

Crucified with Christ

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- [0 : 0 0] Let us turn again to the scripture we read in the Paul's letter to the Galatians. The second chapter, in the words of the, in the last verse of verse 21.
- Galatians chapter 2, at verse 21. I do not frustrate the grace of God.
- For if righteousness come by the Lord, then Christ is dead in vain. Particularly these words at the beginning of the verse. I do not frustrate the grace of God.
- I am sure you have noticed that people who have goods to advertise, very frequently, make use of two considerations that were very, with great influence upon people's minds.
- The first consideration concerns the security that people associate with the tried and the familiar.
- [1 : 1 5] What has borne the test of time and has proved itself to be genuine and worthwhile. That is one great consideration in commanding whatever we wish it is, people should accept.
- The other is a consideration of, associated with progress. And how necessary and exciting it is to be right up to date with the latest discovery.
- And with whatever addition to the old and familiar will make it still more powerful. To combine these two, the tried and the familiar and the well understood, with some additional element.
- I am sure you have noticed it. It is the kind of technique that is used whether people are recommending breakfast cereals or soap powders or sheep dip. Get it right.
- It is a kind of technique that is used not only to command goods for sale, but also ideas.
- [2 : 3 8] People nowadays who have a new gospel to bring to our attention, use the same sort of technique. They will claim to be presenting the gospel that we have known, the gospel with which we have been familiar and our fathers and grandfathers were familiar with.
- But they have discovered some new secret of power. Whether it is an extra revelation, as may be claimed by Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, or whether it is some new and exciting gift, as may be claimed by Charismatics, what is being presented to us is the gospel plus.
- And it was that same sort of situation confronted Paul in his day. He found it at work, for example, in Colossae, where there were people who thought that they could improve upon the gospel by blending it with some new and esoteric philosophy that would get people into touch with planetary powers and that would give them a new sense of supernatural, of being in a supernatural in-ring.
- It's the same sort of thing as the apostle met here, as he writes to the regions, the churches in the regions of Galatia. Though here the additive, the extra ingredient that was being recommended wasn't so very new after all, what was being suggested was that the gospel would be greatly improved if it were married to the older ritual of the Mosaic Covenant.
- If the ceremonies and rituals of the Mosaic Covenant were carried over and blended into the gospel, then you would have something much more superior.

- [4 : 57] Now, whatever the additive was, Paul objected strongly to it. He told the people of Colossae that their notion of getting in touch with planetary powers denigrated the sufficiency that was in Christ Jesus.
- He reminded them, we are complete. We are complete in Christ. We no need to get in touch with those supernatural powers.
- And in any case, our Lord has himself sparing principalities and powers made assured and openly triumphant over them in his cross.
- And he tells the people of Galatia have nothing to do with this extra ingredient that people wish to blend in with the gospel.
- Whatever it is, it suggests a deficiency in the gospel of redemption through Jesus Christ. even he tells, he goes so far as to say, suppose such a message were to be commanded to you by an angel, by an apostle, or by an angel in heaven.
- [6 : 16] Let him be accursed. And he himself recalls how, however painful it might be, he had to resist even the apostle Peter to his face.
- when he seemed to suggest by his conduct that the observance of Mosaic ritual and the separations that it required could be blended into the gospel to produce or to bring about a better type of Christianity.
- I would stoop Peter, he says, I would stoop Peter to the face because he was to be condemned. He was in the wrong. Paul's basic position is this, that whatever, anything that suggests a deficiency, anything that suggests an insufficiency in the saving work that has been completed by the Lord Jesus Christ, anything of that sort must be thrown out.
- Anything that suggests that the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ was not absolutely necessary and was not fully sufficient to meet the exigencies of the human situation, anything of that sort must be discarded.
- Whatever, whatever renders the grace of Christ nonsensical, whatever reduces the grace of Christ to futility has to be guarded against.
- [8 : 16] I do not frustrate the grace of God. The grace of God that the apostle is thinking of here is encapsulated in the gospel of redemption which is achieved by Christ alone.
- His sacrifice, his work of redemption is all that is needed and there can be no virtue added to it and there can be nothing contributed on our side that will improve upon the work of Christ.
- Otherwise, if we think that we can improve upon the work of Christ, we are reducing his grace to futility.
- Now, we want just to spend a few moments asking the question, how can the grace of the gospel be frustrated?
- What things are there to which we are liable that would frustrate the grace of the gospel of redemption in Christ Jesus?
- [9 : 33] us? Well, I want to suggest three distinct ways in which this grace may be frustrated. First of all, the gospel may be frustrated, the grace of the gospel may be frustrated by unbelief in a people who have been evangelized.
- you remember what Paul said at the beginning of chapter 6 of 2 Corinthians? He had to recall that he was among them as the apostle of reconciliation, proclaiming the reconciliation between God and man and bidding people accept the salvation which God offers so freely in Jesus Christ.
- We are his ambassadors as though God did beseech you by us be ye reconciled to God. For he has made him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

and then Paul says and it's a pity that the chapter division maybe obscures this promise it's at that point that he tells them see that you receive not the grace of God in vain.

It's our privilege and Paul reminds those Corinthians of this it's our privilege to live in the era of the fulfillment of the gospel promise.

[11 : 22] That promise was given way back in Eden the promise of God that he would redeem his people that the seed of the woman should there would come the seed of the woman that would bruise the head of the serpent.

That promise was filled out and kept alive within the minds of the faithful from generation to generation but always they had to look forward always there was a measure of obscurity always there was some degree of uncertainty they couldn't tell exactly how it was going to be fulfilled but now the age of fulfillment came God sent forth his son the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the task that was given him he bore the sin of his people and his body to the tree and we live in this area of fulfillment that's what the apostle means when he says God in old times spoke to those people of unacceptable time there was coming an age that would mark the age of God's favor there came there was coming a time that would be the year of God's redeemed it would be the time when God would actually deliver his people from their sins we are living in that time the fulfillment to the work of Christ has been completed and we miss out on the greatest opportunity and the greatest privilege there is if we don't understand that now in this present age now we are in the accepted time now is the day of salvation but if we are to enter into the benefit of that if we are to enter into the benefits of

God's redemption in Christ Jesus it must be in the response of faith you see how the writer to the Hebrews reminds us of this he highlights the danger of unbelief the danger that accrues to people who repudiate the grace of God offered in the gospel of Jesus Christ the gospel was preached long ago he says to people in Israel they had the word of redemption proclaimed to them but some did not achieve some did not get the benefit of it some did not enter in because of unbelief we have to give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard lest that any time we should let them slip exalt one another the apostle sees it as a matter of urgency he doesn't regard us as always to think of ourselves as entirely secure we are always open to temptation we are always beset by the danger that we may repudiate the gospel you have heard the gospel for how many years for how long for how often have you heard the gospel has it been received by faith has it been mixed has the message been mixed with faith in the heart of everyone who has heard it it's this danger of unbelief that our

Lord had in mind when he spoke about the coming of the spirit he promised the spirit to his disciples he promised the spirit to his church he promised that the spirit would come he would come to the church to his to the community of his people and through them he would exercise a convicting work in the world and you know what the beginning of that convicting work is you know what the beginning of the testimony of the spirit what the work of the spirit the first work of the spirit as our lord describes it is when he the spirit has come he will convince the world of sin but he will convince the world of sin in this particular perspective of sin because they believe not in me of sin because they believe not in me you know there is a great danger that unbelief rejection of the gospel rejection of the offer of salvation that God makes to every one of us here through the grace of the Lord

Jesus there is a great danger that we regard the response of faith as a possible option and we regard unbelief also as a quite responsible and acceptable response option it's the way that people think and people are entitled to think the way they do but it isn't born in upon us that the option of unbelief is a destructive one you know how the gospel is how our Lord himself and perhaps in the most familiar summary of the gospel that we have in John 3 16 where he tells that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life he sets before us starkly in that statement the alternatives the alternative is not just hold this opinion or hold that opinion the alternative is accept the redemption that is in

[18 : 20] Christ Jesus accept the gift of everlasting life or remain in the condition that is perishing that they should not perish the gospel the gospel as it is proclaimed to us it can't be emphasized sufficiently frequently the gospel is for taking it's for acting upon the offer of salvation is for accepting not just to be listened to with whatever pleasure or distaste people may listen to it not just to be analyzed and related to whatever other systems of thought one is acquainted with the gospel is for acceptance and it's brought before us in those terms in the scriptures of truth what is necessary is that when we hear it we mix it with faith otherwise we too will be among those of whom it is said they shall not enter in to my rest the gospel is partaking unbelief always says unbelief has one uniform testimony it says that

Christ died in vain I want to recall words of the famous John Duncan Robbie Duncan in this connection no man evangelized he said no man evangelized can go to hell except through the blood of Jesus Christ he must go to it trampling that blood under foot that is what is before us the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ the blood shed for our salvation for our deliverance if we reject the offer of salvation that is made we trample that precious blood under foot unbelief and the part of those who have the gospel preached to them frustrates the grace of God well we must all ask ourselves can I say can you say

I do not frustrate the grace of God if you have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in your heart if you have seen that the saving the sacrifice of Christ the sacrifice that Christ made was made for you that you can say he bore my sins on his body to the tree then you say I do not frustrate the grace of God but if you're living in unbelief if you're living in rejection repudiation of the gospel offer you cannot set your amen to this word I do not frustrate the grace of God that's the first the second way in which the grace of the gospel is frustrated is by incompatible behavior from the part of those who profess faith it isn't enough just to make a profession of faith what the gospel makes very clear to us is that if we do believe in the

Lord Jesus Christ this has a transforming influence upon our whole outlook upon our whole character we are inwardly the word is we are inwardly transfigured by the renewing of our minds we become a different sort of person we have a different set of values at least even if formally we had previously accepted the Christian set of values now we accept it not merely formally but with reality for incompatible behavior frustrates the gospel of Christ I wrote himself drew attention to this at least in one particular you remember when he was teaching the disciples giving them the model prayer that we call the

Lord's prayer our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name he came down to forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors and then he added a footnote he added as Matthew tells us he added an explanation for if you do not forgive neither will your heavenly father forgive you it's not so much that it's laying this down as a condition that we have placed antecedently to fulfill but it is telling us that if we receive the grace of the gospel it will so work in us that we cannot sustain an unforgiving spirit toward someone or toward those whom we think around us indeed our

[24 : 55] Lord himself told a parable to illustrate and to drive home this very lesson he told of men who were debtors a man who owed something to a fellow servant and a fellow servant who owed a great deal to his master the man who owed so much was called to account by his master and he fell at his feet and he pleaded with him forgive me and the master forgave him and then he went and found his fellow servant who owed him a trifling sum by comparison took him by the throat and said to him pay me what thou owest he must be cast into prison until he will pay the uttermost farthing said Jesus the wicked servant frustrated the grace of the forgiveness that had been extended to him our

Lord told also in a parable of a man who had one talent who hid that talent in the earth instead of making use of what the Lord had given him because he had a distorted and perverted idea of the master he served he thought of him as a hard task master weeping where he hadn't sown and gathering where he had not strawed so he did nothing he did nothing about in the way of service for his master and in the end of the day when it came to an account a wicked and slothful servant was cast out we may make profession to belong to Christ but if we are not actively in his service we are behaving in a manner that is incompatible with that profession and we frustrate the grace of the gospel there's one other situation that our

Lord himself told us about and that is the situation where we refuse to put right around that we have done if it is within our power you bring your gift to the altar says Jesus if when you bring your gift to the altar you remember that your brother has something against you you have wronged him you have done something that has offended your brother if you don't carry on with your act of worship leave your gift before the altar more important than carrying on with even that act of worship is that you go and see as far as in your eyes that you put things right between yourself and your brother the grace of God is frustrated when the attitude that we adopt seems to be in itself a criticism of the posture of our

Lord these situations that we have reflected on they suggest attitudes that objected to the attitude of Christ they disapproved of his heavenly example they denigrate his saving grace this grace is frustrated if our behavior is incompatible with the gospel we profess to have received we have all to look at our own hearts and our own behavior does our behavior measure up to the grace that we profess to believe can we still say I do not frustrate the grace of God and finally the scriptures remind us that grace may be frustrated by abuse of the very concept of grace grace this is what the scriptures themselves call turning the grace of

God into lasciviousness making the abundance and the freeness and the God glorifying aspect of grace making that of itself an excuse for our continuing in sin what shall we say then to these things the apostle asks in the Romans and has expanded the gospel of a free justification we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God has set forth as a propitiatory through faith in his blood to declare that he is righteous and the justifier of him that believes that he is just and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus what shall we say to these things he's reflected on how the fact that where sin abounded grace has much more abounded what shall we say shall we continue in sin that grace may abound

[30 : 44] God forbid that would be to distort that would be to misrepresent that would be to pervert the whole concept of the gospel such a suggestion springs from a total misunderstanding and a total misrepresentation of the gospel of redeeming grace the grace of God that is exhibited in the gospel deals with man's sin deals with it justly deals with it exhaustively but it must never be quoted as an excuse for encouraging people to commit more sin this is to forget the cross of Christ let us face the cross of the redeemer let us stand before the crucified one let us understand even but a little of what takes place between

God the father and the son what is involved in that cry of dereliction the damnation which our Lord himself endured it proclaims that God loves righteousness and hates iniquity it proclaims that God wishes to bring to redeem the people to himself righteously in such a way as will honor his law it proclaims the fact that the people whom God redeems to himself must themselves also love righteousness and hate iniquity if there is one thing that protests against this perversion of the concept of grace and if there is one thing that protests against the sin of God's people it is the blood of

Jesus Christ we must hallow this in our hearts if we frustrate if we show disrespect to the blood of Jesus Christ then we denigrate we frustrate the grace which is exhibited on the cross how do you understand the grace of God the grace that is encapsulated in the offer of grace in the offer of salvation when God stretches out his hands to your sinners and bids you turn to him and promises freely to forgive sin do you react to that saying to yourself well then I can just I can just indulge all the lusts of the flesh and of my fallen nature of course you would say to yourself

God forbid as the apostle says it as he asks here is Christ the minister of sin God forbid I do not frustrate the grace of God well let's all examine ourselves in the light of this remembering that grace the grace of the gospel is frustrated by unbelief in those to whom the gospel has been preached and who have not received it with faith it is frustrating by behavior that's incompatible with the experience of salvation it's frustrated when the very concept of saving grace itself is debased to make it an encouragement to live in sin

I do not frustrate may we all be able to say it and to say it with sincerity I do not frustrate the grace of God let us pray oh Lord we are in thy presence accountable to thee for every opportunity of grace that we receive and many of us cannot number perhaps there is none of us that can possibly number the opportunities of grace that we have had and maybe also the opportunities of grace that we have defied yet now even at this late time may we know what it is to commit ourselves to thee to take

[36 : 45] Jesus at his word to believe that he is able and willing to save unto the uttermost all that come unto him and to be ready for the radical change and outlook and behavior that is involved in our receiving the grace of God in our hearts for thy name's sake amen