

LIBRARY OF THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

161

1377-161  
La P 812

Sermon preached by Mr. J. K. Popham  
on Sunday evening, 2nd. January 1927

Text: Galatians 6 v. 14

*Read at Sale*  
*27 Feb '05*

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

\* \* \* \* \*

This word struck me after this morning's service as to remove the thought of resuming this morning's text. I thought I saw some beauty in this word; something absolutely necessary for us if we are to go to heaven, - the word that grew out of the opposition the apostle Paul met with from Judaising teachers. These Judaising teachers taught the Galatians that they must needs be circumcised or they could not be saved; that they must attach Moses to Christ, - works, to His infinite merit, - and the Holy Ghost moved His servant Paul to write this letter, full of divine severity, of divine mercy and compassion. Divine severity, in that these churches of Galatia were very sharply reprov'd for the readiness with which they turned away from the gospel to another gospel which the Apostle says, "is not another." And solemnly does he say - though we or an angel preach unto you any other gospel than ye have received, let him be accursed. If ever we get, by the Holy Ghost, a true view of the importance of the gospel, we shall enter a little into that solemn word, "let him be accursed." So great was the gospel to Paul, as that any conduct that in any degree impeached the gospel and took from it its glory in any measure and added to it anything of the law, that he withstood Peter openly, who had been guilty of an inconsistency. Peter might say well, but it was not much that Peter did. He just gave way to the prejudice of the Jews and declined to mingle with the Gentiles. But then, Paul saw this, that that act of Peter was bringing the law in; that it struck at the blessed truth of justification; that it interfered with the freeness of divine grace. If we do get divine teaching in respect of the gospel; its freeness, its absolute exaltation above, and its independence of, everything, - system, practice, hope, - that would mingle with the glory of Christ, the Apostle says that is "another gospel, which is not another." Beware of anything that comes into the gospel which is not, - it is another. Beware of every bit of practice that in any way reflects on the glory of Christ.

By the cross of Christ, in the text, it would seem from the whole of the epistle that the Apostle gathers the gospel as he had preached it - the covenant made with Abraham, which meant Christ, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Not "seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed." He shows that this covenant, though not fulfilled openly for four hundred and thirty years in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, was not interfered with, not made invalid, not weakened in any degree by the long delay. If you get a promise, you may be very troubled at months of delay or longer, but the thing is settled. What God has said is true. Quantities of trouble may come in; long delays may try you, and put to the test, as it were, God's word, but the thing spoken is true and will come to be known as true in the long run. Hold fast says Paul, the beginning of your confidence to the end. So that this word, "the gospel of Christ," is a comprehensive word. As I view it, it means the Person of Christ, the Covenant of Grace and the operations of the Holy Spirit making Christ known, and in this, the Apostle said he would glory, and in nothing else. No practices of religion must interfere with this; no legal hopes must be grafted into this; no natural covenant must come into this; it stands alone. The glory of God is in it; the glory of Christ's Person is in it; the glory of His obedience is in it; the glory of His death is in it; the completeness of salvation is in it; everything necessary for life and godliness, for time and eternity is in the cross of Christ. Just think of all this, dear friends, all the immortal interests of a sinner, here; all the good a sinner can need, here; all the greatness of God to be revealed in him is here; all the communications of God to him are here in fulness, in the cross of Christ. Seeing this, you won't wonder at the Apostle's spirit; at his exclusiveness, at what men today call, narrowness and bigotry. You will, under the leading of the Spirit, see that Paul's glorying in this, was his greatest honour, his greatest strength, his truest wisdom. What a subject! No wonder that he, knowing what he did of Christ and Him crucified, should say to the Corinthians who were torn with factions and schisms, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." A ministry is useful, not by its variety only, - very desirable a variety is if it is of the right kind, - but a ministry is useful as, in the unction of the Spirit, the Lord Jesus is its theme. "Christ and His cross is all our theme", says Dr. Watts, and that should be the feeling, the aim, the

end, of every minister of Jesus Christ, and the severity of this epistle is vindicated in this way, that what catches nature, religious nature, is of a dangerous kind. O how attractive would this be to the Galatian churches, - you need not renounce Christ, only add this to Him; you need not say you have no hope without Him, just add the law to Him. But says Paul, if you add the law you do away with the gospel; if you are circumcised you put yourself under the law, you make yourself a debtor to do the whole law; you have nothing to do with grace. If you bring in the law, the two are opposed; the one cannot be with the other. It is law or gospel; not law and gospel. May you, may I, in the light of the Spirit's gracious teaching, see this important point. Never think anything little that belittles Jesus and His cross. Never think anything unimportant that attaches anything to the Saviour. He is the Saviour. He is the Saviour, and says Paul, "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." If you put yourselves under the law, then you go away from the gospel. Well sinner, what a gracious instruction this is. What an encouragement this is. Need I do nothing by the law; need I bring in nothing of the law; am I to be delivered entirely from the law, so that it shall be as a schoolmaster who has taught the lesson he had to teach and then there is no more use of him? Yes, we are no longer under a schoolmaster when we have living faith. No longer need we the teaching of the schoolmaster when the lesson he was sent to teach and impart, we have received. But, if one says, 'O I must bring the schoolmaster in, I have forgotten nothing,' - these Judaising teachers speak so, in effect, - then says Paul, "Ye are fallen from grace." You retain your profession, but you do not retain what you think you do. Be exclusive, be narrow, when narrowness means a cleaving to Christ. Be exclusive when exclusiveness means there is none but Jesus. -

"None but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good."

Dear friends, Paul says to Timothy, "There is one God." What a truth! "One God," with whom we all have to do. One God, against whom we have all sinned. One God, whose holy and just law we have broken; whose justice and claims on us in His law, we have outraged. One God, before whom we stand. The realisation of this becomes a terror to a sinner, but then the Spirit adds, by the same pen, in the same word, there is "one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." When you feel undone; when you dare not approach

the Almighty because of your sins, then, the Spirit will show this Mediator. One Mediator!.... This, so to speak, puts honour and glory everlasting in the gospel. No higher throne will you ever reach than the gospel, - the cross of Christ. No greater honour will ever be on you, than the honour that is by the cross of Christ. No way of peace, but by the cross of Christ. No way to heaven but the cross of Christ. Let us, as God helps us, leave all the trappings of an external religion and all the pretensions of Pharisaic nature, and all the obligations that the law imposes, leave them all, and cleave nakedly and alone to this blessed cross. The false teachers gloried in the flesh of these converts. They had perverted the Galatians and then they were boasting as if they should exhibit them and say, see what we have done; we have converted these exclusive people; we have brought them into this: to add to the Lord Jesus. And says Paul, the more you boast away, the more will I boast of Christ and His cross. The higher you put flesh, the more will I exalt the cross. The more beauty you put on the flesh, the more honour and glory and greatness will I attach to the cross. God forbid that I should boast, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I would then, (on this first day of a new year) bring this before you, by the help of God speak a little of the cross of Christ, and then the glorying in this, and the effect of the cross of Christ. By it the world is crucified to us and we crucified to the world. We are crucified to the world by the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ, as I understand and view it, means, the justice, the love, the pity, and the mercy, the wisdom and the power of God. It means the justice of God. It says: this God could not save a sinner without the incarnation and death of His Only begotten Son. Salvation is not an arbitrary act of the divine will only. It was a sovereign decree of God; the decree, - salvation, but He decreed in exact accordance, necessary accordance, with His nature, and this will exalt God in you, if you believe this experimentally. If you feel that it is not possible for God to save you unless there be an adequate redemption; a price paid for you, to buy you back and to satisfy divine justice; this will exalt the Lord Jesus in your eyes, in your affections. Faith sees this - the justice of God. Justice is that straightness of God's character, that integrity that will allow no abatement of a claim, that will permit no damage to the character of God. It is, holding the balances perfectly. Justice!.... Justice among men is a beautiful thing; not repellent to an upright person, and if it be so naturally, what

must divine justice be to faith? What must it be to faith! It kills nature - it exalts grace. It says the polluted person may not come near to an absolute, a perfect, that is, a just God, but it says He has opened a new way in the Person and work of Christ, and it says then, you cannot come too filthy, you cannot be too unjust, that is, you cannot be too guilty. What a wonder is divine justice, as exhibited and shining in the cross of Christ. O its glory is matchless and it shines in the eyes of every convinced sinner. Brethren, seek divine instruction on this point. Salvation is a joyful sound, and the joyfulness of it, largely, is here:- that God's justice is not tarnished in salvation, but honoured; bright, it has no spot upon it. This is on the cross. We speak of the ignominious tree, and it was ignominious to Him who was hanged on it, but O, the glory of God was there. Christ the Wisdom of God. That such a plan could have been devised, was devised, that such a way of saving sinners, should ever enter the heart of Eternal Deity, such a way whereby God could be just and the justifier of the ungodly that believeth in Jesus, - the Wisdom of God shines in this! You, as seeing this truth in the light of the Spirit's grace, will admire that word - "Christ the Wisdom of God;" foolishness with men, indeed is the cross, but to believers, it is the Wisdom of God. Wisdom divine is stamped on all the works of God in creation, but O, there it pales, sinks, fades away, when put by the side of the Wisdom of God on the cross. He devised this means of bringing His banished ones home. He formed a union, a federal union between the bride and her Husband; the Saviour and the saved; the church and her Head. He united eternal riches with our poverty; our nature with His Person united, is exalted, and here the wisdom of God shines; on the cross it shines gloriously.

And the truth of God is here. God's truth in the threatening of the law; in the promise made to Abraham; in the types and shadows of the ceremonial law; in all the prophecies that went before Christ the Truth, the Word of the living God that cannot be broken, standing, when heaven and earth shall pass away. The truth! This is exalted immeasurably above our conception on the cross, and mercy is here, in all her tenderness, in all the sweet motions of her heart and bowels to sinners. Mercy is here, mercy to the miserable. What grandeur there is in this! And then, power is here, - Christ the Power of God. It is omnipotence that can raise a sinner from a deserved hell of punishment, to a heaven of glory,

and this is effected by the cross; nothing else could do it. Divine power manifested in the death of Christ, working by the death of Christ, this, this is the cross. Divine purposes, holy providences, heavenly leadings, reproofs of children, chastisement of children, bringing back children, caressing children, calling vile worms, pure and spotless and without blame, in love; all these things are by the cross. Communion with God is here. This, is the mercy seat - this is the mercy seat. This is the "glorious high throne from the beginning, - the place of our sanctuary." The cross is therefore, the boast of all who follow the apostle Paul in his teaching and have the same Holy Spirit for their teacher.

What is it to glory in the cross? First, it is to believe in it, to believe that it is sufficient as a remedy; sufficient in power and in wisdom; sufficient to forgive the unworthiest of all; to justify the guiltiest of all; to cleanse the most polluted of all. Do we believe this? O, if the cross, as it were so to speak, throws out its arms and reaches us, and embraces us and carries us up in the Spirit to God in reconciliation, then we shall indeed say that we are justified by faith in the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus. Yes sinner, you will boast if you get, you will boast, if you get this. You will be richer than all the whole world, with this. You will be a favourite of heaven, a child of God, an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. You will be one with Him. One in sweet union, one in nature, one in love, one with Christ and that will make you boast. It will be an exclusive boasting - "None but Jesus." The crown is put on His head. The jewels are in His crown. Trophies of grace declare His goodness and His mercy and His love, so the sinner says, 'I have nothing else to boast of, I do not want anything else.'

"Faith in the bleeding Lamb,  
O what a gift is this!"

If you boast rightly, you have love. Paul's love was strong, so that he resented as intolerable, everything that would come and unite itself with the Lord Jesus. He was not indifferent to the cross. Everything that had a tendency to tarnish it and to make it less glorious, he did resent. He would not have it. "I would," he said, "They were even cut off which trouble you." Well, what a spirit, and people call that a narrow spirit and an intolerably bitter spirit, whereas God knows it was, in the apostle Paul, love,

as if he should say, 'I love Christ and I love you, and I resent this false teaching which has estranged you from your Lord who redeemed you, and if this continues, then I shall stand in doubt of you. My love for Him and that gospel, is such that I cannot bear the intrusion of anything,' and you will find the same thing; in your measure you will feel just the same. What an offence it is to try to attach fallen nature in any of its works, yea the law itself, to Jesus Christ. You will boast of it because of what it is therefore, and then you will boast of it because of what it does in you. Ah, this is a point; have we been made nigh by the blood of Christ? Have our consciences been purged by the blood of Christ from dead works? Have we had a smile from God; had a sweet intimation of His love to us, through the cross? Have we seen that His honour and the forgiveness of sins go well together? His honour is engaged to save a sinner, to forgive a sinner, to justify a guilty person, and we in a measure of an experience of that truth, feeling the greatness of it, feeling this has been done in us, and only God could do it, we must boast and glory here. Let men say what they will, when you can put your hand on your heart, when you can say, 'My conscience was burdened and the God of all grace removed it; I was distant and I was brought nigh by the cross; I was distant and I got access through the blood of Christ, by the grace of the Spirit, then, you have reason to boast, to glory. 'I glory,' says Paul, 'in the cross.' You can say the same in your measure. It has brought you near. "A people near unto Him". This 'near', have all His saints. This must seem a strange thing to those who have no fear of God and no life of God in their souls, but I can tell you this, that all you would think to be good, all in which you would boast, - wisdom, and strength, and morality and a religion that pleases the flesh; all this is nothing in God's sight but sin. Coming from a bad heart, it cannot be good; whereas, this that men esteem shame and reproach, this, in a sinner's conscience, is glory, - the glory of God. Jeremiah knew this and was inspired to teach it. He said, the Lord speaking in him said, that it would be for Him for a name and praise and honour in the earth to forgive sin, to forgive the sins whereby His people had sinned against Him. When you have faith to lay claim to this, then you will be a happy person, and enter into the Apostle's spirit, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." And another reason will be sometimes this: that a stubborn will, a rebellious mind, in respect of some mortifying affliction, you have found to be removed, subdued,

and you have been a child, like as the Psalmist speaks of himself: "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child." - Quiet, resigned, submissive; content to be ignorant of God's purpose that He hides from you, and hope to know, that as a father chastens his son in whom he delights, so the Lord your God has chastened you; and this, by the cross. Yes, the atonement has an influence on the dealings of God with His people. It softens the lash that is laid on them; it puts sweetness into the bitter cup they have to drink.

One more word. We have to glory in the cross of Christ because, by it the fulness of God is opened for the supply of our needs. Yes, the fulness of God is opened for the supply of our needs. Our temporal needs as well as spiritual, eternal. O poor sinner, you are not poor if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed to go empty handed and weak and poor. You are not poor! "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom . . . ." So, the people of God have reason to glory in the cross of Christ. It has a twofold effect, - an effect on the world, an effect on those who are redeemed. "By whom," - by the cross -, "the world is crucified unto me." That is a great word to us. O my friends, to look on the world as the apostle Paul looked on affliction - "Our light affliction," - and to us this light world, this empty world, this profane world - "is crucified unto me," - 'the cross brings wealth to me; brings peace to my conscience and contentment to my mind and rest for my soul, and sets before me what is good,' - "and I unto the world", - do not want it!.... As the world says this cross you talk about is foolishness, so you say to the world, 'This is my wisdom, this is my righteousness, this is my hope, this is my holiness, this is my bread, this is my strength.' O blessed is the man who in some measure is able to say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Do not expect an easy path if this is your experience, but you may expect, as Hart has it, - "Hope all that heaven has good." There is nothing that God will not give to His people that shall be for their good and His honour. Now if in any measure, in any proper way, I have set this before you, it will be your wisdom to



seek the Holy Spirit's power to make this cross in you, what it was made in the apostle Paul and to ask that you may have that faith in Him who is there. That will exclude all other trusts, all religions, all ceremonies and everything, to find Him, just what your naked, needy, lost soul needs, and desires.

\* \* \* \* \*