

How to live to not live in vain

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: 13 March 2022

Preacher: Israel Guerrero

[0 : 00] to 11. Galatians chapter 4 from verse 4 to 11. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So you are not longer a slave, but a son. And if a son, then heir through God.

But formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather, to be known by God, how?

How can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slave you want to be once more? You observe days and months and seasons and years.

I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain. This is the Word of God. May the Lord bless His Holy Word.

It is a great honor to be here with you this evening. This is the second time that I'm here.

[2 : 06] The first time was, I think, two or more than two years ago. So it is an honor, a privilege to be here with you this evening. And today, I want to share this sermon about how to live to not live in vain. How to live to not live in vain.

One of the most frustrating things is to realize that we have done things in vain. I don't know if you like to bake a cake or something, but finish making a cake so that it falls to the ground later. How do you feel?

Or writing something in a Word document. And then, sadly, the software crashes.

And we lose everything. How do you feel? Or what do you say? Or what do you think about it? In my case, I said, just, I have done everything in vain. Everything was in vain.

This cake, this, I don't know, everything. But then, something happens, and you say, Oh, this was in vain. Is it possible to live or to work in vain?

[3 : 32] I think that one of the most saddest things in life is to pretend to have a Christian life or living as a Christian without Christ in our lives.

To live a vain, sorry, Christian life is not Christianity at all. And the worst thing is that it brings consequences for this life and the next.

To work in vain, to live in vain. So this evening, I would like to talk to you about three points from this passage. The first one is what's the foundation or the ground of this vain life?

And according to this, it's legalism. The next point is about the foundation of the Christian life. What is the ground, the solid ground for our lives?

And that is the wonderful works of God. It's God Himself. And finally, what's the life or what's the response to this wonderful works of God? And that is knowing God and being known by God.

[4 : 50] So the first point is this foundation of a vain life. And according to this, it's legalism. And probably many of you, you already know the content and the context of this letter to Galatians.

And Paul writes to a community of believers whose foundation is being attacked by this people who wants to preach Christ plus something else.

That is the gospel, a gospel or a false gospel that is about Christ plus something else.

It is Jesus plus your works in order to get a sure salvation. But Paul is absolutely clear that salvation from beginning to the end is a work of God.

So the Christian life is a life based on what God has done for us. And Paul is so clear on this. This is such a great reality that it cannot be tarnished by anything.

[6 : 14] But if someone doesn't want to live according to this, it brings problems to his own life.

Of course, the reality of the gospel is not affected at all. But the reality of that life is deeply affected. This is why Paul says in verse 11, I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

Why is that? Because they are not growing grace according to the gospel, but turning back to the place of slavery.

verse 13, but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world whose slave you want to be once more?

You observe days and months and seasons and years. In other words, they are taking their lives and they are taking their hearts into Egypt again.

[7 : 37] But let's remember the words in Hebrews, in the book of Hebrews, but my righteous one shall live by faith and if he shrinks back, my soul has not pleasure in him.

This community in that particular context, they are not running to the heavenly promised land, but drawing back to something similar to their natural state without Christ.

Can you see this? They were trying to live with Christ as they used to live without Christ.

And what was that condition? according to verse 8, formerly, formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not God.

So this is the natural condition of any single person without Christ. Actually, two characteristics we can see here. the first one is that any single person without Christ doesn't know God, doesn't have a saving real knowledge of God.

[9 : 06] And secondly, he is an enslaved person. So there's not a true knowledge of God, but at the same time, he's an slave of idols or sins.

So to know God, this is the fundamental issue for everyone here tonight. What is to know God?

I will talk about this in the third point, but to know God is mainly to live according to the main purpose of life, man.

And that is, and maybe we can reply here, what's the chief end of man? And that is, it is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

forever. It is to enjoy God. It is to glorify God, and we glorify God when we enjoy him forever. This is not a dry, cold relationship.

[10 : 25] We are talking about life itself, about joy. It is to enjoy God forever. So that is to know God.

God. It is to have this living fellowship with the living God. However, and because of sin, this is not the case. We reject God and seek true satisfaction in fallen creatures, fallen things, fallen

ideologies, in other people, or in ourselves, in our achievements, in everything, but not in God.

and this lifestyle make us a slave of these things. And to be a slave, to be a slave, demands a significant energy cost of life, of life itself, for something that will never, never satisfy your life.

So we are just wasting energy, or in biological terms, ATP, whatever you call it. you are wasting your life in something that will never, never will bring satisfaction, meaning to what is to live.

At the end of the day, and at the beginning of every day, as Paul said, for me, and maybe this is the summary of this sermon, but for me to live, to live is Christ.

[11 : 56] What are we reflecting right now? what is for us to live? It's to live as angry people, better people, betterness, selfishness.

What is to you to live? So to be a slave is just to waste our energy in something that will never satisfy our life.

This is the worship of any false savior or God. That could be your life, your money, your possessions, your tragedies, and so on, or even your ministry, anything that replace God in your life.

In other words, anything in the place of God to rule your life, family, and ministry. How can you turn back again to the weak and worthless, elementary principles of the world?

You observe days and months and seasons and years. So this is the issue. In their kind of natural past life, they were like pagan people.

[13 : 09] So they were moving from one slavery to another slavery. These are the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world.

people, they were considering things that in its nature were weak and worthless. Who wants to build on a weak and worthless foundation?

Nobody, right? But why? Why? Why are lives so focused on these things? in this case, this weak foundation, this new slavery, this new way of life that in its core is slavery, in this context is legalism.

legalism. And this legalism is centered on our person and works. We are, I am, the focus of everything.

I am the son of this system in this universe. Verse, so, the legalism is centered in our persons.

[14:36] Therefore, to get salvation and certainty of salvation in legalism demands a high cost of physical and spiritual energy.

In other words, the daily breath of a legalist person is a glass, not of water, it is a glass of sand or dust that will never satisfy our spiritual thirst.

The legalist, the legalist, sorry, lives to satisfy all the time. And in Paul's days, they were centered in this unhealthy traditionalism, trying to keep things of the old, external things of the old covenant.

In our days, we can do something similar. And let me be clear on this. Tradition is good. We need it. We have this Christian reformed tradition, and we need to recover that.

But legalism turns tradition into traditionalism. As a church history professor used to say, tradition is the living faith of the dead.

[16:01] Traditionalism is the dead faith of the living. Let me say again, tradition is the living faith of the dead, but traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.

And let me add to this definition that traditionalism is the dead faith of the living legalist. In other words, a healthy Christian, and in this case reformed tradition, focus on God, his saving works through the ages, where the legalist, where this legalist, traditionalist man focuses on his person and way of doing things through his life and ministry.

The focus is always on other us and not in Christ. So at the end of the day, we are tired of being Christian because we are wasting on energy or life not to live according to our chief end, but according to our dreams or things or even selfish ambitions.

This is why Paul says I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain. In the original text, there is a kind of word that indicates a maybe. That is, Paul is saying, this is not completely certain now that this is in vain, but you are walking in that direction, in a direction of a vain life and work.

work. It's like, please, consider this. Everything could be in vain because we are adding things to the complete work of Christ.

[18:04] And we are not living according to the gospel, but it's according to the gospel plus something else. I am afraid I may have labor over you in vain.

That is, all the effort in that church because of legalism, it seems to be in vain.

It's a really sad situation. Everything in vain because we want to be the object of attention, we want to set up the rules, we want to be the object of worship or lordship in our lives, families, and church. Obviously, we don't say, worship me, but how do we live? Who is the lord in your house, in your family, in your ministry?

You or the lord of lords? So, with this context, so, what is the foundation that that may not be the case for us?

[19:24] What is infinitely more sure, secure than living in vain? What can rescue us from a vain life?

What can restore the joy of salvation? salvation? Who can restore this salvation from slavery, of legalism, or any kind of sin?

And the answer is God and his wonderful works. So, this is the second point, briefly. So, the second point is the foundation of the Christian life, the wonderful works of God.

God, and let me be clear on this, that's the foundation, the ground of your life.

It is not according how you are doing the things, you are doing the things in a pretty good way, it's not about that, and if you're living according to the gospel, that's great, if you're praying, if you're reading your Bible, we have to do that, but the foundation of our lives is not what we are doing, and this is a great comfort at the same time, the foundation of our lives are not our temptations, or your sins that you are struggling with, the foundation of your life is God and his wonderful works.

[20:58] So, this is your comfort, this is your joy for the good days, or for the very, bad days, is God and his works. So, that's the second point.

So, but when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we may receive adoption as sons.

Verse 6, and because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his son into a heart crying, Abba, Father.

But when the fullness of time had come, this is the fulfillment of what people were waiting and longing since the fall.

People were waiting for something, for restoration, for meaning in their lives. People were waiting for God himself, and now we have the fullness of time had come.

[21 : 59] In one way, they were waiting for the sending, the sending of the son, the sending of the one who is true God from true God.

And please hear this, God sent his son. God sent his very only begotten and loved son to us.

And maybe you already know the words of John 3, 16, for God so loved the world. And this is the gospel that he gave, he sent, he gave his only begotten son.

he sent his son to you.

God really knows what's the main issue within your heart. And God sent his, God gave his son for you.

[23 : 14] this is a powerful statement because here we see the heart of the gospel.

God's love, and please this is so, so great that we should pray to remember the importance of this. Praise God if you were born in a Christian family and if you already learned this and memorized this verse, but we have to remember every day what's the meaning of this sending that God sent his son.

This is God's love manifest in sending his only begotten son. God sending God. God the father sending the one.

God the father sending the one who is eternally begotten. The one whom the father eternally says. And hear this.

[24 : 26] This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. God the father look at the son and he says I am very well and well pleased with you his own son.

And that son was sent to us to you and he is right now in this very moment in this congregation because he is the head of the church.

He is the head of this congregation of your life and he is here with us. Therefore the mission of the son in being sent to us manifests his eternal relation of origin the only begotten son.

The sending manifests the promise of the covenant of grace Emmanuel God with us. People were waiting for this. People were not waiting.

The people of the covenant in the Old Testament and this involved the church in general. The church is not waiting for having a higher amount of money to do things, a nice building or things to accomplish God's mission in evangelism or in the kingdom.

[26 : 15] We only need God the son. God the son. In our lives. In our marriage.

In our family. In our singleness. In our jobs. In the midst of our temptation. In sad times.

In happy times. In every moment. We only need God the son. God the father. And God the holy spirit. Here. The foundation of the church.

Emmanuel. God with us. And according to verse 4 and 5 this sending has a double purpose. To redeem and to receive adoption. We are free people.

God sent his son to redeem those who were under the law. But we must clarify something here.

God redeem us or set us free not from the law itself because the law is holy and reflects the God's will and that is love God with all your heart and love your neighbor.

[27 : 24] The root of the law is love. So this being free to redeem us or set us free not from the law itself but but from two things from keeping perfectly the law in order to be safe and also from the curse of the law by breaking this law.

Galatians 3 Christ redeem us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

So what's the foundation the solid ground of every Christian? First that he is a free person because the holy beloved and only begotten son took a human nature and on the cross he became a curse.

Please think about this. How can be that the one who is holy holy became a curse and took all God's wrath that you and I deserve to give us freedom and also to receive this adoption as sons and daughters through the son.

By nature we are enemies of God but by grace we have received adoption. We are legally free. We are declared justified. That's a legal term.

[29 : 03] But here but this doesn't stop here. The judge of the universe the one think about this the judge of the universe who declares you just and free because of the merits of his son comes to you comes to your very heart to say that you are my son and daughter in this son Christ the judge

comes to you to your very heart to adopt you you are not an enemy but through the mission of the son you become a son or daughter of God so just think about this

Christ mission on earth manifests the eternal relation of origin that is eternally begotten from the father in order to adopt you and this is absolutely real and you know what because this doesn't stop here there's another mission or another sending of the triune God verse six and seven and because you are sons God has sent the spirit of his son into our hearts crying Abba father so you are not longer a slave but a son and if a son then an heir through God the sending of the spirit all the missions of God reflect the glory of the triune God and think about this because God the triune God must be the foundation of everything of your joy life and relationships of everything God sends his son and also the spirit of his son therefore both the father and the son send the holy spirit and again please don't think that this is a lecture on systematic theology or something like that but this is the gospel this is the gospel maybe you can say I am not here to listen to this lecture in dogmatics or something like that but this is not a lecture this is the gospel this is this is we are talking about the very nature of our triune God the God that we say that we worship so God sends the spirit of his son this the spirit of his son the one who knows and penetrates the heart of the son and at the same time knows the depths of

God the father for the spirit searches everything even the depths of God so so also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the spirit of God that spirit so please I know that we are tired but think about this God himself that spirit who is God himself the one who is glorified together with the father and the son the one the holy spirit who is the spirit of God and the spirit of Christ or the spirit of the son comes to you but look at the direction of descending look at the target of descending it's your very heart and what's the purpose of this that we may cry out from our hearts Abba father and that means to have this intimate fellowship with

God who by his missions fulfills the promise of the covenant and that is Emmanuel God with us and also through the Holy Spirit God in us dear brothers and sisters this is the only thing that we need to know and to live according to this that God is here among us and is within us how then shall we live when you are being tempted when we are angry frustrated of things that are happening in our families when when you are struggling and falling into the very same ugly sin who is the only one who can give you freedom and joy of salvation but the triune

[34 : 27] God and to know what is within within the very being of God that God sent his son to live and die for you that God sent his with the son his spirit the one who knows the very depths of God the father and God the son comes to you to give you comfort peace joy salvation to cry out Abba father so in this way the foundation of our life this foundation destroys any kind of legalism and that is our God and his wonderful works so let me finish with this how shall we live then knowing this so this is the

Christian life knowing God and being known by God verse nine but now that you have come to know God or rather to be known by God because we know God and we are known by God we don't even think about going back to Egypt we don't even think about putting our persons in the midst of our lives families and church we are not the center it's the triune God the triune God is the beginning center and end of everything so we live to know God while at the same time we are known by God so think about this relationship and the most awful horrible thing that an almost Christian can experience is to hear these terrible words of

Matthew 7 on that day and you and I will be in that day believe it or not we will be there if you are here or you are watching online or you are watching this in the future I don't know but on that day Christ says on that day many will say to me Lord Lord did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do many works in your name and then will I declare to them I never I never knew you depart from me you workers of lawlessness I never knew you that is a declaration of something that never happened between the almost

Christian and Christ and that is a sweet and glorious fellowship of love there was a pretend to be a Christian we're going to pretend we are going to play to be a Christian no to be a Christian is to enjoy this sweet fellowship with the one who sent his son with the one who sent his spirit to live for his glory however if that's your case let me tell you this Christ paid for that sin on the cross of that sin of this lack of communion with him in order to lead us to have communion with God and that is to know

God so let me finish with this what things are involved in this knowing God a continual understanding of the Lord that we worship of the of the God that we proclaim to know more and

more about his being attributes names and each person of the Trinity to know more you desire to know more about the God that you adore I want to know more about Christ and his offices I want to know more about the one who is my prophet my king my high priest I want to know more I would like to pray more but I don't know how but what about if you think about Christ praying for you right now in this very moment what if you think about Christ who now is at the right hand of the father with a human nature with a human beating heart being filled with the

[39 : 47] Holy Spirit and that in this very moment the Holy Spirit who is filling the human heart of our Savior is filling our hearts right now what if we think more about the God that we worship when we think how can we have a better relationship with our relatives families or in everything that we do what if we put our what if we live according to this reality this is real and this is the work of the Holy Spirit that he's always preaching us and saying this is real this is real this is real you you are today you are sitting here but there's something more real than this are you suffering yes and it hurts but it's something more real and that is the triune God and his wonderful works that is to know

God is a knowledge that is united with the saving faith and that is resting in God and his work this is an experiential knowledge at the same time not something that jumps in our brain it's not just about having a good and great theology it's to have this burning knowledge that transform our lives and give us passion passion for the glory of God and his kingdom and this community here it is light for our heads because we need this but it's a heat for our hearts in order to seek the face of the living God why is all this because God knows us from eternity the father gave you to his son at the fulfillment of the time God took a human nature to live and die for us and at Pentecost the father and the son sent the

Holy Spirit and in this day and in this Lord's day we can experience the benefits of these missions while we know more and more and more about God knowing that the foundation of that knowledge is that we are known by God therefore you are secure in Christ and you will never ever hear that words I never knew you because you are being loved infinitely loved by God the Father God the Son and God the Holy Spirit the God who is with us and within us may the Lord lead us to experience this right now and for the rest of our lives Amen let's pray together O God restore the joy of my salvation and what is this joy but to not only know that all our sins have been forgiven but also to know you more to love you more to seek your face to say whom have

I in heaven but you O God and there is nothing on this earth that I desire O God help us to remember your works in past ages help us to remember your work in this very day that you are praying for us that you are here with us that you are working in our hearts through sufferings through victories through temptation through any circumstances you are with us and within us and we want to live according to that give us passion for your holiness give us passion for your kingdom give us passion for your people give us passion for the one who will be your people and are outside here in Livingstone or here in Scotland give us passion for your name for you oh God in your holy name we pray amen come and you kid he and your head to his amen community ma God neighborhood Save things who every country savior