



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Galatians 2:1-10

“Are There Two Gospels?”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're turning this morning in the Scripture for our reading to Galatians chapter 2, Galatians chapter 2. Some of you may remember that a few weeks ago I spoke on Galatians chapter 1. I want this morning in the time that we have to pick up the apostle's letter to the Galatians in chapter 2 and read and study with you verses 1 through 10. So, Galatians chapter 2, verse 1 through verse 10 is our Scripture reading.

“Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in secretly to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to

me: But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles;) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was diligent to do.”

Galatians is Paul’s most explosive letter, and in vigorous terms it sets forth the grace of God as the Apostle Paul understood it. It’s a very simple epistle. The first two chapters are a personal defense by the apostle in which he speaks of his right to speak to the Galatians and outlines some of the features of his relationship to others in the course of his ministry. And then in the next two chapters he unfolds the characteristic features of his doctrine of justification by faith, and finally concludes with some ethical notes in which he lets us know, all of his readers, just exactly how this gospel is to express itself in our personal lives. When we think of Galatians we think of Martin Luther, of course. And the experience of Luther is an experience which finds its description in the doctrines of the Epistle to the Galatians.

E.G. Schwiebert who has written a book on Luther called *Luther and His Times* has conclusively shown that Luther’s understanding of the gospel of is to be related to his study of the Psalms, and as they were enlightened by his later study of the Epistle to the Romans. But the doctrine by which Luther came to an understanding of the grace of God was the doctrine of righteousness or justification through faith. And that of course is the theme of the Epistle to the Galatians as well as the Epistle to the Romans. One of them tells us what the gospel is, that’s Romans, and the other one tells us what the gospel is not, and that’s Galatians. When Martin Luther came to an understanding of his gospel, he

was studying this theme of the righteousness of God, and he expresses it in his discovery in words something like this. He says that he came to realize that righteousness, the righteousness of God, did not presuppose some inner change in man or some inner healing as he had formerly been taught, but now he knew that it was something outside of man, and it was, as he came to discover the belief in Christ's atoning death, and it was that belief in Christ's atoning death that liberated man from the bondage of sin and death. And then he goes on to express the feeling in his heart that he had when he came to the full understanding of this. He said as violently as I formerly had hated the expression the righteousness of God, so was I know violently compelled to embrace the new conception of grace, and for me the expression of the apostle really opened the gates of paradise.

Now I think this is really the spirit of the Apostle Paul, and Luther, probably of all the reformers, has caught it best for what he had come to discover was that we are not justified by anything that we do, by any kind of preparations that we may make, by any kind of soul searching previously, by any kind of sanctifying ministry before we see the objective work of Christ, but we are justified when we observe the Son of God dying upon the cross and shedding his blood for our sin and when by the grace of God Luther expresses it, “He was violently compelled to embrace,” when we are violently compelled to embrace the objective work that Jesus Christ has done. And at that moment we come to an understanding of what it is to be justified by faith and to have a righteousness that avails before God. This is very difficult for man to understand and of course cannot be understood apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit in enlightenment.

The situation in the Galatians churches was of tremendous importance for Paul, and he was deeply disturbed over what was happening there. He had preached the gospel to them. They were in a sense Pauline churches for they had come to understand Jesus Christ through him. But they had since the apostle had been there come to be troubled by infiltrators. We have called them Judaizers simply because it seems evident that they related themselves to the apostles in Jerusalem, falsely claiming their support for

their false doctrine. They had come in after the apostle had preached the Gospel of free grace and pure grace, and they had begun to tell the Galatians believers that, while it was significant that they had believed in Jesus Christ and it was important that they do that, more must be done. And they proceeded to tell them that it was necessary for them to undergo the ancient rite of circumcision in order to be saved. It might seem to be a rather inconsequential thing after all -- is it not supremely more important to believe in the Lord Jesus, to believe in his death and resurrection, and do we actually destroy the grace of God if we simply ask of those who have believed that they undergo a simple rite of circumcision which for hundreds of years was valid for the nation Israel as a rite. What is so significant about that and why should an apostle be so upset? It might seem to be a relatively unimportant thing and to have no real relationship to the essential ministry of the Lord Jesus.

Now it's evidently that the apostle did not take that view because he became so excited that he wrote this epistle in his own hand which was something that he was not accustomed to doing. He usually had an amanuensis, or a secretary, and he asked the secretary to write his letter for him. He dictated it evidently to the secretary and then at the end he would sign his name. And since the apostle had eye trouble, it seems, one could tell particularly from his hand writing that it was a genuine letter from Paul when his name was signed at the end of it. And the saints evidently came to have an understanding of Paul's significant and so all he had to do was to write his significant at the end and they would say, "This is a genuine letter of Paul." He refers to this in the Thessalonian epistle, the second one about this being a genuine letter and you can see from his signature.

Now in the case of Galatians he says right at the end of it that he wrote this whole letter with his own hand, and he, in fact, comments upon it saying, "You see with what large letters I have written this in my own hand." He was so concerned, so upset over what had happened in Galatian that he wanted to be sure that they realize that he, the

apostle, the same apostle who preached the gospel to them, was deeply disturbed over what had happened to them.

Now a few weeks ago when I spoke on the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians I commented upon the fact that the apostle had no disagreement with these Judaizers over the facts of the gospel. They both believed the same facts evidently. They believed the same thing that the apostle speaks about in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verses 3, 4 and 5 when he says that the gospel consists of Christ's death for our sins and that he was buried and that on the third day he was raised again from the dead and he was seen. There are two great facts. He died. He was resurrection. The intervening statements, he was buried, and the final one, he was seen, are designed to authenticate the other two. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. The proof of his death, the reality of it, is that he was buried, and he rose again on the third day from the grave and the evidence of the truthfulness of the resurrection is that he was seen. So there are two great facts, his death, and his resurrection. These are the two great objective facts that make up the gospel according to the Apostle Paul.

Now he didn't have any disagreement with them over the facts of the gospel. They believed the same facts, but they differed over the terms upon which the benefits of these facts become ours and in that difference over the terms of salvation. In that very difference there rests the difference between a gospel of the grace of God and a gospel of the works of men. And this is the important thing that the apostle is concerned about. There is no agreement between the apostle and the Judaizers over the terms upon which these benefits are received. For Paul, the benefits of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are received upon the basis of faith. For the Judaizers, the benefits of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are received upon the basis of faith plus circumcision.

Now I think you can see if you will just think for a moment that this problem is a contemporary problem, and it's a contemporary problem unfortunately even in evangelical circles. Of course it's a contemporary when we think of the Roman Catholic

Doctrine of Salvation. According Old Testament Romanist Doctrine original sin is removed by the waters of baptism not by the blood of Christ. Daily sin is removed by the non-bloody sacrifice of the mass, not by the blood of Christ. The Council of Trent has said, “Let him be accursed who says that sins are not removed by the non-bloody sacrifice of the mass.” Venial sins or forgivable sins are removed by the oral of extreme unction. And other sins are removed by purgatory. There is only one text in the New Testament that refers to purgatory, and that is Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 3 in which the apostle states, or the author of that epistle states, “When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.” There is just one purgatory in the Bible, and it is the purgatory of the cross of Jesus Christ.

Well, now what is left for the cross of Christ, and what is left for grace, and what is left for faith? Where water, bread, oil and fire remove sins, what does the blood do? If so much is done by works, little is done by grace. I would love to have read a letter that the Apostle Paul should have written to the Romanist church of the centuries. It would have been a tremendously explosive letter. But now, of course, we do not only have this error in Romanism. We have this error in other churches as well. The church of Christ, the denomination loves to say, “Repent, confess, believe and be baptized in order to be saved.”

Now it's evident that the apostle would have written an explosive letter to them too, for you see for the Apostle Paul the terms upon which we receive the benefits of the death and resurrection of Christ, the term is faith. But for the church of Christ it is repent, confess, believe, and be baptized. It is obvious that they too have added to the simple term of faith. And if we add to the simple term of faith, we draw upon ourselves the condemnation of the apostle.

Now perhaps we are sitting in our pew this morning and thinking, “Well of course we all knew that the Romanists were mixed up on this point, and we knew that the church of Christ was mixed up on this point, but thank God we are not mixed up on this

point.” But today in evangelicalism we have all kinds of terms offered from the pulpit for the reception of the benefits of the work of Christ. We have, “Open your heart to Jesus.” We have the doctrine of repentance spoken and preached in a way which is not true to the New Testament. We have repented in the sense of to be sorry, to moan, or to groan. And we have these terms, one of which I have mentioned, “Open your heart to Jesus,” which are in effect the same kinds of things. They turn our attention, not to the facts of the gospel, but they turn our attention away from the facts of the gospel to something subjective which we do.

Now I am sure that if the apostle were here he would look with a great deal of disfavor upon many of the terms that we like to use in order to invite men to respond to the gospel message. I have thought about this for many years, and I have never become convinced, and as you can tell I'm not convinced now, that there is any better term by which we should receive the benefits of the saving work of Christ than the simple term to believe.

Now in the light of that let's take a look at our passage and we want to see, I hope, what the apostle does in the light of this difficulty that existed in Galatian. The circumstances of the visit to Jerusalem are described in the first two verses of this second chapter. He says that, “Fourteen years after,” he's been describing some of the things that have happened to him since he was converted in order to show his readers that he did not get his gospel from men. He got his gospel from God. And he wants to show them, these Galatians, that his gospel is a gospel which the apostles in Jerusalem approved of, and that the Judaizers are confusing the Galatians and are actually untruthful if they should suggest that his gospel is not a gospel that was acceptable to the pillar apostles in the city of Jerusalem. He says, “Fourteen years after he went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.” This visit is the one that is described, most likely, in Acts chapter 11 verse 27 through verse 30, and when he says in the 2nd verse that, “He went up by revelation,” he probably refers to one of the prophesies of the prophet

Agabus who is referred to in that passage as having been present at Antioch and perhaps was the one who uttered a prophesy concerning the apostle's visit to the city of Jerusalem. The opponents of the Apostle Paul knew that the apostle had gone to Jerusalem, and evidently they had told the Galatians that the fact that Paul went up to Jerusalem is evidence of the fact that he recognized that the true gospel was found in Jerusalem. And since he went up to Jerusalem that was itself an act of submission to the men in Jerusalem and since we represent those who are in Jerusalem, you should listen to us and not to the Apostle Paul.

Now, of course, what Paul is going to show is that when he went up to Jerusalem it was not an act of submission at all, but rather they acknowledged his superiority among the Gentiles, for Titus was not circumcised, and further when he left they gave to him the right had of Christian fellowship in token of the fact that they were in harmony with the apostle. He says that he, “Took Titus with him also.” Now that is significant because Titus was a Gentile. And a Gentile, being taken to the city of Jerusalem, would be a test case. And so the question was, “Is the church in Jerusalem going to insist that Titus, a Gentile, be circumcised in order to have their blessing or not?”

In the 2nd verse he says that he, “I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles.” Now isn't that a striking expression? You'll notice the emphasis in the apostle's statement is not upon the results of his preaching. He did not say to them now I want you to understand, as he stood before Peter, James and John, I want you to understand that there are great scores of people who have come to faith in the Lord Jesus through my preaching. As a matter of fact we have a church back in the city of Antioch with several hundred members. And we are finding that there is a tremendous response to the message that I am giving. He did not talk about the results of his message.

Now that is of great importance, and I think sheds a great deal of light upon the kind of missionary work that is being done today. Almost always when missionary's

report to their congregations or to their churches they tell us of their results. They tell us of their numbers. They tell us of the churches, but very, very rarely do they tell us anything about the message that they are preaching. But you see the message that they are preaching is of the greatest importance. When Paul went to Jerusalem he, “Communicated unto them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles.” This is what I am preaching. This is my message.

For you see it's possible to gather crowds of people together to almost any kind of message. The many societies and the various types of societies are illustrations of this. All of us, for example, get in our mail, week after week, invitations to join this society and join that society. I got two or three this past week. One new society, I could be one of the three hundred and fifty charter members of this society, all types of societies, but societies and so called results are no testimonies to the truthfulness and accuracy and divine authority of the message that is proclaimed. The apostle “Communicated unto them the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles.”

There is a great deal of confusion I say over the terms of salvation. Now the gospel is preached in this way. The Lord Jesus died for our sins and he was raised again on the third day. Believe and do good works. Why of course we would not fall for that, and yet there are many, many people who fall for that. Jehovah's Witnesses are very avidly proclaiming the doctrine that I have just enunciated. That is that there is such a person as Jesus Christ. There is such a testimony to his death and resurrection, and if you do good works and if you join our society you can be sure to find acceptance with God, and they are getting results. Three hundred thousand decisions this past year imagine it, three hundred thousand decisions this past year. Over two million Jehovah's Witnesses, so they are publishing. One would say, if he were a person who believed that numbers and results determine the accuracy and genuineness of the message, that God is blessing the Witnesses. But that is so far from the truth that once you say it you realize how ridiculous it is. It is not true. God is not blessing them. They are not witnesses of

Jehovah at all, and yet they are gathering in great scores of people with their message. Believe and do good works and join our society, or since we are not taken in by that, believe and repent.

Now of course the Bible tells us that the Apostle Paul preached repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. What did he mean by repentance? Did he mean to weep and cry and be sorry? No, when he said, “Believe and repent,” and when he said repent he meant to have a change of mind with regard to one’s trust. Now in that sense, the “Believe and repent” is biblical terminology. There is nothing wrong with that. It is perfectly alright to call upon people to repent. If you understand by repentance a change of mind with regard to one’s trust that is we no longer trust in this or that, our good works, our church, our culture, our education, our baptism or whatever it may be, and we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Or “Believe and confess,” but what do we mean by confess? Do we mean that it is necessary for us to rise up out of our chairs in an evangelistic meeting and come down to the front and publically give testimony to the fact that we have believed in the Lord Jesus before we are saved? If so, that is false doctrine for we have again mixed with the grace of God the works that men love to require. If we mean simply that there is a testimony of the heart to God in which we say within our hearts, “I thank Thee God for giving Jesus Christ to die for sinners. I take him as my savior. I make that confession to Thee,” then that is biblical in the preaching of the gospel.

“Believe and be baptized.” We’ve discussed that. “Believe and surrender.” Often evangelicals mention that we should surrender to God. What do they mean by surrender to God? A dead man cannot surrender. “Believe and make Christ Lord of your life.” If I could make Christ Lord of my life I wouldn't need salvation. It is true that in the New Testament we are told that Jesus Christ is Lord, and it is true that there is no possibility of salvation without the acknowledgement of our Lord Jesus as Lord, but to say that we must “Believe in Christ in order to be saved and make him Lord of our lives,” is to confuse

justification and sanctification. It is to say in effect that we must be sanctified in order to be saved, whereas sanctification is the product of our justification.

Now I know that there are some who say, “Well then if you preach, ‘Believe and believe only’ then you are preaching ‘Easy believism’.” I must confess if someone should accuse me of preaching “Easy believism” I’m not at all certain I would be angry. I don’t like easy, but if you say you are preaching only believism, then I should not be angry at all because the person who said “Only believe” was our Lord Jesus himself.

Now when the apostle communicated his doctrine, his gospel that he preached, to the men in Jerusalem, they discussed, no doubt, the terms upon which the benefits became ours. And so they discussed, no doubt, this same issue. Is circumcision necessary? Now I didn’t say anything about a couple of other terms that I think are important to mention. We do have many evangelicals saying that we should, “Open the door of our hearts to the Lord Jesus.” We even have them using the term commit in I think an unbiblical way. These false terms usually deemphasize the need of content in the gospel. Almost always these terms such as “Open your heart to Jesus,” or “Surrender,” or “Commit,” or “Call upon God,” in the sense of make public confession to him, these types of things deemphasize the need of content, whereas when you say to people, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” or “Believe,” they are inclined to respond by saying, “What?” And then you have the opportunity to talk about the content of the message. I hope I’m not laboring this point too much, but it seems to me that the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians was extremely concerned over this very issue, and it is of the greatest importance in the preaching of the gospel that we stick, or adhere, to the terms that are set forth in holy Scripture.

Now he said he, “Communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.” The apostle had no personal doubts about his own gospel. That’s not the meaning of, “Lest by any means I should run,” or “Had run in vain.” He needed

no reassurance he had been preaching the gospel for about fourteen years at this time. What he wanted to do when he went to Jerusalem was to settle this issue so that these Judaizers wouldn't be disturbing the work that he had done, and so he was saying to them I want to settle this thing and settle the character of the gospel lest by any means I should bestow all this labor upon the Galatians and these Judaizers and others come in after me and destroy the work that I have done. That's what he means when he says, “Lest I should run in vain.”

Well the controversy over Titus is next described in verses 3 through 5 and it surely was a daring step to introduce a Gentile into the head quarters of the Jerusalem church and force them to make a decision. I love the Apostle Paul. He was the kind of man who didn't mind doing what was necessary and what ought to be done. And he says in the 3rd verse, “But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.” In other words, the men in Jerusalem stood with me on this question of the grace of God, “And that because of false brethren unawares brought in.”

The reason it was necessary for the apostle and for the leading brethren in Jerusalem to insist that Titus not be compelled to be circumcision is because there were false brethren who were unawares brought in. That means, literally, secretly brought in. Who brought them in? Why they were brought in by the members of the church. They were brought in by them. They had been invited in by the members. It's evident that they were soft on the question of the grace of God. And it arose right in the midst of the congregation of the believers in Jerusalem because of the false brethren unawares brought in. There are always in the congregation of the saints sweet souls who do not have the spiritual courage to face up to spiritual issues and want to smooth over things frequently in the name of love, unfortunate, very unfortunate, because it's unapostolic, very unapostolic. With the apostle when love, so called, and truth were in conflict, truth always must be upheld. Love must be love in the truth. They were the 5th columnists who were brought in, these false brethren. The legalists are always treacherous. Legalists

are not open people. They never are open people. They're spies. They're Satan's secret CIA. They love to get in among the saints who appreciate the grace of God and destroy the grace of God if they possibly can. And if you think for one moment that they care about what they do, you're sadly mistaken. They are treacherous, and they are wicked, and they are iniquitous.

Many years ago I had occasion to have much contact with Pastor W. E. Hawkins. He was a man who preached to the rural people in Texas. He had a great ministry with them. If you talked to Brother Hawkins, as we call him, you would think, “Why here is a man who probably grew up on the farm, and he probably began to preach as a teenager and preached throughout his whole life in the rural churches of the state of Texas.” He spoke with the ordinary language of a Texan, a country Texan, and did not give you the impression of being an extremely intelligent man at all. But he was a graduate and a student at some of the leading theological schools in this country. He went to Princeton. He studied under Robert Dick Wilson and men like that. He was at Vanderbilt. He knew, and he used to tell me frequently before we went on the air together, “Lewis when I was in theological seminary and when I was studying under my professors they told us to use the language of the man in the pew, but give it the meaning of the scholars in the theological seminary. Use their language, but using their language, communicate what you now know to be the truth as a result of biblical criticism.” And he used to say to me, “Lewis they are deceptive treacherous people.” And I'm sure the Apostle Paul would have felt the same way about them.

Now Titus was not compelled to be circumcised, and the reason it was necessary is because the false brethren were there and it was necessary for the apostle and the leaders in Jerusalem to stand up for that which was the truth. And he states in the 5th verse, “To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”

Luther, we have spoken about, and Luther was just that kind of man. Listen to what he says, “Let this then be the conclusion of all together, that we will suffer our goods to be taken away, our name, our life, and all that we have; but the Gospel, our faith in Jesus Christ, we will never suffer to be rested from us. And cursed be that humility which here abaseth and submitteth itself. Nay rather let every Christian man here be proud and spare not, except he will deny Christ. Wherefore, God assisting me, my forehead shall be more hard than all men's foreheads. Here I take upon me this title, according to the proverb: “cedo nulli,” I give place to none. Yea, I am glad even with all my heart, in this point to seem rebellious and obstinate. And I here I confess that I am and ever will be stout and stern, and will not one inch give place to any creature. Charity giveth place, for it ‘beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things’, but faith giveth no place.”

Now as concerning faith we ought to be invincible and more hard if it might be than the adamant stone, but as touching charity we ought to be soft and more flexible than the reed or leaf that is shaken with the wind and ready to yield to everything. In other words, when it comes to the love we should be yielding, but when it comes to faith, to the truth, we should never yield one inch. As Calvin put it, “The duties of love should not harm faith.” If the Christian church had not at critical points followed this, we would not have the Christian faith today. If, for example, in the Arian controversy there had not been an Athanasius to stand up for the true deity of the Son of God, the Christian church would not exist today because we would be believing in three different essences, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, but only one real divine essence. We should have a Christianity in which we really had idolatry and by now there would be no Christianity at all, but there was a man by the name of Athanasius who stood at that particular point in time, and as a result of his successful stand, the Christian church exists today. And a great deal of the fruit of the preaching of the gospel is because a man like Athanasius stood.

Now finally the apostle concludes in the 6th through the 10th verses by simply saying it's evident that as a result of the controversy in the city of Jerusalem they stood with us. He says in the 6th verse, “But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me.” In other words, when we got there they did not have any change to make in my gospel.

“But on the contrary (on the positive side) when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (and the 9th verse) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision.”

There are not two gospels, only one. It is true that in my sphere of activity I will go to the Gentiles for God has called me there, and Peter and the others will locate their ministry primarily among the Jews. Although Peter was the one who was used of God to open the door to the Gentiles. But so far as the gospel itself is concerned, there is only one gospel. And Paul does not modify it. He does not edit it. He does not trim it. He does not supplement it with any kinds of additions, but rather Paul is given the right hand of fellowship by James and Cephas, and John in token of the fact that they are together in the matter of the gospel of Christ.

Let me conclude by saying that when we add to the term believe in the preaching of the gospel, anything that violates its essence, three things happen. First of all, we invalidate the conception of salvation by grace. If we should say, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized.” Or if we say, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be circumcised.” Or if we say, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and open your heart to him.” Or “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and make Christ Lord of your life.” Or “Believe in the

Lord Jesus Christ and surrender to him.” In that very addition we have invalidated the conception of salvation by grace, free salvation. That’s the first thing.

The second thing that we do is as important. We insult the work of Jesus Christ. For we say in effect what Jesus Christ did is not sufficient. We must do something else and also something else which we have done. And then third, and this may seem to be very shocking to you, but the third thing that happens is that the Holy Spirit says to us, “Go to hell.” Now, that is evident from the 8th and 9th verses of the 1st chapter where the apostle says, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” That was the ancient way of saying, “Go to hell.” It’s a serious matter when we add anything to the gospel of the grace of God. We invalidate the conception of salvation by grace. We insult the work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit says to us, “Go to hell.”

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse in one of his sermons on the Epistle to the Romans has described an incident that occurred when he was seeking to lead a man to Christ. He was trying to present the gospel to this man, and he just could not seem to get through at all. And finally the man, evidently, and now becoming a little disturbed said to Dr. Barnhouse, “Tell me; what does God want? What does God want?” And Dr. Barnhouse said, “I was given at that point a statement which was a glittering statement of theology which I had never really put together before.” He said, “I said to that man, ‘God wants to be believed.’” And then he went on to be explained that though we should seek to make our life just as sweet and nice and lovely as it is possible for us to do through our good works, we should be lost. He said no matter what we did we should be lost. God wants to get home to us the fact that he has done it all through the saving work of the Lord Jesus, and he wants to be believed. And finally the man turned to Dr. Barnhouse and said, “I think I see,” because the honor of God is involved. And that’s really true. The honor of God as the only savior is at stake.

The gospel is that Christ died for sins, that he was raised on the third day, and that the benefits of this saving work of the Lord Jesus may be received upon the basis of simple trust, simple faith. Faith involves knowledge, assent, conviction that the facts are true, reliance upon the facts concerning the Lord Jesus. That’s faith. And if by the grace of God, the Holy Spirit, you have been compelled, as Luther said, to embrace these facts for yourself, you have come to true biblical faith. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” That’s sufficient. Shall we bow in prayer?

[Prayer] We are thankful to Thee, Lord, for the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and we pray that Thou wilt enable us to proclaim it purely and simply and accurately. And we ask, Oh God, that through the preaching of the word the Holy Spirit may bring to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus those whom Thou doest desire to come. And Oh Father, if there should be someone in this audience who has not yet come...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]