

The Cross of Christ and the Message of Redemption

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: 28 September 2025

Preacher: Rev Callum Macleod

[0 : 00] Let's turn together to Paul's letter to Galatians and chapter 3 and we can read verses 13 and 14.! That we might receive the promised spirit through faith.

I want us together this evening to pick up on what we have been studying in the past months and the times that I've been with you. And that is to look at the benefits of the cross of Jesus Christ.

If it is true and it is that Jesus himself is the gospel, then Jesus is the most important person that we can think about. And Jesus becomes the most important person we can think about when we realize who we are.

And right through the pages of the gospels and of these letters, the word of God engages with us, seeking to raise in our minds the sense of our need of God's salvation and the preciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We saw in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 the cross of Christ and the message of reconciliation. How God takes the initiative and he brings us to himself and he makes peace with us through the Lord Jesus.

[1 : 41] We saw in 1 John chapter 4 the message of the cross and the message of propitiation, where the anger of God is turned away in the cross work of the Lord Jesus.

When we look at the letter to this church, there are so many interesting things that connect us with what Paul is saying and who he is writing to.

And he is writing this letter, first of all, because he is defending the gospel that has been given to him.

And we read at the beginning of the chapter the way in which he is referring to those who are preaching a gospel that's different to the gospel that he gave to them. And that's a major problem.

That there is a message which is there to counteract and to go against the message of the gospel itself. Not that it is entirely or 100% against the gospel.

[2 : 42] And the issue is that it's close to the gospel, but it is a departure from the gospel that Paul is preaching. And that, of course, creates confusion.

And wherever there are two messages, we get confused. And where there are mixed messages taken from the Bible, then we get confused. And we get confused to our harm.

And we can perhaps highlight three things that show us the confusion that the people in Galatia suffered from because of the wrong teaching.

There is, first of all, there is a faith problem. There are those who are departing from the faith because of the confusion. There is also a fullness problem in the sense that they are beginning to think that Jesus is not enough.

And that's a major problem. And they are also having problems with how they relate to each other. So the confused message of the gospel that is given to them to contradict Paul's message creates all of that confusion.

[3 : 56] And bearing that in mind, I want us to look at these verses this evening. I've done a gospel coaching course. And there are different matrices used to help people at different stages of their ministry.

And one of these matrices seeks to highlight particular gaps that may interfere with a person being able to carry out their ministry effectively.

And there are three gaps. The first of these is a knowledge gap. People don't have the knowledge to fulfill their ministry effectively.

The second gap is a skills gap. People don't have the skills to go with their knowledge to enable them to fulfill their ministry. There is then the motivation gap.

That unless people are motivated by the love of God and the love of Christ, then they won't be able to fulfill ministry. Three gaps that are ideas that we can borrow and bring into the very way in which we are called among to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

[5 : 07] And if there is a gap in our knowledge, then everything else is going to suffer. And we want to carry that idea with us as we look at these verses.

The fact that there is a knowledge gap. That knowledge gap is creating confusion. And the confusion is with regard to their appreciation of Jesus Christ in the gospel.

And so against that background, I want to think of the cross of Jesus and the message of redemption. Confusion. I want to think first of all of the problem.

And I mentioned confusion and the problem is that same confusion. And in the confusion, there are two aspects to it. And the first part of the confusion is that there are those who don't need the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's who verse 10 begins. For all who rely on the works of the law. Their lives are given over, lived out of the law. And reckoning that through their observance of God's law, that they are the children of God and that they belong to the kingdom of God.

[6 : 21] Everything that they do is motivated by their understanding of what the law of God means. And based on that, they are confident that they can live their lives in such a way that will please God.

And that will bring them into the very kingdom of God and be the children of God. And we read what Paul is saying here and it's clearly referring to the law that was given to Moses.

So they're looking back to the words that God spoke to Moses to give to the people as his covenant people. And that law is the law that they are relying upon.

So there is that confusion in that category of people who don't see their need for the Lord Jesus.

And the second group that are confused is those who are already Christians. And we see at the beginning of this chapter that they are those who are already Christians. And they are convinced that they need more than Christ for salvation.

[7 : 27] And those who are speaking about the law and enforcing the law upon this people, they have persuaded them that as well as having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they need to have their salvation brought to its perfection and completion by relying on the works of the law.

And so there is the first category, they are Christless because they don't see the need for Christ. There is the second category, they have the Christ plus problem.

They are looking for more than the Lord Jesus. And I want to suggest to you tonight that as surely as this was true in Galatia, it can be true in Stornoway, it can be true in the Church of Christ in every generation, that there are these two categories of people as well as other categories.

And tonight I am sure there are those here who rely upon what they do themselves and your attendance in church and your attention to the things of God, rely upon these things for your salvation.

And sadly too, there may be people who are the children of God and who don't see that their salvation in Christ is complete without doing things themselves and recognizing that we are called to serve the Lord Jesus, to be doers of the Word, but not doers in a sense to complete our salvation and our acceptance with God.

[9 : 10] And we need to ask ourselves as we journey on through these verses tonight, do we find ourselves in any one of these categories? Because if we do, we haven't understood and appreciated the value of the passion and work of the Lord Jesus.

We are looking to what we can do, and you are looking to what you can do in order to have the complete salvation. That is the confusion.

And the problem with the confusion is that it does not align with the teaching of the Word of God. And the stark truth that Paul brings before the church in Galatia is the truth that God wants us to contend with this evening as those who are in the same categories as the people in the church of Galatia, to contend with the truth about the works of the law and about those who trust in them.

And that's where Paul continues in verse number 10. For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and to do them under a curse.

And what does that mean? To be under a curse. The curse in the Bible is to do with relationships. A relationship with God.

[10 : 49] Curse in the Bible has to do with a covenant relationship with God. It has to do with the fact that God has given to us boundaries for a relationship with Him.

And if we live our lives within these boundaries, then we have the blessing of God, which is the opposite of the curse of God. But as soon as we cross the boundary and break the law of God, then the Bible tells us that we are under God's curse.

How serious a matter is that? When we refer to the backdrop to these words, in Deuteronomy 27 and 28, it's alarming what that curse means.

And it basically means that the God who delighted over His people to do them good now takes delight in their ruin.

And the God who was their friend turns to be their enemy. And the God who protected them from their enemies gives them over to destruction at the hands of their enemies.

[12 : 03] It's the complete reversal of what was promised if they obeyed the law and the covenant of God.

And God wants us to reckon with that this evening. To reckon with the seriousness of where we are as those who trust in the holy law of God and who think that's what our salvation is.

To think about what we're doing if we're saying that that Jesus is not enough, that I need to do more work myself in order to complete my salvation. Whatever we're relying on works, God is telling us that is not the place for blessing.

That is the place where my curse rests. And it rests upon all those who are covenant breakers. And that's where the greatest knowledge gap exists.

And it exists, and such is the nature of its influence in our lives that we don't realize it exists.

[13 : 20] And Paul speaks in 2 Corinthians 4 about the God of this world blinding our minds, or the minds of unbelievers, so that they don't see the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

That means that you can be here this evening and under the gospel of Jesus Christ, relying upon your own works, the works of the law, for your salvation.

And so blinded you are to your need that you are comfortable with that. And that your unbelief is a shield that protects you against the darts that come from the Word of God that wants to penetrate that darkness, that wants to penetrate that contentedness in the things that you do yourself.

And such is the delusion that the devil brings upon us that he will leave you comfortable in that sense of the assurance that you have that you will be okay because you do X, Y, and Z.

And do you know that Satan, the enemy of our soul, the enemy that wants us in our lost eternity, that wants us not to have God's salvation, he will never trouble you if you think you're okay on what you do yourself.

[14 : 53] Because the person who is religious and who has no faith in Christ is in their own comfort zone and they're content with their own delusion and the devil is not going to trouble such.

As soon as you show an interest in the Lord Jesus, then you will sense that the devil is active, seeking to turn you away from that and take you to get your back to the kind of pillow of resting upon the things that you do yourself.

And what about the person who is saying that they need more than the Lord Jesus to be saved? What about that person? If you're here tonight and you have fallen back into resting in the things that you do yourself, it does mean and it will result in not only the loss of your appreciation in the Lord Jesus, but the loss of a sense of his power in your life.

And you will go through life and you will get to the stage where you're convinced that it's all about what you can do. And because you can't do, then you think you have failed and you will think you have lost your salvation.

The problems are huge. And the problems are huge because there is no alignment with what the Word of God is saying.

[16 : 29] And God wants us this evening to take where we are and a relationship with religion and with God's holy law and to take that back to Deuteronomy 27 and 28, which you can read for yourselves afterwards and see what God says about the people who rebelled against him.

the problem. We need to acknowledge there's a problem before we appreciate that there is provision.

The problem then. Secondly, there is the proclamation. It's the message of the gospel. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.

The Christ that died outside of Jerusalem at the hands of his enemies. The Christ concerning whom Peter writes in Acts chapter 2 after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

The Christ that Peter describes as the Jesus whom you crucified. God has made him both Lord and Christ. He has raised him to sit at his right hand.

[17 : 46] He has journeyed on to be seated in a place of glory and of influence and of power. That Lord Jesus Christ, he is the person that is proclaimed in the gospel.

And he is proclaimed in the gospel as the person who has redeemed us from the curse. I go to Galatia in central Turkey today and I go to Galatia on Paul's day and I ask the person on the street what is Paul on about when he speaks about redeeming us and redemption?

Well, we go to the center of administration in the city, the marketplace where the administration of the city takes place and where there are transactions and where there are exchanges and where there is buying and selling.

We go to the marketplace and in the marketplace in Galatia we see a particular kind of transaction and the transaction is that slaves are taken and set free from their current owner and master and given a new freedom and that is based on a price that is paid for them.

They are transferred from a place of slavery to the place of freedom on the basis of a price being paid.

[19 : 25] And Paul is telling them that Christ has carried out this redeeming action. God is telling us this evening that that's what Christ has done.

That he has transferred us to freedom. That he has done so with a payment of a price. That he has exhausted, covered everything that's required to set us free.

And that as surely as God in the Old Testament promised his people, Israel, who were in Egypt, I will deliver them from slavery.

I will redeem you with an outstretched arm. I will take you to be my people. This whole redeeming transaction is taken from the place of slavery to the place of freedom into a living relationship with God.

And that's tonight why Christ Jesus is important in the gospel. Let me park my whole idea about keeping God's law so that I can be saved. Let me cast aside any thought of needing the law of God in order to make my salvation complete.

[20 : 43] And let me focus on the passion of Christ in this marketplace transaction and the administration of the kingdom of God where I'm taken from that place of slavery because of my sin where I'm set free from it and from its burden and from its mastery and where I'm in a living relationship with God.

And as soon tonight as I align my thinking with what God says about me and about his law then this becomes meaningful.

the knowledge gap is filled with the teaching of God's word and once that knowledge gap has been filled then here is emerging exactly who I need.

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. And Jesus himself in speaking to his disciples in the gospel of John speaks about the way in which if the son sets you free you are free indeed.

You don't need to doubt that you're freedom. You don't need to spend your life wondering if you are free or not. It's certain freedom. It's absolute freedom.

[22 : 11] It's a freedom to be the people of God, to be the children of God. If the son sets you free you are free indeed.

he has redeemed us from the curse of the law. In the administration and in the government of God's kingdom there is the buying back that gives you and I freedom in Christ.

Christ. But perhaps the remarkable thing is and the center of the gospel is and the wonder of the gospel is that in that same marketplace where the kingdom of God is administered and governed and the principles are set out that when Jesus pays the price to redeem us that he did so by being made becoming a curse for us.

He is not the Lord Jesus Christ who went into that place to have a transaction where a price was paid to set you free.

We go into that place of transaction in the presence of God and he himself is the price. He is made a curse.

[23 : 42] He takes on a new form of existence and the very thought of where our salvation took the Lord Jesus and God's plan took the Lord Jesus that it took him to the place where he exists as a person who is bearing God's curse.

And the God who said to his people in the Old Testament that because of their rebellion against him that he would pluck them off the land.

We see Jesus taken outside of the city. We see him hanging on a tree crucified not in order to be a curse but because he is cursed he is hung on a tree.

He becomes the ultimate outsider in order to secure your freedom and mine. Israel will take him from Jerusalem Babylon but Jesus was in the place where he was left by the people excluded from the people and excluded from the presence of everything that represented God.

And in the same way God as we saw took delight in doing his people good when they obeyed but when they disobeyed he took delight and bring them to ruin.

[25 : 37] And Isaiah tells us in Isaiah 53 that it was the will of the Lord to crush him. It pleased the Lord to bruise him.

That's the remarkable solemnity of this great transaction that the God who said regarding his son you are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

It's now in this new existence that is temporary on Calvary's cross that that same Lord and father takes delight in bringing him ruin.

He becomes a curse. his body begins to break. His heart is broken.

He is exiled from God in that moment of God's curse and God's wrath descending upon him when he cried out to God my God my God why have you forsaken!

[26 : 45] me? he doesn't hear God he doesn't sense that God is with him because God in this moment of this transaction has left him and he did this for us he took our place and he took what ought to be yours and mine the proclamation that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us and let's not entertain the idea that because it was his son that he held back some of what of the curse that is upon us for our sin he did not spare his own son and his son exhausted everything that belonged to that curse and he did so as he spent these moments of darkness on

Calvary's cross the proclamation realigning our thoughts with God's law and realigning our thoughts with the cross of the Lord Jesus how can we not tonight realize the significance of both of these and how can we not tonight see the preciousness of what Jesus has done how can we not see the urgency of our need to have salvation through him how can we continue on any other path but the path that belongs to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that we might be saved there is a problem there is a proclamation and finally there is participation what does it mean to be part of

God's kingdom what is the product of what God has done in the Lord Jesus when Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law what is the fruit of all of that the fruit of all of that is exactly what they were confused about and as we come to the close of ourselves there are two particular issues that are of key importance to them and that are of key importance to ourselves this evening what is the product how do we participate well first of all we have a right standing with God on the basis of what Jesus has done so that in verse 14 so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles the blessing of Abraham the blessing of God I think of curse and I think of the way in which

God's destructive power is targeting where that curse lies and I hear the word blessing that speaks to me of God's power in my life and God's life in my life that speaks of newness and of well-being that speaks of a life lived with him the blessing of God God blessed Adam and Eve and told them to be fruitful and multiply here it is the blessing of Abraham what is the blessing of Abraham God said to Abraham in Genesis 12 in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed but in this chapter it becomes clear that those who are blessed with Abraham are those who are justified by faith who have the right standing with God in verse number 6 just as

Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham and the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying and you shall all the families and nations of the earth be blessed a right standing with God there is now no condemnation in Romans 8 being justified by faith in Romans 5 it's having that standing before the throne of God in Christ in a relationship with Christ who died for us and us now being in him having that relationship where we have that peace with God where our sins are forgiven and we are accepted as righteous in his sight the faith with which we trust in God and it is the faith that has at its very heart the whole idea of persuasion and for you and I tonight the faith that is required of us to participate in this great product and the fruit of

[32 : 30] Christ's saving work is to be persuaded that with our law keeping we cannot be saved to be persuaded that in our law keeping we are under the curse of God to be persuaded of what God has done for us in the cross of Jesus Christ and if we have that triple persuasion then faith reaches out and trusts in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and there is no other blessed standing in this world and none so blessed as those who have that right standing with God the peace of God dwelling in our hearts the right standing and the pinnacle of everything else to have the family status to know that we are the children of God and these chapters are all about how we can become the children of God and that's the second part of this verse so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith the spirit promised in the old testament in

God's new covenant that he would place his spirit in our hearts and give us a heart and hearts to love him in response to his love for us it's a spirit of God in our hearts and as we jump on to chapter number four that spirit of God in our hearts is what gives us that special relationship with God and Jesus Christ in verse number four but when the fullness of time had come God sent forth the 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 a son into our hearts adopted into God's family given all the rights inheriting everything that belongs to the children of

God the right to everything that Jesus has and Jesus has done the right to the inheritance of the glory that Jesus has prepared for us and that sense of wonder of knowing that we are the children of God and that sense of wonder which John touches upon in his first epistle in chapter 3 what kind of love is this that God has poured upon us that we should be called the children of God and it's that sense of the fatherly love of God that sense of his eye looking down upon us and seeing us in a relationship with his son and us sensing the warmth of his love and of his care and of his interest and of the fact that he is our father and that he possesses us in that special loving and living way and there is no greater blessing in this life than to have the blessing of secure family relationships and a family that is functioning as God designed and we know how precious that is times of joy and times of sorrow where families come together and there is that sense of support and joy and grace and peace even in times of trouble much more so tonight as those who belong to the family of

God do we rejoice in his care do we rest in his love do we wait for him in the evening and in the morning do we spend our lives giving ourselves to him because he did such a great work for us and as we close the take away is simple we cannot rely on what we are going to do or have done we rely simply and wholeheartedly on what Jesus has done and we cannot rely on what we have done because we are under the curse of God if we rest upon the law which we cannot keep and which is broken but we have peace with God and we trust in the son of God who became a curse for us to set us free in order to be the children of God may God help us and strengthen us to embrace him in his word and to receive and to embrace the Lord

Jesus Christ as our saviour let's bow our heads in prayer most gracious God we rejoice in you and the great God that you are in the God of our salvation the God who has planned such a wonderful magnificent way of rescuing us from our sin and from our condemnation and from our distance from you and we worship you and we praise you for every aspect of the life and work of your son through which tonight we can have peace with you we can stand before you declared to be just by you and we can know that we are the children of God so bless your word to us as we journey on to our homes and give to us that sense of your love following us both this evening and all the days of our lives we do pray for we pray all of these things for Jesus sake Amen the closing psalm is psalm number 130 in it's on page 173 and the tune is martyrdom and we're going to sing the whole of the psalm

[39 : 02] Lord from the depths I call to you Lord hear me from on high and give attention to my voice when I for mercy cry we stand to sing the whole of the psalm to God's praise Lord from the depths I call to you Lord hear me from on high I'll give attention to my voice when I'm for mercy cry Lord in your presence to the sound if you are sins record forget forgiveness is with you that we may fear you are

I wake my soul wait for the Lord my hope is in his word more than the Lord and wait for God my soul his heart and heart all his strength good your hope in God for mercy is within a glory and glory and from the rest!

his will be free the I go to the door on my right the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more Amen Amen holy