



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Galatians 1:6-10

"Paul, His Gospel, and Thomas Jefferson"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We'll turn in your Bibles to the 9th chapter of the Book of Acts. And I want to read a passage from the Book of Acts. And then our Scripture reading in the Epistle to the Galatians, because the background of the account that Paul gives us in Galatians chapter 1, is really found in Acts chapter 9. So Acts chapter 9 and I'm going to begin reading right after the account of Paul's conversion, and then his meeting with Ananias. And we'll read from verse 18. "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus."

Incidentally, you will notice that it was customary for believers in those days to come to a faith in Jesus Christ, then to be baptized in water, and then to begin to meet with the disciples regularly in the locality where they were living. That is, in general, the pattern that seems to emerge through the whole of the Book of the Acts. And so far as I know, is really the proper pattern in the Christian church today. When we come to faith, we are baptized in water in testimony to that faith. And then begin to meet with the

disciples, observing the Lord's Supper, hearing the ministry of the word, and having the relationships that are helpful to us in the Christian life.

Now, the apostle describes some of the things that happened right after this, and they fit in very nicely with the things that we will read about in a moment in Galatians. "And immediately he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?" Now, evidently the visit that Paul made to Arabia, which is not described by Luke, occurred between the 21 and 22nd verses of this chapter. Perhaps between the 22 and 23, but we will just say for the sake of simplicity that at this point Paul went to Arabia.

Now, in Galatians it will say, "He returned to Damascus," and we pick up in verse 22, the account. "But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying wait was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem," now we will read in the Galatians account that he went up to Jerusalem to visit Peter. And evidently at this point, these two accounts again are to be harmonized.

"He tried to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus."

And again, we will read in Galatians 1 that he went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, Tarsus was in that area. And so that is to be placed at this point in the account. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." Let's turn now to Galatians chapter 1, and we shall read beginning at verse 11 of the apostle's account. Beginning at verse 11, the apostle writes,

"But I make known to you, brethren that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation concerning Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. And when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter."

This word "see" means to visit with Peter. I was listening to a tape not long ago by Dr. Vernon McGee. And in the course of it he said that we wished that he had a tape recording of this particular session. Well, I think we all would have wanted to have a tape recording of it. It surely would have been interesting to hear what they said. I'm not a scientist, but I understand that all sound waves really keep on moving. And that if we had the proper instruments, we could recall everything that had ever been said from the time that men spoke in the Garden of Eden. So perhaps, since light waves and sound

waves still move, we may ultimately be able to sit down in heaven and not see a movie of the western world, but a movie of everything that has transpired from the beginning of time. Maybe that's one of the bases of the judgment at the judgment seat of Christ, and at the great white throne judgment, that God will just have pass before our eyes our whole life, including everything that we have said. So maybe one day we will have a recording of what happened in the house when Peter and Paul had that visit.

Paul said "he abode with him fifteen days." Now, that was not long, because he also engaged in other activity as Acts points out. "But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." Incidentally, that may indicate that he considered James the Lord's brother to be an apostle, because he had seen the resurrected Christ. It is an interesting little statement. The apostle does not say that, and it may be wrong to infer that, but that may be a proper inference.

"Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word. Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Our heavenly Father, we are indeed grateful and thankful for this lovely day, for this unusual season of the year in which we still think, even if not so directly as in the ages past, of the life and ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we look around, Lord, upon life in this Western world of which we are a part. We recognize the fading significance of the Lord Jesus Christ in the minds and thoughts of the citizens of these countries in the west. We think back over the years, and think of the marvelous

way in which Thou hast blessed this western world. And we are disappointed when we see that our society has so largely become a spiritually superficial and artificial kind of society.

But we thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast in Thy wonderful grace enabled us to know whom who to know is life eternal. And we thank Thee for the calling that Thou hast given to us to be as salt in our society. As lights in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation, to use the expressions of Scripture. We know our failings. We have failed so often. We pray, O Lord, that Thou will strengthen us, and give us spiritual courage to truly represent the Lord Jesus Christ. Deliver us from fear and cowardice, how reprehensible to say that we belong to him and hide our lights under a bushel.

Lord, we pray that by Thy marvelous grace, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that Thou will give all of us who hear these words, including me, courage, spiritual wisdom to represent the Lord Jesus Christ. To say the word that will be fruitfully used by the Holy Spirit, to do that which will be used by him, and particularly at this time of year when some people's thoughts consider, perhaps after a long absence, Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for him, for the blood that was shed for us, for the assurance of the forgiveness of our sins, how marvelous that is. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for this morning is, "Paul, His Gospel, and Thomas Jefferson." Thomas Jefferson was the third President of the United States. He was the drafter of the Declaration of Independence. Many have considered him to be one our greatest presidents. There is no question but that Mr. Jefferson was a weird and erratic theologian. He admitted that he was not a total follower of Jesus Christ. He said that Jesus took the side of "Spiritualism," to use his term, while he himself was a Materialist." He admitted that Jesus preached the efficacy of repentance for forgiveness of sins, while he, Jefferson, required what he called a "counterpoise of good works to redeem it."

After these damaging admissions, the religious mountebank of Monticello added a few words about the gospel authors, and especially the Apostle Paul. He wrote in a letter to a man by the name of Mr. Short, "Among the sayings and discourses imputed to him," that is Jesus, "by his biographers, I find many passages of fine imagination, correct morality, and of the most lovely benevolence; and others, again, of so much ignorance, so much absurdity, so much untruth, charlatanism and imposture, as to pronounce it impossible that such contradictions should have proceeded from the same being. I separate, therefore, the gold from the dross; restore to him the former, and leave the latter to the stupidity of some, the roguery of others of his disciples. Mr. Jefferson is calling Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John "stupid," and "rogues."

The words that follow concerning the Apostle Paul are probably the most amazing of all, because after delivering himself of this diatribe against the apostles and the disciples who were earlier apostles of our Lord. This is Mr. Jefferson's assessment of the Apostle Paul. He says, "'Of this band of dupes and imposters, Paul was the great Coryphaeus, and the FIRST CORRUPTOR OF THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS.'" Well, one day we shall see who is corrupt and who is not corrupt, because at the Great White Throne Judgment God will determine who is corrupt and who is not corrupt. And I have the conviction deep down within that the Apostle Paul will be vindicated, and Mr. Jefferson devastated by what happens then.

Jefferson's views are not original with him. They were the views of many of the theologians of his day. And they are the views of many theologians still today. In fact, their views so closely dovetail with one another that you wonder if they have not read one another. One of my teachers was James S. Stewart of the University of Edinburgh. Dr. Stewart is still living, but retired. And he referred to these claims that modern theologians have made concerning the Apostle Paul, and he has written, I think, in beautiful language, the situation as they have set it forth concerning the Apostle Paul and the teaching of our Lord Jesus. "These modern theologians," Mr. Stewart has said, "Say in

effect that God sent His Son to be a solution: Paul made Him a problem. Jesus bade men consider the lilies, and trust like little children: Paul spoke of justifying faith. Jesus had a cross, Paul a doctrine of atonement. Therefore, it is said, let us away from the Christ of dogma to the Christ of history. Eliminate the Pauline elements, and the gospel in its pristine purity will appear. "Back to Jesus! is the cry." That is very common. We still find vestiges of it in contemporary theology. We have seen many who have looked at the apostle's language and they have not liked it because the apostle is very direct and plain, and teaches that men are lost under the guilt and condemnation of sin. And that there is only one way of salvation, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

They had not believed that Paul had gotten his doctrine from God. They rather liked to say that Paul got his doctrine from men. And being men, they want to find out exactly what strand of doctrine is responsible for the apostle's teaching. H.J. Holtzman the grand master of liberal theology said that Paul's theology was "the objectivizing of an interpersonal experience on the Damascus road, derived from Greek influences." Reitzenstein, another well-known liberal scholar, said in the earlier part of this century that "Paul was a mystic cynic, giving out speculations from Gnostic Hellenism." Rudolf Bultmann said that Paul's teaching came from the heathen religions also. That's the question, I think, that comes before us, ultimately in these words that we are looking at this morning. Was Paul's gospel the product of his own fertile brain, derived from hints and ideas from Greek influences, or Gnostic Hellenism, or even forms of Hellenistic Judaism. Did he, as Mr. Stott says, "Did he crib it," or did it come from God? Is Paul a philosopher who has given us a system of truth, a system of theology, and while basing it in some ways upon the teaching of Jesus, is Paul one who has actually corrupted the gospel? Is it true that the teaching of the Lord Jesus is so different that we can call it the simple gospel, whereas in the Apostle Paul we have the "mystifications of a professional theologian?"

Now, the Apostle Paul is very plain in what he says. He says he got his message from God. He doesn't say that he got it from men. He says that he got it from God. So the issue is joined. Harnack, another very well-known German church historian, one of the most learned men of the 20th century, though he lived decades ago, said, "That there was only one man, Marcion, who understood Paul, and he misunderstood him. Now, that would seem to indicate that Mr. Harnack believed that the apostle's doctrine was unique. That is, he did not derive it from any doctrine that was floating around in the days in which he was living.

But let's listen to Paul, after all, we should give him the benefit of the doubt, and let him say where he got his word. We know from the first verse of the Galatian Epistle that he claims that got his office from God. He says, "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.)" SO that as far as his office is concerned, he claims that he got it from God. He is not an apostle of men. He is not a representative of any church. He is not a representative of any synod. He is not a representative of any convention. He is a representative of God, directly.

Now, he will look at this gospel, and he will tell us, essentially, that his gospel is no human word. First he tells us what it is not, then he tells us what it is. He's a man of negatives. So we have learned. In the 11th verse he writes, "But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man." Now, what he means by that is simply that it is not in accordance with human traditions. It is not a gospel based upon some human authority. It is not a gospel derived from some creed, though the creed may be very good. Incidentally, there are good creeds. There is the Westminster Confession of Faith. The soteriological parts of it, with which I agree, totally, whole-heartedly. That statement is a very good statement of what Jesus Christ accomplished in his death on the cross. I recommend it to you. There are the canons of the Synod of Dordrecht. In their soteriological expressions, they express exactly what I

believe and teach concerning the person and work of our Lord Jesus. The nature and the extent of the atonement is set forth beautifully in both of these doctrines. And I agree with them.

There are other good historical documents. Some of Reform persuasion, some of Lutheran persuasion. And of course, we all have creeds. Now, we may not have a written creed. We may have a spoken creed, but all of us believe something. That's what a creed is. And we may publish it, or we may not publish it. There are people who say, "I don't believe in creeds." But now, of course, that happens to be their creed, [Laughter] even though they don't realize it. We all have our creeds. Now in Believers Chapel we have no doctrinal statement. We don't want you to understand by that that we are saying that we don't have a creed. We do have a creed. We have one of our elders who loves to have one of the seminary students come and ask for the doctrinal statement. He knows that they are usually coming to fulfill some class requirements from a professor. And usually the assignment is something like this, "Take one of the churches in the community, and find out everything you can about it. Notice its doctrinal statement, its book of church order, and set up its organizational chart." And then we'll write a paper on it, or else we'll discuss it in class, and so on.

And some of the young men come, who are just out of college or university, and don't know a whole lot about the Scriptures or any of these questions. And they come up to this elder who is one of our more prominent elders, and they'll say, "Mr. So and So, I have got a class requirement. And the professor has asked me to get the doctrinal statement of Believers Chapel. Do you have a doctrinal statement, and could I have a copy of it?" And he loves to have a student ask that, because he takes his Bible and just hands him his Bible [Laughter] in order to watch the face of the student. Of course, he's trying to express the fact that our creed is the word of God.

Now, that is the creed that we seek to live by, and to preach by in Believers Chapel. That is our creed. Abraham Kuyper, one of the greatest thinkers of the 19th and

20th centuries, says, "There was nothing wrong with making a creed. The only thing wrong is in ceasing to make them." Now, Mr. Kuyper held very strongly to certain creeds, such as the Belgic Confession, and the canons of the Synod of Dordrecht. But Dr. Kuyper realized that creeds tend to become immutable and ossified, like the immutability of the persons of the trinity. And unfortunately when a creed becomes so immutable that it cannot be modified in any way. Then it has replaced the word of God. And we have learned in history that that is a very bad thing, because not only do individuals err, but counsels and creeds also may err. There's nothing wrong with a creed, so long as we realize that it is something that may be tested and examined, and corrected by the word of God.

Some of the creeds have demonstrated, by the fact that they existed for hundreds of years, that they are good creeds, and largely in harmony with the teaching of the word of God. In years past, I have had individuals come to me, and ask me to preach on certain creeds. In fact, in one of the first churches in which I preached regularly, I was asked by the elders to preach on the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Apostles Creed. And I refused to do it. Not because I didn't agree with a great deal in those creeds, but I don't think it is a good practice to preach on secondary sources. I think it is much better to preach on the primary sources.

Now the apostle says that the gospel that he derived was not after men. In other words, it is something that came from God. Further he says, "Neither received it of man." Now, what he means by that is that he was like the twelve. Incidentally, there is a little emphasis in the Greek text at that point, on the "I," for *I* neither received it of man." In other words, I was like the twelve. My gospel came to me directly, just as the Lord Jesus revealed himself directly to Peter and James and John, and the others, so I received my message directly. "Nor was I taught it," he says. I was not like Apollos who was taught the truth. And I was not like Timothy who was taught by his grandmother, and also his mother. I received the truth by the revelation of Jesus Christ. I understand that,

incidentally, to mean that it was by God, through Jesus Christ and about Jesus Christ that his message came. In other words, it was God the Father who directed our Lord Jesus in the revelation to the Apostle Paul, and that revelation was a revelation concerning him. In a moment he will say that God separated him, and revealed his Son in Paul. And I think that is what he has in mind when he says that he got his gospel then, "From the Lord Jesus by revelation."

Now, I don't have time to speak about some of the details of this. I suggest that you read the Believers Bible Bulletin for today, in which I have added a paragraph or so about a question that might arise at that point. This is really the proposition that Paul has set before us in these verse. "My gospel is not of human derivation. It is a gospel that has come from God, through the revelation that has to do with Jesus Christ." Now, that of course, demands proof. The Judaisers, evidently, had said that the Apostle Paul is a dependent apostle, and he has his authority simply because he is under the apostles from Jerusalem, and they are directing him.

Now, the apostle wants to make plain that his gospel is a gospel that is independent of the apostles in Jerusalem. The Judaisers claim to come from Jerusalem, and since, in their mind, Jerusalem had an authority over the Apostle Paul, they therefore were seeking to establish their understanding of Christian doctrine in the Galatian churches as over against the message that they had received from the Apostle Paul. So Paul is anxious to show his independency, that he stands by virtue of his own personal relationship to the Lord Jesus, which took place on the Damascus Road. So that's his proposition. "My gospel is not after men. I did not receive it from man. I was not taught it by any man. It came to me by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Now, to prove it he says, I want you to look at my past before I was converted. I want you to look at the time when I was converted and what happened. And then I want you to notice my activities after my conversion. And I think you will see that there is no relationship to Jerusalem that can account for the message that I have received, and that I

preach. So proof number one, the evidence of his life before his conversion. He says in the 13th and 14th verses, "You my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, why I spent my time persecuting the church of God and wasting it. I profited in the Jews religion above many of my equals in mine own nation. I was more exceedingly zealous of the traditions than my contemporaries. I was a rabbinic student par excelos. Now if you look at my life and see it in that light, I think that you will see that you cannot account for the fact that I was a persecutor of the church, and now am a preacher of the faith that I once destroyed. Apart from a direct relationship with God through Jesus Christ. There is not way to explain this turn around in my experience if you examine my life, apart from divine intervention." That's proof number one.

Then proof number two, he turns to the evidence from his life at his conversion. And here we have on of the most beautiful pictures of prevenient grace. Up to now, everything has been of man, but at this point God intervenes in the life of the apostle. And he writes, "And it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb." What a beautiful expression that is. Everything has been "I, I, I," but now we read "God, he, God." And he claims to be a kind of second Jacob, a kind of second Jeremiah, Jacob and Esau struggled within the womb of Rebecca, and the result was that God made a prophecy. He said, "Two nations are in your womb. Two people shall come out of you, but the elder shall serve the younger. And later on in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, that is filled out and expanded in biblical doctrine to teach what the Apostle Paul puts the capstone in Romans chapter 9, saying, "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated." People look at that text, incidentally, and say, "How is it possible for God to hate Esau?" That's not the problem of that text; the problem of that text is not how God is able to hate Esau. The problem of the text is how he is able to love Jacob. "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated." It was by the electing grace of God, the Apostle Paul states in Romans chapter 9, that we read, "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated." Like it or not,

that's what Paul says it is. He's a second Jeremiah, upon whom God put his hand long before he was born, and made him a prophet of the nations.

So here Paul says, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from," that from is temporal incidentally, "from the time my mother's womb, and called me by his grace." What he's talking about is the doctrine of election, the doctrine of predestination, whatever you want to call it by. It's the doctrine that God works before our salvation. There are people who do not like this, but let me assure you that if we do not have a doctrine of election, if we do not have a doctrine of predestination, we do not have any ultimate assurance of our own salvation. And furthermore, we rob God of the glory of his grace, we rob him of the glory of his free mercy extended to men in saving them, and we rob him from the glory of the humility that comes to true believers who realize that God, for no reason in themselves, has saved them by his grace. What a great comfort that is. And let me assure you that when the trials and tragedies of life come, one of the greatest sources of strength for the person in difficulty is the assurance of the electing grace of God that goes all the way back to the counsels of eternity. And sustains and upholds us. "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,"

There was a famous theologian of a few years back who said, "We shall never be clearly persuaded as we ought to be that our salvation flows from the well-spring of God's free mercy until we come to know his eternal election, which illumines God's grace by this contrast, that he does not indiscriminately adopt all into the hope of salvation. But gives to some what he denies to others. Those who are blind to the three benefits of this doctrine, God's free mercy, God's glory, our sincere humility would wish the foundation of our salvation to be removed from our midst, and would very badly serve the interests of themselves and all other believers." And he goes on to say, "In this one discovers the very origin of Christ's church." And then he says, "Let us resort to the election of God, whenever we become dismayed or cast down. If we see men fall away, if the whole

church should seem to come to naught. We must remember that God hath his foundation. That is, the church is not grounded upon the will of man, for they did not make themselves, neither can they reform themselves, but this proceedeth from the pure goodness and mercy of God." Then he says, "This useful doctrine ought to be preached fully and freely." I do believe that.

This past week I got a call from a young preacher. He is one of the most promising of the younger preachers that know, and an excellent Bible teacher. He has, in recent years, come to understand something of these things that this man has been speaking about here. And he's in a church in another city in the State of Texas. And there are a few people in the audience who have not heard this kind of teaching before, and they are rebelling against it, a few of them. Fortunately, many are responding. One man happens to be a mutual friend of ours, a man whom I have known for many years, a very fine man. But he has just recently left the church, and my young preacher friend was telling me about it. He was not upset over it, because he realized what was transpiring. And this man had been nice enough to write a letter to the Board of Elders and tell them why he was leaving the church. He said that it was because of the preaching of the doctrines of the sovereignty of God that he was leaving. And in the course of our conversation he said that, "I ran across him on the street just last week, and we had a nice conversation." He has gone to another church, and incidentally, the two churches are pastored by two young men who come from the same theological seminary.

And I asked him, "Well, what did he say?" Because the other man, as far as I know, had some ideas of the sovereignty of God, too. He said, "Well, he made a very interesting statement. I asked him how he was doing at the other church. And he said, 'Well, I'm doing pretty good. I'm getting along pretty well, but to tell you the truth, I think that this other preacher believes most of the things that you believe. But,' he said, 'he's not quite so anxious as you are to make them clear.'" [Laughter] Now, I think if I had been that man, I would have turned around and gone right back to the first church

again. I want to go where the man makes them clear, if I have a choice. Particularly if they are supposed to believe the same thing. I was amazed at that statement.

But anyway, the apostle made them very clear. And of course, he made his enemies, that's why they called him the person who was the first corrupter of the doctrines of Jesus. Because he made it very plain that men are saved through grace, by the sovereign mercy of God. Now, Paul goes on to say, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me." Now, I think if you look at this you cannot help but see that what the apostle is speaking about is a personal, meaningful, subjective revelation, which became the life and message of the Apostle Paul. "To reveal his son in me," there are some who have translated that "through me," but I think in the light of the context, and particularly the clause that follows, we must understand this in this personal intimate way. What Paul is saying is that God came to him on the Damascus Road, and through that experience on the Damascus Road, he was brought to a conviction of his union with Jesus Christ.

Evidently, what happened was something like this, he heard the Lord say, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" If he thought about that, he might have asked, "I have not persecuted you, I've persecuted them, but I have not persecuted you." And then remembering that our Lord was telling the truth it finally dawned on him that to church the God, the true believers, was to touch the Lord. And when he said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" It was true that when he touched one of the believers he touched Jesus Christ, because there is a union that exists between the Lord Jesus and those that are in him. And out of that arose Paul's great doctrine of our Lord as the representative man who has died, who has been buried, who has been raised again. And in his life, death, and resurrection, he has united with himself his own people, and passed them through that experience to the right hand of the throne of God, so that our standing, ultimately, is in our great representative, the last Adam.

Now, that is an amazing truth, of course, and it is the heart of the Pauline theology, our union with Christ and what he has done for believers. When I was going through theological seminary Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer used to like to make a great deal over our Lord's statement in John 14:20, "Ye in me, and I in you." In fact, he said that simply little statement, made up primarily of monosyllabic words, contained the heart of the Pauline theology. "Ye in me, and I in you." What a strange thing, a kind of mutual abiding. "Ye in me, I am in Christ, and yet he is in me." What a strange thing. Mutual abiding. It's the language of an element. It's the language of fire. It's the language of water. It's the language of the earth. Botanically it's true, because the vine and the branch grow into one another. And our Lord said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," as an illustration of it. But particularly do we see it in the elements. Take a poker; put a poker in fire, and soon the fire is in the poker. Or a bird in the air. A bird flies in the air, but air is in the bird. Or a fish in water and water is in the fish. Or a plant in the soil and the properties of the soil are in the plant. It's the language of an element. It's the language of union that is of the closest character, "to reveal his Son in me."

Incidentally, the order is very important, "Ye in me." That's our position. "I in you." That's our state. "Ye in men," that's our position or standing. And "I in you," that's our power. "Ye in me," the basis of our justification. "I in you," the basis of our sanctification. It is true, these little statements that the Lord Jesus made are very important, and Paul speaks about the same thing. Then he says that, "To reveal his Son in me that I might preach him among the Gentiles." "In me, but for them," ultimately. Mr. Spurgeon, as you know, was noted for his preaching. There was a time in his life when his father, who was also a preacher, asked him to make plans to go to theological school, because he thought that it might help him to gain prestige and prominence.

And an interview was arranged with Dr. Joseph Angus, who was the principle of a school in London. Well, through some circumstances that are rather strange, Mr. Spurgeon went to meet the appointment, and Mr. Angus did too, but they were not able to meet. And

later on, as Mr. Spurgeon left, when he found out that Mr. Angus had to leave, he was walking home, and he said he heard a voice clearly say to him in his inner man, "Seekest thou great things for thyself, seek them not." Words from Jeremiah. And from that time on, he devoted himself to the preaching of the word.

I fully believe that the most important thing that any Christian can do is the proclamation of the word of God. And of course, if God has laid his hand upon you to teach his word, and preach his word, that is the highest calling to which a man can attain. Or the highest calling that a man can receive from God. From that calling, you would have to stoop to be a king or a president. And the Apostle felt that way about it. God had revealed his Son in him for the purpose that he should preach him among the Gentiles. What an amazing privilege it is. I never cease to marvel at the fact that God has allowed me to say one word in behalf of his Son Jesus Christ.

George Cutting is a man who is best known for the fact that he's the author of a little pamphlet. You usually find it in tract racks of Christian churches. It's entitled, "Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment." Mr. Cutting was just a simple Christian man who went around preaching the gospel. He was also a business man, as I remember, and one day he was bicycling through Norfolk in England. He was an Englishman. And he said it was early in the morning, and as he was going through, he was a very quiet man, he suddenly gained from the Lord the distinct impression that he should shout out a Bible verse. And so, right in the midst of this small town, there were just a few houses around, he shouted out "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He said he cycled on a little bit longer, and the Lord seemed to say definitively to him, "Say it again." So he said he shouted out, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

Six months later he was visiting in that little village, and he was doing, as he frequently did, just knocking on door after door. His first question, he said, was always, "Are you saved?" That's called the direct approach. [Laughter] So a woman opened the

door and he said, "Are you saved?" And she said, "Oh yes. About six months ago I was in great distress of soul. I plead with God to help me, and even while I was calling upon him, I heard a voice cry out, 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.'" And she said, "I was startled. I wondered if I had really heard right." She said, "I prayed again to the Lord, and I said, 'Lord if that is the message, repeat it again.'" [Laughter] And she said, "And I heard it again and I trusted Christ, and I'm saved." And Mr. Cutting had the joy of telling her that it was he who had called out the verse. That's preaching. You know, when Paul tells us to be instant in season and out of season. And imagine there were lots of citizens in that little village who thought that it was very much out of season to hear a Bible verse shouted out early in the morning from one of their streets. But it was in season for that lady.

Now, Paul says that when he received this message from the Lord to preach him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, but went into Arabia." That in itself is designed to let his readers know that he did not get his message from Jerusalem, contrary to what we might think. After all, he's now been brought to faith, what do you do? Well, you go up to the Jerusalem theological seminary and study under the apostles. No, God said no, "I want you to go out into Arabia." Now, the fathers, incidentally, they said he went out into Arabia "flaming with zeal for the lost." The only difficulty with that is that there were very few people out there for the apostle to preach to. And he does say here, "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." So we assume that the apostle went out in order to be alone. He was a professional theologian but of the Judaism, and it was necessary for him to make a new arrangement of his theology. He had to revise. He had to look at the Old Testament in the light of the fulfillment in Jesus Christ. And it took him time to put those things of the Old Testament in to harmonization with the things that he had now learned concerning the Lord Jesus. And it's always good to get off by yourself and think through spiritual things for yourself.

And furthermore, it takes time to become a preacher of the gospel, even for someone like the Apostle Paul, who knew that Old Testament and had that experience with the Lord.

It was President Garfield, when he was President of Hiram College, who was advising some parents and a young man on their course of study at that small college. And he was setting out a very demanding schedule. And they said, "Well, can't you set out something easier. "That's going to be hard, and that's going to take a long time." And he reminded them that it took a long time for something like an oak tree to grow. But he said, "In six weeks you can make a squash." If we really are going to be something for the Lord, it's going to take time. And the apostle conferred not with flesh and blood.

Well, for the sake of time, the last of the proofs is evidence from his life after conversion, and he simply says, "I did not go up to Jerusalem, except for one short visit, in which I spoke only to Peter and James. And consequently, you cannot account for the message that I proclaim from that short visit. And then I went off into Syria, and into Cilicia and spent years in the ministry of the word of God, and was actually unknown by face to the churches in Judea, only they were saying that the person who had persecuted us in time past, now preaches the faith which one he destroyed. And they, those Judaists in Jerusalem, they were glorifying God in me. Now, that's a word to the Judaisers. If you Judaisers, who are afflicting the Galatian churches, were really followers of Jerusalem, you would glorify God in me too.

Paul's gospel then, is it from God or is it from men? Paul says it's from God, and furthermore, he states in the 20th verse, "Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not." Now, I have no question that Thomas Jefferson was a nice, gentlemanly, sweet kind of man. In some ways he was a vile character incidentally. If you study Jefferson's life you will find that to be true. But let's assume that he was a nice courteous man, but a nice, courteous man does not necessarily preach the truth of God. Take the philosophers and theologians, or take especially the theologians.

There was a man by the name of Brader, who has greatly influenced Christianity in the 20th century. Brader said Paul's teaching was from a mythological redeemer and redemptionist speculation. That was characteristic of his time. Holtzman said that Paul got his teaching from Greek influences. Reitzenstein said that he got his teaching from Gnostic Hellenism. W.D. Davies said he got it from Pharisaic rabbinism. If these gentlemen were on the platform, we might well say to them, Professor Brader, you say that Paul got his teaching from mythological redeemer and redemptionist speculations of his time. Paul says he got his teaching from God. Furthermore, Paul says "Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not." Professor Holtzman, you say he got his teaching from Greek influences. Mr. Reitzenstein, you say he got his things from Gnostic Hellenism. Professor Davies, you say that he got his teaching from Pharisaic rabbinism. Paul says he got it from God. Now, somebody's lying. There is no middle ground. Paul says he got it from God, you deny that. You say he got it from these things. Now, if somebody's lying, and somebody has to belying, because Paul said he's telling the truth, he's either lying or he's telling the truth, there is no middle ground.

And my friends, there is no middle ground with regard to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul has told us there is one way to God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and he has said that he is not lying. There is not middle ground. Either Paul is lying or he is telling the truth. And I am persuaded that the history of the Christian church and the history of the experiences of men down through the years has vindicated the Apostle Paul. Paul did tell the truth, and it was Thomas Jefferson who lied. It was Brader who was lying. It was Holtzman who was lying. It is Paul who has told us the truth.

Now, if that is true, and if Paul is telling the truth, then there is only one response to the message of the apostle, and that is to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. Does salvation come by praying through? No. Does salvation come by paying the church? No. Does salvation come by good works? No. Does salvation come through religion? No. Does salvation come through some religious ritual which we practice, baptism, or sitting

at the Lord's Table? No. Does salvation come through the organization of the Christian church? No. You must be born again. Or, as Paul puts it, in the 3rd chapter in the 6th verse, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." If you are here this morning and you have never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, we call upon you to come to him in faith, trusting him who has offered a sacrifice for sinners. May God so work in your heart that you respond in faith, casting aside all of your human trust, and anything in which you may have put your trust. And casting yourself upon the atoning work of the Lord Jesus. May God help you to come to him. May we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we ask Thy blessing upon each one present. We praise Thee that the atoning sacrifice has been offered in the blood of Christ, and that that is sufficient ransom for all of our sins. O God, through the Holy Spirit, in wonderful prevenient grace, bring the lost to Thyself. Now grace, mercy, and peace go with us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.