

Galatians 2:11-21

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[0 : 00] You have your Bibles showing me to the book of Galatians. We're in Galatians chapter 2. Galatians chapter 2. This morning we will start in verse 11 and go down to verse 21. So Galatians 2 starting in verse 11 to verse 21 which gets us to the end of the chapter.

A couple of weeks ago or several weeks now we introduced this study going through the book of Galatians. And we have looked at the reality of it that this is one of the earliest writings of Paul. And Paul is writing to a church which knew him very well.

As a matter of fact the church knew him so well that he is the one who began this church with the proclamation of the gospel. He was there. He proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ. People came to faith in Jesus Christ in the Galatian region.

He started new churches. A multitude of churches. Not just a single church. He started those churches and then he stayed around long enough to raise up elders and leaders for those churches. Elders just being another word for pastors.

That is we find in scripture Paul writing to the number of the multiplicity of elders that he left behind in each local church. And that he was raising up teachers and preachers and overseers and administrators.

[1 : 07] And he was raising all these up. So when Paul left he left behind a healthy body of believers. Paul was a man of great diligence. He would not only proclaim the truth.

He fulfilled what Christ commanded to do. He made disciples. He taught these believers, these new believers, everything he had been taught. And he showed them the administration of what Jesus Christ means in their life.

And he would leave behind not just a ragtag group of believers who might know the truth. He would leave behind healthy churches who in turn could make more disciples. He was really concerned with disciples making disciples.

He wanted to see the kingdom of heaven grow by multiplication not just by addition. So he would leave behind these churches. And because of that he bore a care and a concern for these churches.

If you ever talk to a pastor, someone other than me, someone who has pastored a number of churches. There are some dear friends of mine. They've pastored a number of churches. And they will tell you in a moment of truthfulness that they are still very much concerned about every church they've ever pastored.

[2 : 10] Because while pastoring that church, it could have been there for a short time or it could have been there for an extended time. But they invested what they thought was God's desire and God's design for the people.

And they care about how they continue on. They care about how they progress in the faith. It is not that they have a longing to go back. It's just they bear a concern for the believers they left behind. And Paul was the same way. He said, I bear a concern for every church. We know that he was concerned about the church at Rome that he would write to the Roman believers even though they didn't know him. So when Paul wrote this first letter, probably, we don't know if it's absolutely true, but more than likely the first letter he wrote to a church, he was writing to believers to encourage them in the gospel.

And he was really defending the truthfulness of the gospel, of the good news of Jesus Christ. His concern and his aim, before we ever approach a section of scripture, we need to know what it's there for.

Right? We need to know why God led someone, why he moved by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit to move the thoughts in the pen of Paul to write a letter that he would preserve until it came down to us.

[3 : 18] Because Paul wrote other letters that we do not know anything of. We have two letters that Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, but we know in those letters, Paul also references an earlier letter to which we have no idea where it's at.

There are other writings of Paul that we don't know. Paul was in the habit of writing letters. Why? Because in that time, you couldn't send a text message, right? Or you couldn't make a phone call. You had to write with pen and ink, and you had to take time, and you would write it and send it out, and it would take some time to get there.

But why would God put his hand of protection upon these letters and preserve them and include them in what we call the canonization of scripture? Why are they in your Bible?

So it is always becoming of us to open that up and know, why did you put this here? Is it just so I could gain some new truth and hold on to it? Or did you have a reason for it? It's called reading the scripture in context.

Well, Paul is writing to the church at Galatia, and he's defending the true gospel. And he had to defend the true gospel because, as is always the case, every time the truth is preached, Satan always has his administrators and his adversaries who come, or Satan always has his people to also come in and kind of skew the truth a little bit.

[4 : 26] If you don't think so, ask Adam and Eve. Every time God proclaims a truth, Satan proclaims a half-truth, which is a full lie. And he doesn't come out and make something completely opposite, but he makes something so close to the truth, he ensures that you will miss the mark completely.

Because if you're off just a little bit, you're off a whole lot in the grand scheme of things. Especially when Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me. That's pretty narrow, by the way. Don't let anyone ever tell you that Christianity is broad. And don't feel bad if anybody ever tells you you're narrow-minded when it comes to the things of the faith, because you need to be narrow-minded when it comes to the things of the faith.

I have no place and no part in any broad faith. I don't think all roads lead to heaven. I don't think all good people go to heaven. I don't think all good dogs go to heaven, right?

I have a very narrow view of faith. I have a very narrow view of eternity. And the reason I do is because Scripture paints a very narrow view. It is this thing called the truth.

[5 : 26] And that's what Paul is defending. And he was defending it to brothers and sisters in Christ. So we see that. Now we're in Galatians 2, which is really a very pinnacle section of Scripture, as most of them are.

But there's a word introduced here in Galatians 2 that is really essential to understanding. We'll get to it in just a little bit. You have to understand this word or you don't understand the rest of the book of Galatians.

As a matter of fact, if you don't understand this word, then you will not really understand anything else Paul writes. Because this is what he said first. But I want you to see the section of Scripture first before we get into it.

So if you are physically able and desire to do so, will you stand with me as we read together the word of God found in Galatians 2, starting in verse 11. And I'm going to read down to verse 21, which gets us to the end of the chapter.

Paul writes here, But when Cephas, now for our understanding, that's Peter, right? But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles.

[6 : 27] But when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, If you being a Jew live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?

We are Jews by nature, not sinners from among the Gentiles. Look at verse 16. Nevertheless, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, since by the works of the law no flesh will be justified.

But if while seeking to be justified in Christ we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be. For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

For through the law I died to the law so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh.

[7 : 40] I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God. For if righteousness comes to the law, then Christ died needlessly.

Let's pray. Lord, I pray that you would open our hearts and minds. Lord, that we would understand this text. Lord, we would not be able to leave saying, well, that's a great truth we understand, but Lord, we would see, wow, what a Savior.

Lord, we would be amazed at your word. And it would change our lives completely. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. This morning, I want you to see from this text, Paul's greatest defense, if you will, for the truthfulness of Scripture, the truthfulness of the Gospel. Last week, we looked at the reality that love, true love, is the greatest apologetic you will ever have. That if you love as Christ has commanded us to love, and you do that in the name of Christ because of the life that has been transformed through faith in Christ, that really there is no argument with that.

And Paul takes that step a little bit farther, and he begins to speak of your life as a testimony, as a living testimony to the truth which he is defending. Because it really doesn't matter what you say about the truth until your life matches the truth which you defend.

[9 : 03] No one will ever believe the truth you declare. You can proclaim the truth all day long, but if you do not live the truth, it really doesn't matter. Because about 80 to 85% of what you say is always filtered by how people see you.

Your body language, your actions, the things that you do, the way people perceive you is the filter that everything that comes out of your mouth goes through. People do not pay as much attention as we would like to the words we say as they do to the life we live.

And Paul is defending the truth here, and he is pointing to himself really as a great defense of the truth. He has said, because most of the accusations that were brought against him is, well, Paul doesn't know the truth.

All Paul is doing is repeating what Peter repeated. And all Paul is doing is repeating what he's heard from others. And we saw earlier in Galatians 2 that Paul says, no, no, no, no, no, Peter and James and John.

They didn't really contribute anything to me. They didn't tell me anything. All they heard was that I had met Christ on Damascus Road. For three years I disappeared, and after an interval of about 14 years I came back.

[10 : 11] And that's the Jerusalem council that we find in Acts 15, you may remember. And when I came there, they really didn't have any argument with me. They just said, yes, God is doing a great work in your life through Christ, and God is doing a great work in our life through Christ.

And Paul says, they are pillars of the church, but it really doesn't matter to me what they are because God is not a respecter of man. But they gave me the right hand of fellowship and said, yes, what you're saying is true and what we're saying is true.

And he said, that's all. He said, so to say that all I am doing is repeating what others told me, then that is a false accusation. And he takes that step further, and he's always using his life as an example.

I used to think that Paul was very audacious. That's a word I like to use every now and then. And sometimes I get caught up on it because it is a word of power, really. I used to think Paul, really, it's a nice way of just saying that he had a lot of guts for him to look at people and say, you imitate me. I mean, Paul would look at people and say, you just live like I live. And you're like, man, that's crazy. But Paul would say, you imitate me as what? As I imitate Christ. Paul said, I don't want you to be like me.

[11 : 12] I want you to be like Christ. But you can look at me to see what it looks like to be like Christ. And we see this here in Galatians 2.20, which, by the way, is the very first verse of scripture I ever had memorized. And it is such a powerful verse.

And then Paul would write, as he was more like Christ and more like Christ, he saw less of himself. In this book, he sees himself as an apostle born out of due season. By the time he writes his latter

book, by the time he writes the latest, the last letter, he says, I'm the chief of all sinners. I'm the worst man that's ever lived. And he said, when you have that kind of attitude, my friend, and you can tell people to live like you live. Right? And Paul here is going to give us the life that is a testimony.

And if you had to have a title this morning, it would be living the crucified life. What it looks like to defend the gospel, the truthfulness of scripture, the very narrow view of heaven, while living the crucified life.

Living the crucified life is something that entails a whole lot, but we're only going to look at three truths that come from that this morning. I want you to see, first and foremost, that when you live the crucified life, you are able to avoid the temptation to conform.

[12:25] You are able to avoid the temptation to conform. Paul here introduces us once again to someone we are very familiar with, though he calls him by a different name. Just this past week, I was shared that the very first Sunday I was introduced here as pastor, which was three and a half years ago.

Some of you met me for the first time as Billy Joe Calvert. There are a number in the congregation that grew up with me, and they said, that's not his name. His name is not Billy Joe Calvert. That is his legal name, but that's not his name.

Because some of you knew me by another name. Some of you knew me either by Joe or, well, probably many of you that have known me for a long time simply knew me as Fatboy. And some people are like, well, I'm going to call him Fatboy.

And I was skinnier then than I am now. I don't know why in high school that's what I was called, but that was what I was. And so it's just having a multitude of names, understanding how people know you, right? So we're being introduced to somebody we're familiar with, just the name we're not familiar with.

Paul here begins to speak of Cephas. Now, Cephas is Peter. It's the same person. Don't let the name mess with you too much. This is just who it is, right?

[13:30] Paul says in Galatians 2, verse 11, But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. Now, I just want to just really be clear about this.

I love that the Bible is full from Genesis to Revelations with people who mess up. I love that the Bible is full of imperfect people.

And you don't find but one perfect person. And it's not Cephas. And it's not Paul. It's not James. It's not John. You find one perfect person, and that person is Jesus Christ.

I love the fact that when Paul here brings up this attitude or this temptation to conform, he introduces us to someone that we would think would never deal with that temptation.

Now, we may think pre-resurrection appearance Peter may have that problem, right? I mean, we know he did because Peter is the man who said, Jesus, if that's you, call me out of the boat and I'll walk on water too.

[14:39] And so Peter, he says, all right, Peter, come here. And Jesus calls Peter, and Peter gets out of the boat. And then Peter looks at the waves and the sea, and he looks at the wind, and he begins to conform to the other 11 that are in the boat.

And he begins to sink, right? Fear grabbed a hold of him. And then we see Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration. He said, I want to build three tabernacles. And God says, be quiet, Peter. You don't know what you're talking about.

You know, quit conforming to Judaism and all this. And then we see him right there where he says, Jesus, I will die for you. I will not deny you. I will not conform to everyone else.

Oh, God, I am faithful to you. And Jesus says, Peter, I'll tell you the truth. Before a rooster crows, you'll deny me three times. And we see him cowering in the presence of a slave girl. We see him bending the knee to the people of the world.

We see him afraid by the fires of the world, which, by the way, when you warm yourself by the fires of the world, you will always begin to look like the people around the fire of the world.

[15:36] And we see Peter conforming to those around him. I don't know who Jesus is. I don't know who that man is. I know I may have a Galilean accent, but I don't know him. And we see Peter conforming. But then we see Peter restored, right?

We see Jesus cooking him breakfast one morning after he had a fruitless night of fishing. We see Jesus telling him to cast a net and they hauling in more fish than they had caught in a long time. We

see Jesus cooking him fish and serving him a meal.

We see the resurrected Savior saying, Peter, do you love me? Peter, do you love me? Peter, do you love me? We see Jesus restoring him and renewing him. And to be honest, all of us seeing Peter on the shore being restored would love to think Peter no longer has that problem of conformity.

Because how could you meet the resurrected Jesus and still deal with the same problems? Let me tell you some good news. Peter still dealt with the same problems.

You say, why is that good news? It's because Peter didn't trust in his own goodness. Peter didn't trust in his own faithfulness. Peter didn't trust in his own worthiness.

[16:51] Peter trusted in the faithfulness of Christ. And Paul says, I want to tell you what happened. He said, I was there. And Peter showed up. And oh, we were having a great time.

Now you have to read the scripture and you'll see it. But Peter, Paul said, we're having a great time. I was there with the believers, the Gentile believers. And Peter came in. Man, we were eating a feast. We were sitting at the table.

By the way, table fellowship means something in scripture. It was against the law, Jewish law, for a Jew to sit down and eat with a non-Jew that is a Gentile because it would make them unclean.

Right? So gathered around the table meant something. I love this saying that my wife told me, Mother Teresa once said that when you have an abundance of things, do not store up more things. Build a bigger table.

Right? Have more people come around your table, extend your table, and have table fellowship instead of hoarding it up. Get a longer table. Get more and more people around your table and have this fellowship because it's so important.

[17:46] It is so essential. And it means something. And we know it means something because Paul says the problem Peter had is that when certain Jews showed up, Peter got up from the table. And he opposed him to his face simply because he got up from the table.

He quit eating with the Gentiles. Peter says, I can't eat with you guys anymore. And Paul says, Peter, why can't you eat anymore?

Peter, why, a minute ago, just yesterday, we were sitting here and we were breaking bread together. But now, all of a sudden, since certain people show up, you say you won't sit down.

Peter, you're wrong. Peter, you have a problem. Look at what it says. Paul says, for prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles.

But when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. There it is. Conformity is always rooted in fear. Let's just be honest right here for a minute.

[18:53] Inside the heart of every one of us. Inside the heart and mind of every one of us. Whether or not we want to acknowledge it or not, we just want to fit in.

We think that that's only a child problem, but it's not. It's not just with children. It's not just with teenagers when we tell them, you don't have to fit in with everybody. It's not just with young adults. It's from the oldest to the youngest. The heart of man desperately wants to fit in.

We want to belong. We want to look like everybody. We hate the thought of standing out. Even people who like to stand out usually surround themselves with other people who stand out. Why? Because they don't want to stand out alone. And we see that. And one thing that I have noticed, and I've seen it in counseling, and I've seen it with other individuals, is those who seem to push against the norms and stand out.

And I've had them tell me this from their own mouth. The reason they stand out so much is because they are so insecure. They think they will never fit in. So even the fact that they're trying to be different is rooted in the fact that they desperately want to fit in.

[20:02] And since they think they'll never fit in, they're going to just go the opposite end of the spectrum and completely stand out. And it's this natural tendency that we have to conform to those around us.

And it's fear. And we see that Peter dealt with it. And I like that. Because here is the reality. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and when we proclaim that we have the truth and we know the truth, more times than not, we will be surrounded by people who do not agree with the truth than we are with people who do agree with the truth.

If we believe, and I thank you, brother, for your song. If we believe that if we give a cup of cold water to the least of these, we are actually giving it to our Savior.

If we believe that if we love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us, then we are fulfilling the teachings of our Savior. If we believe that if someone slaps us on the right cheek, we turn the left cheek.

And if we believe that if someone compels us to go one mile, we go two miles. And if we believe that we give to whoever asks of us, then that is going to cause us to be unconformist in the world in which we live.

[21 : 23] And the only way we'll ever stop worrying about if we fit in is if we are already living a crucified life.

Paul says, Peter, what are you doing? Because the moment you started fitting in, Peter, you began to close the gospel to other people. You say, well, what difference does it matter?

Look at what Paul says here. Paul says, because when Peter started doing it, others started doing it. Even to the fact, all this breaks my heart, even Barnabas, the one who was on the missionary journeys, started doing it.

Why? Because all Satan needs is a foothold in one individual before he'll start influencing a multitude of believers.

All he needs is to get one person more concerned with conformity before he'll start pulling others away.

[22 : 27] And my friend, listen to me. All he needs is one person who wants to resurrect the old man. That's what Peter was doing. Peter says, I know I'm dead in Christ, but I'm going to start living like the old Peter. And it began to cause problems.

The crucified life helps us to avoid the temptation of conformity. Number two, the crucified life helps us to declare the truth that redeems. And now we're going to get to that word, which you must understand.

And if you don't understand it, you will not really understand anything in the book of Galatians. And you probably will not understand anything that Paul writes. And it is this declaration of the truth that redeems.

Do not think that in verse 15, Paul is not saying that the Jews are not sinners. Because verse 15 says, we are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles. Paul is not saying we're Jewish and we're perfect and everybody else is Gentiles and they're sinners.

That's not what Paul is saying. By the way, if you are non-Jewish, then you are Gentile. Gentile is everybody else in the world. And Paul is not here declaring that the Jews are perfect or sinless. He is just saying that we are Jews who are sinners and we are not sinners from among the Gentiles.

[23 : 28] But we are sinners still the same. And we see this here in this truth that he declares. And we get into the word, which we must understand. And you probably picked up on it because he repeats this word a number of times.

It says, nevertheless, knowing. Oh, my friend, I hope you know this. Oh, this is going to be narrow, right? This is going to be very narrow. This is going to be true.

And it's not just true for me and it doesn't have to be true for you. This is truth with a capital T. This is what God says is true. Let every other man be found a liar. Okay, this is what this is.

It is very narrow. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Christ Jesus. The word you must understand is the word justified.

Justified. Justified is a very powerful word. And every time Paul uses it in the book of Galatians, he uses it in a very particular way. Now, I want you to stay with me. I'm going to give you some technical information because you need to know this.

[24 : 27] And this will encourage you because Satan uses this as some of his tools. It's in some of his battery of weaponry that he takes against you. Justified means this. Literally, it's a simplistic way.

Justified means... Are you listening? We're going to stay with me. That God sees you as innocent. Not guilty.

Free. Now, I know. I said about 85% of what we hear is filtered through what we see. So, I'm trying to be still because I want you to hear the words.

It is that God sees you as innocent. Not guilty. And free. Justified does not mean that God makes you innocent.

Some of you are going, wait a minute. It does not mean that God makes you innocent or that you are necessarily forgiven for a past crime.

[25 : 32] And the reason it doesn't mean that is because if I forgive you now, if I look at you and say, you have fallen, you have messed up, you have sinned against me and I forgive you. That is defining a point in time in history which from this time back, you are forgiven.

But if you mess up from here on out, I don't necessarily have to forgive you. If I declare you innocent now, then you are innocent for the things you've done up until now.

But if you mess up after now, you're still guilty. But if I look at you and I say, in Christ, I see you as innocent, guess what?

Jesus never fades. And it doesn't matter what you do from this point on because I still see you as innocent in Christ.

This is why this matters. Because in Christ, God sees us as forgiven. In Christ, God sees us as innocent.

[26 : 34] In Christ, God sees us as clean. We are not clean. We are not innocent. We are not perfect. We need to know that.

But in Christ, God sees us that way. Because that does two things. Number one, that magnifies the death of Jesus Christ. Jesus says that while you were yet a sinner, which by the way, we can say was today too.

And probably will be tomorrow because I'm a sinner today. I'll be a sinner tomorrow. And I'll be a sinner for the next day. Until the day he calls me home, I am still a sinner. While you were still in your sins, the godly died for the ungodly.

The ungodly would be me. That Christ Jesus died for me. That in Christ, God looks at me through the blood of Jesus Christ. And all he sees stamped across me is innocent, forgiven, pardoned, paid in full.

It's all done. And that doesn't mean I am innocent. And the reason this matters is because Satan will stand on your shoulder and say, well, if you were in Jesus, you wouldn't do that. If you were forgiven, you wouldn't do that.

[27 : 34] If your sins had been cast away from the east to the west, you wouldn't do that. And you'd have to say, he didn't make me perfect. He just sees me that way. And the picture I always like to say is with my children and with my wife.

And I know my wife is not perfect. And oh boy, does she know her husband's not perfect.

Sometimes my imperfections are magnified. But the love that I have for her sees her as my perfect helpmate.

The love that I have for her helps me to see her and all of her perfection. And it does not overlook her imperfections. And I am so thankful that God, through the love that he's given us, does not cause her to overlook my imperfections.

That in spite of my imperfections, in spite of my failures, and I tell them when I do pre-marriage counseling, listen, the honeymoon wears off. Right? The dating days go by quick.

Soon you wake up and you're not too lovely anymore. And you wake up and it's going to be, sometimes they're not going to feel like loving you. The good news is that you don't have to build a relationship upon feelings.

[28 : 33] You have to build it upon crucifixion, right? You do not love them because they feel lovely. You do not love them because they look lovely. You love them because you're choosing to love them even though they're unlovely.

And in Christ, that's being justified. Paul says, this is the truth. Nothing you can do, you are not justified. God does not see you as innocent because of anything you do.

God does not see you as forgiven through works, right? Anything you can do. Works include anything. The works of the law. He says here, this is the truth. By the works of the law, but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by what? By faith in Christ and not by the works of the law. Since by the works of the law, friends, listen to me, no flesh will be justified. What does this tell you? That I don't care what you do.

I don't care how hard you labor. I don't care how much effort you put forth. I don't care how many times I take you to that baptistry and dunk you under the water. I don't care how much you give to the church.

[29 : 31] I don't care how many times you take communion. All that is stuff you do. It is a work. It is a labor. If you are doing it, you are doing it, right?

It is a work. And none of those things are going to cause God to see you as innocent because everything you do the rest of the time overrules that. If you have ever had a disagreement with a brother, if you have ever had any form of jealousy in the heart, or you have ever coveted and said, Oh, I wish I had that.

Or if you have ever said anything, you have fallen, right? It says if we have ever done any of those things, we are guilty. And it does not matter how much we do because if we are guilty in one point, the scripture says we are guilty of the whole law.

There is nothing. This is the truth of the gospel. This is the very narrow road. Why do we do those things? Why do we go and do baptism?

Ask Bryce. I told him, Bryce, you are not getting baptized so that God can see you as perfect. You are going to get baptized because God already sees you as perfect. In Christ, he sees you as forgiven.

[30 : 37] The least you can do since he sees you that way is to go get wet, right? The least you can do is let everyone else know that he sees you that way. It is an act of obedience, not an act of a have to. There is a big difference there.

And we see here that Paul says this is the truth that a crucified life declares. There is nothing I can do that is ever going to make God see me as right. But by faith in Jesus Christ, God sees me as forgiven.

I am justified. I am justified. He does not remove the fact that I do the things I do. Isn't that freeing? Think about this just for a moment. Let me just be honest. How many times have you beat yourself up? You know how many times I've beat myself up? Every time I fall.

Every time I mess up. Every time I stumble. Every time I slip back and do the things that I thought I never would do again. Every time I get upset. I beat myself up and say, You know what?

[31 : 38] If I was saved, I wouldn't do that. If I was redeemed, I wouldn't act like that. If I was forgiven, I wouldn't do that. But here's the truth. Go back and look at Peter.

He still did it. Now you know why I love the fact that the Bible is full of messed up people. Because I just get to jump in line. And the truth is, I'm going to fall.

I'm going to mess up. I'm going to stumble. I'm going to trip. And sometimes I'm just going to fall flat on my face. I'm going to get bruised up. I'm going to get beat up. And I'm going to look ugly. And people are going to look at me and say, Well, if you were a believer, if you knew Jesus as your Savior, you would never do those things.

And then all I'm going to do is look at them and go, That's why I know Jesus is my Savior. It's because praise be to God. God, when He sees me, doesn't see me as I am. He sees me through Christ.

And He sees me as I am in Christ. There will be a day He makes me perfect. Paul messes up. Paul cast a judgment against John Mark. I mean, Mark wrote a gospel. Okay?

[32 : 39] Paul got so mad at John Mark, he said, I don't want you to go with us. Mark says, That's fine. I'll follow Peter. And then God will use me to write one of the gospels. The earliest gospel. Don't you know that Paul later on was like, Boy, I had that one wrong.

We know he was because Paul said later, Ask Mark to come here. He's useful for the ministry. He repented, right? I could use a man who can write a gospel, right? I can use somebody like that. Please send Mark. I need him. I used to think I didn't want him. He got on my nerves a little bit. I cast him off. I said, He's not coming with me. I was wrong. Paul was imperfect. Paul had an anger issue.

He had problems, right? And all these things. But that is the reality of it. Paul knew that when God looks at me, He doesn't see me as having it all together. When He looks at me, He sees as I am in Christ.

And in Christ, He sees me as forgiven. In Christ, He sees me as free. In Christ, He sees me as innocent. I just want to ask you, How does God see you? Is He seeing everything you're doing?

[33 : 37] Or is He seeing you as you have faith in Christ? Now let's go to the last and final thing. Not only does living the crucified life help us to avoid the temptation to conform, it also helps us to declare the truth that redeems.

And here's the third and final thing, and the one that's really so essential. Because how are we going to get to that in Christ business? Living the crucified life helps us to model a testimony of surrender.

Helps us to model a testimony of surrender. Boy, we Americans don't like that word. There's really nothing about the word surrender we like.

Because surrender in our mind signifies defeat. Surrender in our mind signifies the fact that we lost. Surrender in our mind signifies the fact that we gave up.

But that is why it's so important. Because surrender is a giving up. And a testimony of surrender. I was talking to a brother in Christ who attends another church last night at the benefit.

[34 : 41] And I used to live beside the church where I pastor prior. And I got to know him real well there. And he attends a church in town. And I was talking to him. And he was sharing with me. He was like, You know, God's moved me in jobs.

And he said, I'm there. And he said, I know God wants me there because I'm able to pray with people at my desk. And God's using me. He said, But when he's through with me, He'll just move me somewhere else. I don't really like the job I have. But I know he wants me there. He said, So when he's through with me, He'll just move me somewhere else.

I said, Isn't surrender a beautiful thing? Because surrender says, I'm here because God wants me here, not because I tried to get here. Surrender says, I'll be here as long as he wants me here.

God, I'm not in charge of my plans. The Bible tells me that man plans his step, but the Lord directs his ways. And surrender is like, God, I'm going to let you direct. If you want me to be somewhere, I'll be there. When you want me to move, I'll move.

As long as you want me to stay, I'll stay. Surrender is a beautiful thing because even in the midst of a situation we don't like, surrender helps us to love the one who put us there. And that's exactly what he was testifying.

[35 : 38] And Paul says the same thing here. It is a crucified life that helps us to model this testimony of surrender. He says, But if while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves, I'm in verse 17, have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin?

May it never be. For if I rebuild what I once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. What is he saying? He says, Peter, you got to have this right. You can't say you're trusting in Jesus and then go back trying to work your way there. A lot of people put their faith in Jesus Christ and said, now I'm going to do everything I have to do.

That's not what it's about. Okay? He said, now you're a transgressor and Christ is not a minister of sin. So what you're doing needs to be repented of. It is not that you're trusting in Jesus and then doing other things.

It's that you're trusting in Jesus in the story. And then he goes on. Here is surrender. Look at verse 19.

I want to tell you how to give up to win. You know, the gospel is the only thing that tells us that if we surrender and we give up, we win. It's the only way that you can lose the battle and still win the victory.

[36 : 46] He says in verse 19, for through the law, I died to the law so that I might live to God. Works are nothing other than law driven.

That is trying to be good enough to earn God's favor. None of us here adhere to or conform to the Jewish Ten Commandments law or the Mishnah, the oral law that contained over 634 written commandments.

None of us here probably adhere to that, though there are still legalistic Jewish people alive today on the road. They're saying, I'm going to live by these standards. But many of us struggle with this. Well, I have to do this and I have to do this and I have to do this and as long as I do this, God will like me. That's still law. All that's rooted in the Old Testament. And Paul is very clear in the book of Romans and we find also throughout the Old Testament, especially when we get to the book of Leviticus or some other books who proclaim the holiness of God, that the end result of the law is what?

Death. For the wages of sin is death. And all the law does is show you where you mess up. If you don't believe me, please go to the book of Deuteronomy, read the book of Deuteronomy, and come to me when you get through with the book of Deuteronomy and tell me how perfect you are.

[38 : 03] Not by your standard, not by the world's standards, not by the guy next to you, not by the people around you, not by the people living in your house, but by God's holy standard. Please tell

me if you can read God's holy standard and walk away from it and say, yep, I've got it all together. All the law does is reveal our mess ups. It reveals our sins. The law, the Old Testament, the do's and don'ts, never give us a way to be forgiven completely for our sins.

The Old Testament law gave them a way to be forgiven once a year, but what if after the Day of Atonement you sinned, which you would, because after that Day of Atonement all men would sin because the sinner is in the heart of every man, right?

And what if you died before you got, the only way you could be forgiven according to the Law of Standard is to die immediately following the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. It would be, okay, they offered that sacrifice and now I'm going to die.

Because at that moment God pronounced, now that was a national cleansing, it wasn't a personal cleansing, so don't tell me the sacrificial system cleansed you because that had nothing to do with personality, that had something to do with nationality.

[39 : 15] That cleansed the nation for God's usefulness. It didn't cling to individuals. So all the Law does is show you where you mess up, shows you where your faults are, shows you how you feel, and it points to the reality that you're going to die because you messed up.

No wonder a lot of people don't like the Old Testament. No wonder people think in the Old Testament God is a big mean God and by the way, that is completely false because there's so many beautiful pictures of grace in the Old Testament.

But the truth is is that the Law says you're going to die. Paul gave up. He surrendered. This is what Paul says. For through the Law I died to the Law.

You know what Paul did? Paul died before he died. Say what? Paul says, the Law says I'm not good enough. The Law says I have to die.

So why do I have to wait for my body to quit breathing before I die? Paul says, I'll just die right now. I'm going to give up right now. I'm going to tell God right now, I can't do it.

[40 : 19] I'm going to stop trying to do it. I'm going to act like I'm a dead man walking and I'm just going to go ahead and die. And whatever I do from now on is not going to be Paul doing it.

It's going to be Christ in me who's doing it. He says, for I have what? Been crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live.

It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives inside of me. In the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the one who loved me and gave himself up for me who is Jesus Christ. Here's the testimony a surrendered life has.

A surrendered life says this. You know, for a long time I tried to be good enough. I tried to do enough. I tried to earn God's favor.

And then there was a day where I realized I couldn't do it. So I quit. I quit. I gave up. This is my testimony.

[41 : 22] I went and hit my knees in prayer. And I looked at God in heaven and I said, God, I can't do it. I quit. I can't be good enough.

I can't earn enough. I'll never earn your favor. I don't deserve your love. I can't do it. But I'm going to trust that Christ has already done it.

When people surrender, they hit one of two choices. They either say, God, I can't do it. Forget it. I'm going to live how I want to live. And Satan has his way. Or they go ahead and they die to the law.

They say, you know what? The law says I need to die so I'm going to go ahead and die and I'm going to find my life through faith in Christ. And from this point on, it's not going to be me who lives. I'm going to let Christ live in me.

We call that the great exchange. His death becomes my death. When he died, I died. So that my life can become his life. So that as I live, he lives. So that people may see me on the outside, but what I'm doing from the inside out is no longer me.

[42 : 25] It's not what I want to do. It's what he wants to do. It is the great exchange. It's saying, God, I'll take your death if you'll take my life. And I would rather die now and live my life through you as opposed to die eventually whenever I come to that great day of judgment because here's the reality, my friend.

You can fight and you can battle and you can try and you can do all that, but there will be a day according to the law you will die. You can either die now and give your life to Christ and let him live his life through you or you can wait until that day, work real hard, labor as much as you want to, spend your life trying to earn God's favor, stand before a holy God.

He pulls out the judgment of Christ upon you and he says, well, the law says you failed here, here, here, here, here, and here and you never surrendered and gave your life to me. We never made that great exchange. So since you did not die to the law, I'll let you die to the law eternally.

The crucified life says, you know what, I'll take my dying now and I'll let him live his life through me. Why? Verse 21, I do not nullify the grace of God.

This is how good and great God's grace is. For if righteousness comes to the law, what's Paul saying? If I could have been right before God, then Christ died needlessly.

[43 : 48] But since nothing God does is needless, that must mean I need him. And I'll take him and let him have me.

And I'll live the crucified life. Because that's the only way to be justified in God's sight. I don't know where you're at.

I really don't. Don't know what valley you're walking through or which one you just came out of. But I know this. The truth of Scripture says that according to the law, we all die.

Right now, we have a choice of when that death will be. We can die presently and surrender and give up and let him take our life that great exchange or we can try to fight and scratch and work and labor and give it our best effort.

And still in the end, find out that according to the law, we fell short. Death comes to every man.

[45 : 02] Jesus said in the Gospel of John that he who has faith in me has already passed from death unto life. Which means he's already died. He said, well, I know a lot of believers who have died.

No, my friend, you messed up because the New Testament says they fell asleep. When they put their faith in Jesus Christ, they passed from death to life. And they're living life differently than they used to live it in Christ for his glory.

Let's pray. Lord, I thank you so much for this day. God, I thank you for the testimony we've seen of obedience. Lord, as Bryce has followed you in faithful obedience and baptism, we thank you for the testimony we've had in the song.

We thank you for the testimony we have in your word. Lord, our hearts desire and our great call, may it be, oh Lord, may we live the crucified life for your glory.

God, I pray that right now through the power and presence of your spirit and through the presence of Jesus Christ that you would have your great work and your great way. You would do in the heart of every man, every boy, every lady, every child, whatever it is you want to do that you may be glorified and exalted.

[46 : 15] We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen.