

The Gospel... Reapply frequently and generously as needed

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 April 2012

Preacher: Tobin Miller

[0 : 00] Good morning. Good morning. I just want to say I feel really appreciative to be able to worship with all of you this morning. It's just been amazing so far. So as we look at the book of Galatians today, we're actually going to be reminded of the struggles of the early church with those who came into its midst, tried to replace the gospel message of our Lord Jesus Christ with a false gospel.

And as we look around in our world today, I think we all realize that we have the same struggles with this. We may never forget how easily we can lose our focus off the true hope of Jesus.

So please follow me along this morning with the responsive reading found on the screens behind me. Father God, the lie of empty, dead religion is that if we can be good enough or better than other people, then you will love us.

But you are not impressed with our pitiful attempts to appear righteous. We can do nothing to earn your grace, and we are no better than anybody else.

It's only through your Son, His life, His death, and His resurrection that we can be made right with you. Save me from religion and all its self-righteousness.

[1 : 20] Forgive me for a cheapened view of grace. You see into the depths of our hearts, and you know the reality of who we are. Our deepest thoughts and darkest sins are not hidden from you.

Change my heart. Give me the desire to live a life surrendered to you. You don't desire a life filled with empty routines or deeds that look good on the outside.

But Jesus died and rose to bring us into a living relationship with you, that you would transform us from the inside out. Help me to know you.

Help me to love you. Help me to serve you with every part of my life. May your compassion and grace transform our lives and the lives of 95% of Hong Kong who don't yet know you.

Amen. The scripture reading for today comes from the book of Exodus and the book of Galatians chapter 1. Please follow along in your bulletin. As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them.

[2 : 29] They became very frightened. So the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord. Then they said to Moses, Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that have you taken us away to die in the wilderness?

Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?

For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness. Then in Galatians we read, Paul, an apostle not sent from man nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead, and not the brethren who are with me.

To the churches of Galatia, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins so that he might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forevermore.

Amen. I'm amazed that you are so quickly deserting him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel, which is really not another, only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

[3 : 43] But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you have received, he is to be accursed.

For am I now seeking the favor of men or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I was still striving to please men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

This is the reading of God's word. Did you hear amen to that worship time? Amen. Was that amazing? That was amazing. How you guys doing? I get to say that at least once in a while, right?

Hey, we are, we're continuing our, see if I can find a place for all my things up here. We are continuing, or actually we're starting a journey in the book of Galatians. We're putting Luke on hold because we feel like there's a couple things in this book of Galatians that builds, and it's something that we want to be talking about and getting a foundation down in our life.

The idea of grace and mercy in the gospel. I don't know where you are on your journey in here. As I come in here, we pray a lot for the message and for the worship and for every, I don't know if you know that every one of you have been prayed for before you even get here, that we pray that God would speak to you, that you would make it.

[5 : 12] What a crazy morning. Once I woke outside, I saw ducks floating by my house. It was raining so heavily. A figure of speech, I didn't really see ducks, but someone will ask me that. Ducks in Hong Kong?

Where are they? Lunch. You'll catch it later on after the coffee, okay? But we realize that every one of us is on this journey, and God has us on this journey, and our stories are being told, and our stories are interweaving.

First, they're interweaving with God's story. God's taking our thread, and he's interweaving our story with his story, but he's also interweaving our stories with each other, and it's amazing to see what God does in people's lives.

I mean, to me, that's the most amazing thing as a pastor. You come in, you see people's lives changed by mercy. You see people's lives changed by grace, and as we talk about this journey, I want to talk to you that as far as I'm concerned and with the elders and the leaders, that we're always going to use God's word as the filter for everything, that we're not going to come in here and say, okay, let's put something else on top of God's words like our feelings or our emotions and filter God's words through that, but as long as we're on this journey together, we realize that God's word is God's word.

It doesn't need to be changed or altered, and it's what we go to when we have problems and things we want to figure out in your life, and I don't know how you feel about that because that should really bother you at some stage in your life.

[6 : 41] I mean, sometimes I read these things, and it just, it drives me crazy what's written in here. Sometimes I read this, and I try to think about how am I going to apply this to my life, and I think about the sacrifice and what it means to trust and to love, and it just, it drives me crazy, and it's an incredible challenge, and it bothers me sometimes.

It bothers me sometimes when I do these sermons because I have to be thinking about them for three months, and you guys just think about them for an hour, and then you forget when you leave here. Probably. I have to think about it for a couple months, and it drives me crazy, but I realize that God wants to speak to us, and if it doesn't drive you crazy, then maybe your God is too small.

If something that I say in here doesn't offend you, and we're talking from God's word, then maybe your relationship with God is not what you thought it was. Maybe your view of God is so small, and you can just manage him in a bottle, so no matter what's said, you can compromise that and deal with that and not think about it, and your God is too small.

I got this letter this week, and I asked permission to read it, so I know I share stories. So if you send me a letter, I usually get, not nice letters, but if you send me a nice letter, and it's in line with things, I just think this is interesting.

He says, Dear Pastor Tobin, I do not normally write, but I feel like I have to after your last sermon. I've been going to Watermark since almost the beginning, and my family loves it. Don't try to figure out who it is, but as I sat listening to your last message, I realized that I'm lost.

[8 : 27] I'm stuck in Egypt, surrounded by my comfortable life, my money, my pride, my idols. I'm actually a prince in the land, just like Moses was.

I remember a sermon you talked about on a moral therapeutic deism a while back, and I listened to it again, and I realized that that was my faith in my God.

I taught this like six months ago, so I went back to the notes, and I printed out a PowerPoint for it, and we said in this sermon that according to Christian Smith, who's a sociologist at Notre Dame, he said the primary expression of faith today, the fastest going religion in the world, is moral therapeutic deism, and it's characterized by five beliefs.

The first belief, basically, is there's a God who created earth, and he watches over it. The second belief is God wants people to be nice, fair, and good, as is taught in the Bible and most other religions.

The central goal of life is to be happy and feel good about yourself. God doesn't need to be involved in your life except when there's a problem that needs heavenly performance enhancement, like you really gotta pray.

[9 : 38] You've lost your job, but besides that, you don't really want God in your life because he causes you to do things that you might not want to do or you might have to give away something or you might have to change your attitude, and the fourth part of that is good people go to heaven when they die, and we compare that to the gospel message, and our friend says that that is what he lived.

It's taken me a long time to realize this and even to dare to admit it because I am surrounded by family, friends, and a culture that values safety, security, pragmatism more than obedience and holiness.

I'm haunted by the passages where Jesus asked the rich young ruler to give up everything to follow him. If Jesus were to ask me that, I would laugh and walk away, but I'm sad about that.

In my soul, I know there is life and freedom there, but I'm still stuck in Egypt. I'm worried about what it will say or what I will say to a holy God who asked me to justify my life on his accountant books.

You talk a lot about being on a journey and taking steps towards the Lord. Lord, this letter is my first step. Please pray for me as I look forward to continuing this journey with you.

[11 : 01] God is amazing. His grace, His love, His mercy beyond me. Your fellow traveler. We're all on a journey.

We're all seeking God. We're all asking questions. And what I've realized as we go on this journey is that whenever the gospel is preached, and we're going to see that. We've been talking about that in Luke.

Whenever the gospel is preached and taught, amazing things happen in people's lives. We see people's lives change, but then what is typical of human beings, of Christ followers, we're lazy, we're creatures of habit, we're fickle.

And often we go back and forth and we go back and forth between two different types of faith. Two different types of extremes, two different types of gospel.

It was true today, and it was true in Paul's day when he preaches the gospel in Galatians. Some of us, when we hear the gospel, think it sounds too good, too easy to be true, impossible.

[12 : 08] What's the catch is what people often say to me. No such thing as grace and mercy like that. Nothing is for free. And so we start to do things when we hear this, if we're like this.

We feel like we want to help God save us, and sometimes we even add religious activities to our lives to save us. Sometimes we can even get to a place where we hold on to these activities more than our relationship with God.

Our life is more about doing things than about our relationship with Jesus. Jesus. And if we head down this road, you're going to get exhausted. If you try to help God save you, or you try to help God justify why he saved you, you're going to get worn out.

You're going to get tired trying to do things, and eventually you're going to get bitter and angry. My fear as a pastor is that many of us will do all these activities and as an end to themselves, but not because we want to know Jesus more or because we love him.

The question we have to ask ourselves as we do things is, are we doing these things because we love God and we want to know him deeper and more truly?

[13 : 31] John 6 is an amazing passage I was reading over this week. In this passage, Jesus is talking to the Pharisees, the most learned people in his culture. They knew everything. They were intelligent.

They had all the biblical answers. And Jesus looked at them and he said, guys, you study in vain. You know all the answers.

You know all the right things. You know how to say everything, but in the end, you've missed me. You've missed grace. You've missed mercy. You've missed God.

Some of us, I think we're so busy with stuff for God that we, I mean, we're going to five Bible studies a week. Some people in here are going to three churches this Sunday. If you're going to three churches this Sunday, stop it.

Don't go to three churches. Go to one church. If this isn't the best church, go to another church. There's a lot of great churches I can recommend to you. I know the pastors are great guys that are walking with God, but don't go to three churches on Sunday.

[14 : 32] It's crazy. Stay in one church and get involved in that. Some of us are doing hundreds of religious activities a year, and I think it's not because we love God, but I think it's because we're actually trying to get a love for God.

And we feel like if we do these things, if we are busy, then God will love us and we'll love him. And what I've seen in my life is that people often just give up on Jesus. They give up on church.

We said this church was planted for the church, the unchurched, and the de-churched. And the de-churched are those people. They grew up maybe in a Catholic background. They've gone to Catholic school. They've been told all these things they want to do.

And they've done them over and over and over again. And finally they get to this point where they're just so tired and worn out. And there's still this emptiness in their soul, and they don't know what that emptiness is and they just give up.

And they come in to me and they say, I've given up on church. I've given up on Jesus. And I hear their story and what I realize is that they never, they never knew him. But they've been so busy doing things and trying to fill those activities within knowing Jesus that they don't even really know him.

[15 : 47] I think in reality when it comes to many of us, when we become Christians, we have this restlessness, this emptiness, this void in our lives.

I mean, we hear the gospel and it saves us and we know that we have this fire insurance, but we wonder, is it good enough to get us on through the journey? We invite Christ into our hearts and we allow him to save us, but we wonder, is he enough to walk with me every day?

Can I trust him? I mean, I'm just sharing from personal experiences, okay? Is he really good? Can I trust him in his journey? Is he enough to get me through there?

And sometimes I think we forget that the gospel is the power not just to save us, but it's the gospel is the power that keeps us going throughout all of our life. And it moves us through this journey.

It's funny that Katie quoted this C.S. Lewis quote. I was going to quote the exact same quote. Because he tells this very interesting part about restlessness in our soul. In the book C.S. Lewis wrote, it's very famous, we've quoted it many times, it's called The Screwtape Letters.

[16 : 57] The story of Screwtape is there's this high-ranking demon and he's talking to one of his minions who's terrorizing this person. And he's giving this guy a strategy against Christians, against you and I.

And the demon says this, he says, you have to keep them in a state of mind that I call Christianity and. A-N-D.

Christianity and. In Lewis' day, it was Christianity and the new psychology. Christianity and the new order. Christianity and faith healing.

If you can just get them to add something else to their faith, get them to add something else to Jesus, get them to add something else to the gospel, and if you do this, you void out everything and they miss out on the power of God.

Is that, I just thought that's amazing. I mean, I thought about that today. If C.S. Lewis were around now and he was writing, he would probably add different things for his end.

[18 : 04] He would probably add Christianity in coolness. Christianity in self-affirmation. Christianity and self-improvement. Christianity and personal progress.

Christianity and social issues. And diversity and tolerance. And popularity. And success. And power. And social status.

And tradition. I mean, if you're like me, what I struggle with are things like Christianity and control. Christianity and achievements.

Christianity and my strengths. Christianity and my reputation. Christianity and my relationships. Christianity and my family's well-being. My ambitions. My goals. My dreams. My personal preferences.

My spiritual growth. I don't know what you add in there. But the Bible says that we all do that. And we call those things idols. and they're not a bad thing.

[19 : 08] Personal ambition is not a bad thing. Family is not a bad thing. Growth is not a bad thing. Change is not a bad thing. But when they become the ultimate thing, they become equal to Christianity.

Then they become our God. And Lewis says to the demon that if you can get them to do this, if you can distract them, if you can get them to hesitate, if you can get them to add, you will keep them off course.

You will keep them powerless. You will keep them ineffective. And they will never ever come to a place where they will believe that mere Christianity is enough. You hear what the demons said to each other?

We've got to get them so busy in adding things on that they will never come to a place where they will believe that mere Christianity is enough. Make them feel like they add something onto the gospel.

And if they add something onto the gospel, then they lose it. That's one of us. One of us, when we hear the gospel, we're going, woo!

[20 : 12] Amazing! Incredible! Grace! Mercy! I got that going for me. Now I can leave here, and I can just do whatever I want. Because I have my heavenly insurance.

I mean, we live our lives in compartments and boxes. And these boxes have no integrity. They're not built together. There's no connection.

There's nowhere where the gospel goes through every part of our lives. We think we can come to church, we can come to community group, we can do two hours, and then at the end of the rest of the week, we just do whatever we want.

I mean, watch out. I can lie. I can cheat. I can defraud people. I can treat people poorly. I can treat people poorly at work, at my family. I can treat my wife like crap. I can treat my friends as disposable friends.

Hey, it's okay because I go to the gospel, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

[21 : 09] What he has done for us has made no difference in our lives. And so we walk out of these doors with this false sense of security because we come to church.

I think sometimes we think that we know Jesus, but we don't have this overwhelming sense of God's holiness. We don't have the overwhelming sense of how desperate we are. We don't have an overwhelming sense of our brokenness, of our lostness.

We don't understand God's mercy and grace and how God wants to be with us every day and to change everything and every moment God is there to take you on the journey. And we lose that because our lives are compartmentalized.

And we just think this is what I do here and this is what I do there and this is what I do there, but none of these things ever come together. we lose all of God's grace. Some of us, we go tonight to family dim sum compartment, then we go to Sunday night compartment, to our Monday work box, to our Monday evening work box, to our Friday at Leng Kui Fung box, and in none of these areas does God's glory, glory, in none of these areas does God's glory or holiness or grace or the gospel change anything.

Jesus might be something to us, but he's a very small something, he's not everything. And if you're in one of these two categories, congratulations, because we all are.

[22 : 52] And what is true today is true for us as it was for Paul when he wrote the book of Galatians. And so if you turn in your bulletin, I wrote out the first eight verses, we're just going to fly through those things, we're going to do this for five weeks, we're going to look at Galatians because I think there's some things in there that we really have to understand, we really have to get our heads around.

First, Galatians was written by Paul, his Jewish name is Saul, and he was a brilliant opponent and persecutor of the early church. He had the best teacher in Torah in the world at that time.

He was the highest educated person. He starts to attack the church and in the books of Acts, we see this amazing come to Jesus experience where Jesus actually appears to Paul and blinds him and changes his life and Paul does this incredible 180.

He becomes a leader in the church, he's an amazing church planner, he plants church after church after church, he plants a series of churches in Galatia. And then after he's done planting them and putting in elders, this group of men called Judaizers come in.

Now these Judaizers, they're Jews, and they come in to the church and they try to lead the people astray. They try to say, well, this is what Paul taught, and they're not going to say that's wrong, because right away people's ears will go, whoop.

[24 : 15] I mean, if I came in here and said, you know, Jesus didn't really die on the cross for you, you'd go, whoa, wow, whoa, that's totally against Christian doctrine and everything else.

That's not orthodox. But if I said, Jesus died on the cross for you so that you could earn your way to heaven, he opened the door so that you could work hard enough now, well, maybe some people would say, I don't know.

Maybe that's true. I mean, sure, nothing's free, right? So maybe I need to do something. So that was what was happening in Paul's church.

These guys came in and they were Jewish and they said, you've got to do all the rules. You've got to do all the ceremonies. You've got to go all the festivals. And so Paul hears this and he reacts incredibly strong.

I mean, he breaks cultural norms in writing this letter because he skips parts of it, like a greeting, a salutation, a welcome, because he's so upset about what's happening. Because people's lives are in danger.

[25 : 21] They're in danger of falling away and not understanding Jesus and the gospel and grace and mercy. And so around 49 AD, Paul writes this letter 15 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

And he writes to these churches and he warns them and he uses very strong language and he basically says, you are in danger of losing Jesus. You're in danger of being separated from the thing that we've struggled so much for.

And he writes this letter to these men. Paul, an apostle, big A, a messenger sent out, not sent from men nor through the agency of men but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead.

And all the brethren who are with me. So Paul writes out and he says, hey, I'm an apostle. I'm gathered with the twelve. God has given me a special message. God has given me a special mission.

He's given me a special purpose. He's given me a special power. And I'm going out to preach this gospel to you. grace to you.

[26 : 42] That word is unmerited favor. It's the gospel. It's something you don't deserve and God gives to you. Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins so that he might rescue us from this present evil age.

Are we living in a present evil age? He's not just talking about what's going on around us but he's looking forward to the future.

He's looking forward to what's going into our heart. Verse four.

He gave himself for our sins that he might rescue us from this present evil age according to the will of our God and Father. To whom be the glory forevermore. Amen. I am so amazed that you are so quickly deserting him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel.

Paul uses incredibly strong language here. And he says guys you were walking, you were running, you knew what it meant to put your faith and trust in Christ and all of a sudden these men come in and without blinking an eye I'm amazed, I'm astonished, I'm shocked that you've gone to this gospel.

[28 : 03] And the gospel isn't a different gospel, it's a false gospel. I mean these guys had come in and they'd taken the Bible and they'd laid Judaism on it. And so the Bible is good but you've got to make sure that you practice all the rules too.

You've got to make sure you do all the ceremonies, you've got to make sure you're clean, you've got to do all these things and if you do all these things then you'll understand everything that's going on in this word. And Paul says don't listen to them because they're changing this.

And this should be the thing that goes above everything. It goes above our family, it goes above what we believe, it goes above where we work. In Paul's day it was Judaism, maybe today people put the Book of Mormon.

Maybe somebody you've heard puts Scientology tracks or Jehovah Witnesses watch tower up there. Maybe some of us put Marxist doctrine or communist belief.

Maybe some of us put our own personal experience. Well I know that's what it says but you know I've never really felt that. Well I know that's what it said but that's totally impractical.

[29 : 16] Do I really need to do that? And Paul says these men have come in and they've placed stuff above the Bible and they're reading through those things to interpret the scripture and he says if you do that you're going to die.

Does that sound intense? I mean when you read this you're like whoa, these are strong words. Because he knew that what was in here was so precious that if you take it and you change it just a little bit, you lose the power of God's spirit, you lose the power of Jesus Christ, you lose the reason why Christ died on a cross for us.

And so he's warning them very heavily. In verse 7 he says it's not just a different gospel but it's really not another. Only there are some who are disturbing you and they want to distort and that word is pervert to change to make look unrecognizable the gospel of Christ.

Christ, he goes on and he says these words be careful of these people. Basically what he's saying is if you change the gospel you lose the gospel.

Basically what he's saying is every one of us have a choice in here. We can place our life in our future in the hands of God or we can place our life and our future in our hands.

[30 : 51] And Paul says there's only two choices there. You have to choose which one are you going to do? Are you going to choose God? Are you going to choose man? And he says be careful because when these false gospels come in what they tend to do is they diminish your sinfulness.

And they look at you and say you know you're really not that bad. I mean if you just went to a couple more Bible studies you'd be great. You know you're really not that sinful. I mean those really conservative Christians think you are but you're really not.

I mean you can fix yourself. You can do it. I mean don't worry about that. And you know God we used to think he's really big but he's really kind of like that. In fact God you want to get God so small that you can put him in your pocket and you can carry him around.

And so when you need him you can bring him out and you can rub on him and blow. Okay I need this. That's moral therapeutic deism right? And Paul says be careful how you choose your gospels because there's not two different gospels there's not three different gospels there's one gospel.

He goes on in really strong words in verses 8 and 9 he says but even if we Paul Tobin the elders of Watermark the elders and leaders of any church you go to even if we are an angel from heaven.

[32 : 14] How did Mormonism start? An angel from heaven came and they had a special book and they wanted to give the leaders and they said if you put this book on top of the Bible you're going to understand everything.

And Paul says be careful of that. Even if an angel appears before you and they say something different than what I've said if they preach a gospel contrary to what you've preached he is to be cursed and the word is damned and it's one of the strongest words in Greek.

To be lost. So be careful who you let in. Be careful who teaches to you. Be careful what you listen to. Be careful what you read besides your scripture because those things are going to filter everything that you read.

And be careful of that or you're in trouble. Paul in 9 goes on and he says again let them be damned. Let them be accursed. He later on in Galatians basically says that you're teaching death.

They're teaching poison to you. You know eight years ago I had a heart attack and I still take heart medicine today. What do you think would happen if all of a sudden I realized that the heart medicine I was taking was counterfeit?

[33 : 34] You think that would be something I should be concerned about? I mean the thing that I was hoping that was going to give me life, the thing that I was hoping that was going to make my life better, it was going to extend me, it was going to heal me.

What if I found out that the thing, the medicine I was taking was counterfeit? It was actually poison. Should I react to that?

that's one of the first things my wife said. She goes, now where are you buying that medicine? You need to get that checked out because I wanted to make sure that what I was taking was real and true.

And Paul says to the church and he says to us, in the same way, you guys need to make sure that what you're taking, what you're believing is real and true because you might be taking something that you think is life and it's going to kill you.

It's going to work you to death. It's going to make you feel like you got to do all these things. It's going to make you feel like you can do whatever you want because you're going to heaven because Jesus loves you. He's my dude. Paul says be careful.

[34 : 41] Examine your life. Examine your actions. Examine your heart. What do you really believe and how are you really living that out? Does grace in the gospel message change anything?

that you think or do. And Paul says if it doesn't, then you're probably taking poison. And ultimately it's going to kill you.

And the hard thing about this type of poison is it's spiritual death. And it can be passed on to those around you. So Paul says be careful.

Make sure you're taking the genuine gospel. Make sure you understand what it is. And the true gospel I think is found in verse 3 through 5 and we're going to end here. Because if you just take verse 4, that is the whole message of this passage.

That's the whole message of the book of Galatians. The true gospel is this. Verse 4, it tells us what. What did Jesus do? Jesus came. Read that again with me. Jesus came to give himself for our sins so that he might rescue us.

[35 : 47] What did he come to do? He came to rescue us. I mean, Christianity is the only religion in the world where the leader sacrifices himself.

He jumps in the water to rescue the people. Every other religion says, hey, you're drowning? Here, let me give you this book. I'll teach you how to swim. Turn to page 48.

Really quickly. Okay. If you do that, you're saved. Every other religion says, do that. Let me give you something and you're going to learn how to be good yourself. But Christianity, the gospel message is that Jesus Christ came and he rescued you.

He jumped in the water. And not only did he jump in the water, he pushed you out of the water into a lifeboat. And not only did he push you out of the water into the lifeboat, as he did that, he died.

He died. He died. When we were praying about starting Watermark, I met with two professors at the University of Hong Kong.

[36 : 53] We prayed and we dreamed about what it would look like to have a college ministry there. We had no leaders. We had no idea. We knew what was going on. One of those guys was Chris Beeling. And as we sat in TGI Fridays and we talked about it and we dreamed about it and we wrote down on that, little did I know that that summer, he would no longer be here.

Because as he went swimming with his friends, his relatives, and one of the nieces got caught in his undertow and was going to drown and he ran out and he swam out and he saved his niece and he brought her out of the water and in doing that he had a heart attack and he died.

So he's not with us anymore. And in the same way, Paul says to the church of Galatians, this is what Jesus does. He jumps into the water. He rescues us. He doesn't teach us how to be rescued.

He rescues us and he shows us that we need him and we only can make it with him. Jesus jumps in and he throws himself into the water.

How does he do that or what does he do to save us? He says, it says in verse 4, he gave himself for our sins. So he gives himself for our sins. In Greek it says he gives himself on behalf of our sins.

[38 : 09] Jesus dies in our place. He doesn't die in our place to give us a second chance. He dies in our place to give us life.

Because if he had a second chance you would ruin it. And what the gospel says is he jumps in the water and he saves us. He saves us by dying for our sins to give us a second chance.

And in verse 5 he says, why does he save us? According to the will of God our father. To whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. It's grace.

You and I are here right now not because we're cool and not because God thought he really needed to save us because he needed an accountant as a Christian. He just came in and he saved us. His grace poured out upon us on the cross and the reason that we're here is because of God's glory.

In God's goodness. In God's mercy. In God's grace. And Paul wants us to remember that.

[39 : 15] He wants to challenge us to say don't forget the gospel. Don't forget the messages that Jesus rescues. Don't forget the messages that Jesus sacrifices. Don't forget the messages that Jesus did it.

Because he just did it. And the reason you and I are sitting here is not because we have our acts together because I know you and you know me and we don't have our acts together. The reason we sit here is because God poured out his mercy and his grace on us.

And that's the message that Paul wants the church to take away. That's the message that he wants us to remember. That's the message that we walk through our daily lives and we don't just enter into Christian family and life through God's blood but we walk every day through his blood.

When we feel that emptiness in our life we have to realize that that emptiness is there because there's a void and that void can only be filled by Christ in the gospel. Some of us are going to feel that emptiness and we're going to think well I can fill it with a watch or I can fill it with going to another Bible study.

I need to go to another church today and really get that emptiness filled up. But the message that Paul is trying to share to the church is if you do that you're living a false gospel. And it will eventually kill you.

[40 : 26] But the message is that as you walk with him moment by moment every day that his mercy, his grace is poured out upon you. He dances, he loves, he hugs.

The only time in heaven when people stand, when Jesus stands, is when people come to faith. And Paul wants the church, he wants us to understand that. Because the minute we forget that, the minute we just kind of go, yeah, I'm saved.

What's for lunch? Well, I'm saved and, you know, I don't know if this is going to affect my business transaction today. Maybe I can just put that in this other compartment.

Well, I'm saved but I need to do some more things just to make sure that I'm really saved. The minute we forget that, Paul says we take poison instead of life.

And I think we all struggle with this. I struggle with this every moment of my day. I have to ask myself, why is that emptiness there and why am I not allowing God to fill that up with his son?

[41 : 32] Do I really believe getting another title or degree will fill that emptiness? Do I really believe getting more money is going to fill that emptiness? And Paul is yelling and he's shouting out and he's saying, guys, be careful.

Paul, verse three, he says, grace and peace from God, our father and our Lord, Jesus Christ. And that's how the book of Galatians is encapsulated.

It starts off with grace and peace and it ends with grace and peace. And in the middle is gospel, God's love, his sacrifice, how much he's crazy about you, how much he wants to go on a journey with you, how much he wants to write into your story, how much he wants you to trust him.

And the question is, will we do that? Will we surrender to him and allow him to do that? Or will we live a different gospel?

The gospel of my invention. You guys, you're going to be in for an amazing ride these next five weeks as we go through Galatians. I want to encourage you to stick with it, think about it, deal with it, ask questions.

[42 : 41] If I said something that makes you angry, come up here and punch me. Not in the face, but in the arm, okay, or something like that. Let's talk about it. Because you should be angry. It should freak you out.

That's why Paul had to speak so strongly. Don't just walk away and go, that was really cool, that was just another sermon and I'll go live my life the way I want to. Paul says if you do that, you take death.

And we don't want you to take death. We want you to take life. Father, I just thank you for this day.

I thank you for your word that is incredibly powerful and challenging. I thank you how your spirit goes out through your word and changes people's lives and impacts them in ways that we will never know until we get to heaven.

Father, I pray for those of us in here who are struggling with performance and doing and feeling like we just haven't done enough and does God really accept me and now my life is still crap and how's that going to get fixed out and surely God doesn't want to deal with that.

[43 : 49] He wants me to deal with it. That's why I have all these books to read and all these other things and Father, I just pray for those because we're all at places like that sometime in our life. And I pray that your spirit would just enter into their life and they would feel your gospel and your presence and your love and your gentleness and your compassion and they would just be overwhelmed by your goodness.

How much you desire to be with them. Father, I pray for those of us who live here and we just do our two hours and we walk out and our lives are no different. Father, I pray this week that our lives would be different.

I pray that you would just smack us right in the head with a two by four. Help us to realize that we're treating our family in ways we shouldn't. Help us to realize we're treating our spouses in ways that we shouldn't, that we're treating our workers and our coworkers and everything in ways that would be totally dishonoring to you and displeasing to you.

Help us to integrate our lives with your son in the gospel and realize that it's not just one little section but it's everything. That you're everything. Father, help us to have a God who's not so small that we can control him but help us to realize that you are God who's the creator of all things and yet you came to earth and put on an earth suit and lived and died and jumped in the water to save us because we were drowning and you pushed us into the boat and you sacrificed yourself purely because you love us and you wanted to glorify your father.

Lord, we come to you and just are humble and we open our hearts. Heal us. Change us. Bring us to you.

[45 : 43] We love you. And we need you desperately. We pray these things in your son Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.