean to say that we cannot of our own free will render to him anything that pleases him, else there would be something in me that is acceptable to God naturally, and thus it would be a works salvation?" I said, "That is exactly what I've been saying." He said, "Suddenly today, as you were preaching, it dawned on me." I wish you could have seen his face. He comes from a charismatic background, incidentally. And it was just amazing, and he went out with the biggest smile on his face just shaking his head.

It reminded me of a statement Jim Boyce one made, that he felt that what he was "was a kind of man standing behind the pulpit throwing time bombs out into the audience [Laughter] and sooner or later there would be an explosion. [Laughter] And they would come to the realization that the Holy Spirit does work in the hearts of men. And he has worked in their heart, finally brought them to an understanding of grace. Now, I want you to know that I consider it the greatest privilege in the world to be the simple means of communicating important fundamental, eternal truths like that.

The apostle says, "It's not another gospel. There are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Legalists are always disturbances. And so, it was a disturbance, Paul says. They are perverting the gospel of Christ. And then, he goes on to speak about what one must do in reaction to this situation. In verse 8 he says, "But

though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Surprise and astonishment give way to hot indignation. I have said in the notes that Paul does not ride into town holding up the banner, "Make love, not war!" But rather, "Make war, not love" [Laughter] because there is a time when God is angry. And he was angry through his apostle with the Galatians for entertaining the idea of turning from the gospel of Christ. I once had a professor who said, "Paul wasn't interested plans of salvation. He was interested in personal relationships." How ridiculous can you get? Paul was interested in plans of salvation. He was interested in the plan of salvation.

Now, there are just a few points that I want to make before we close. In the first place, it is evident from the Apostle Paul's word in verses 8 and 9, that the outward form of a person does not validate his gospel. He says, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Even an angel cannot veer one iota from the message that Paul preached. And Paul says, "Even if I was to come back to you later and preach to you again, and give you a different gospel. Don't believe it." Luther said, and I think said real well, "What does not teach Christ is not apostolic even if Saint Paul and Saint Peter teach it. Again, what preaches Christ is apostolic even if Judas or Annus, or Pilate or Herod be the preacher." Now, that might seem strange, and that might seem severe. But that was Luther, and that happens to be correct. The apostle gives us an illustration of that. He said when he was in prison in Rome that there were two people preaching the gospel. Some were preaching out of contention, and some were preaching it out of good will. He was delighted that they were preaching. And even those who were trying to rub salt in his wounds by preaching Christ out of contention with Paul, he thanked God, nevertheless, that they did preach the gospel.

Further, any variation from the truth of the biblical gospel brings one under the divine curse. I want to stress that, because I do think that people are inclined to think



that Paul just made an intemperate outburst here, inconsistent with Christian love. No, the word accursed means just what it means and the apostle said it twice to let you know that it was not an intemperate outburst. It was the mind of God. Now, let me say to you that when anyone adds anything to the faith in the Christ who died, offering a penal substitutionary sacrifice, when anyone adds any other condition for salvation, three things happen. Number one, we invalidate the conception of grace in the plan of salvation. It's no longer grace. The only way in which the work of God can be received in grace is through faith, as the gift of God. Number two, we insult the work of Christ. We say he didn't really finish the work. We say he didn't do enough. And number 3 and you'll pardon the language, the Holy Spirit says to us, "Go to hell, let him be accursed." Don't miss the force of that. That's exactly what the Scripture is saying.

Well, the apostle answers the question of whether he was a seeker of favor with men or not in the 10th verse. And since our time is up, I want to conclude by just summarizing what I've been saying. There is, then, one gospel, it is the primitive gospel of the apostles, and to abandon it is to expose ourselves to the curse of the divine condemnation. To preach a different gospel is the worst thing that a teacher of the word of God could possibly do. And to receive a false gospel is the next worst thing that a person can do.

John Milton was one of the greatest masters of English literature that we have ever had. He wrote a poem called "Lycidas" and in that poem he described some bishops. He says they were "blind mouths." What a beautiful description. What is a bishop? Well, a bishop is an overseer. That's the meaning of the word. A bishop, an elder is a man who oversees the flock of God. But this bishop is blind. What does a bishop do? Well, a bishop oversees, and he's responsible for feeding the flock. But here is a bishop not interested in feeding the flock. But in being fed. Blind mouths, we have many of them today. They stand behind the pulpit; they are blind about spiritual things. They have not studied the word of God. They have not sought to find the mind of God. And they are

not so much concerned with feeding you with the meat and milk from the word of God, and they are getting from you. They are "blind mouths."

But Milton also had a description of you. He spoke of a congregation as "swollen with wind." Now, you may know that the word for Spirit in both Greek and Hebrew is also the word for wind. So these people were swollen with wind, this congregational. This man, in being a representative of the Spirit of God, had been blurring upon them the baleful breath of the wind that comes from the pit. And they were swollen not with Spirit, but with wind. Swollen, what's the point of that? Do you know that one of the signs that you are starving to death is that your belly becomes distended? So he spoke of the congregation as listening to wind. They were starving to death, and they also had the signs of it. Swollen with prosperity, swollen, apparently with things that really do matter. They looked as if they had it all, but in fact, they were starving to death. They were swollen with wind.

You know, in the Bible there are some wonderful expressions that illustrate life so beautifully, but we miss them because they are in the prophets. Who ever reads the prophets? They were great men. We're going to have a good time when we get to heaven and get acquainted with them. Hosea said concerning the priests, he said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. The priests are not feeding them with the word of God. And they increased they sinned against me, therefore, will I change their glory to shame." He said, "They eat up the sin of my people." You remember on Wednesday night, if you were here, I was talking about one of the offerings, in which when a person sinned, he brought his offering. He brought his animal, and he divided it up. After they slew the animal, the priests and the people divided it up. And incidentally, the priest got the choice parts. That's kind of interesting isn't it? One of the reasons is, of course, that they were not able to work. And so they got the choice parts, and it was that they lived upon. It was an evidence that God thinks highly of the preaching of the word

of God. And incidentally, the people in this country have historically thought highly of that.

But the priests then could take the other parts that they didn't use and sell them, and sustain themselves. But things had gotten so bad in Israel that when a priest looked out and saw an Israelite coming with his animal. Instead of looking up to God and saying, "Oh God, another one of the saints has sinned against Thee, Lord help me to minister." He would look out and he would say, "Oh brother, roast beef for supper." [Laughter] "They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity." Blind mouths and a congregation swollen with wind. The substance of the gospel is the message concerning the Lord Jesus, the work of the cross, and the principle is the principle of grace. That is why we proclaim to you that a man is unable to believe of his own free will. It only after the Holy Spirit has worked in his heart that he is able to respond to the gospel. And then in responding we give the praise and the glory to God, because salvation is of the Lord. It is what Christ has done, and what the Holy Spirit has done in our hearts in bringing us to faith in him.

What a wonderful gospel, which so magnifies the grace of our Lord Jesus and his cross, gives him the dignity that belongs to him, magnifies our great heavenly Father in heaven, and degrades us to the place where we really are naturally, and then magnifies his grace in what he does with us through the saving work of the Lord Jesus. Making us new creatures in Christ. If you're here this morning and you have never believed in our Lord Jesus. We call upon you through the grace of God through the power of the Holy Spirit to recognize your sinful condition, your lost estate, that you are under sin, under condemnation, and headed for a Christ-less eternity. May God help you to see yourself as you are, and to see our Lord Jesus as the one who has offered the sacrifice that atones for sin, which atones for you on the principle of grace, to be received through faith. Why don't you turn from trust in your good works, in your church, in your baptism, in your upper religious ordinances, in your activities, and trust in him that has accomplished the

once and for all work that enables us to have everlasting life. May God help you to come to Christ. Shall we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for these warnings that have come from the Apostle Paul. Oh God, help us to proclaim the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of our great God. And Father, for any who may be here who do not know him whom to know is life eternal. Oh work in their hearts. Help them to see themselves, then to see the Lord Jesus and come to him. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.