

4.14.2024

## Chapter 2 – No Confidence in Man

### Mortal Confidence Crucified (vs. 20-21)

**Galatians 2:20-21:** “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”

I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, not me, Christ in me. What an endearing verse to those of us who are believers. As 1 Corinthians 1 would say, it seems foolish to the world, but to us it is the power of God. How magnificent it is when you consider that our faith is based solely on what God has done and that it has nothing to do with us. This is a truth that was difficult for the Galatians to swallow; not that they had not initially, because they had received Christ. Oftentimes, we come in our humility, in our brokenness. We've messed our life up and probably the lives of many other people, and we come before the Lord, and we confess our sins, and we say, “Save us.” And He does. He washes away our sins to the point where all guilt is gone. I mean, that doesn't happen if I just ask somebody, “Please forgive me?” And sometimes they go, “Ok.” But I can sometimes walk away from those conversations still not feeling forgiven and not feeling the guilt gone. But how magnificent it is when we pray to God, and we confess our sins through Him; believe that His Son had taken upon Himself all of our sin, that we walk away guilt free. It's a magnificent truth, and it's not something that really can be explained. It's something that has to be experienced. You have to come before the Lord and experience this. Nevertheless, as Paul writes to the Galatians, something has happened as they had initially received Jesus Christ in the gladness of opening up their arms to that wonderful salvation that was not by their works. Somehow, they've gone back to that way of thinking that they had maybe something to do with it. In so doing, they form little cliques, esoteric groups in which perhaps in some of the groups you actually feel superior than everybody else. We kind of laugh about that in the sense of, “Yeah, those Jews, they feel superior.”

In fact, one of the great verses in Galatians 2:15, as Paul brings the Jews into the thinking of this, he goes, “We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles.”

And I can just hear them going, “Amen. We're not sinners; we're not like the Gentiles.” The point of that particular phrase in which Paul is speaking is that “We, as Jews, have sought God.” Obviously, in many ways not appropriate, but they've always had in their mind to seek God and

to pursue God where the Gentiles go, "Who cares?" So, "We're not sinners in that regard." In other words, "We're of higher plane. We're of higher regard. Obviously, we're greater people." It's hard for us to really fully fathom that, but if I could put it on a level in which you and I are used to thinking; if I were to ask all of you, and I'm just going to speak rhetorically, so, I don't want you calling out, "Do you feel that you're a law abiding citizen?" I would hope that most of you would say, "Yeah, I'm a law abiding citizen." And if I were to ask you, "Do you perceive yourself as a criminal, malfeasant, or do you perceive that you're somebody that is a law breaker?" You would say, "No, I'm not a law breaker. I'm not a rebellious individual that would go against the law. I'm not a criminal." I guess we would basically say as we would agree with Nixon. So, we might feel even insulted by the fact that I would ask a question like that, "Are you a criminal?" Because we've all perhaps in some way known, if not on TV, people that are criminals and we don't perceive ourselves as such. We would say, "I'm not a criminal, he's a criminal." We would make that distinction of the people that were. Then, if I were to get a little bit more personal, I would ask you, "Have you ever contemplated breaking the law?" Well, that might begin to stir up some thoughts. In that particular juncture, you might even rationalize and say to yourself, "No, I don't really think I contemplated breaking the law." I'd say, "Ok. Have you ever broken a law?" Well, traffic tickets? So, you start throwing out the possibilities of maybe you've broken the law in some way. Have you ever done anything that in any way could be deemed as displeasing to God? You see, this is where it boils down to. The fact of the matter is that in certain settings, we feel ourselves to be very superior because "we're not like them." When it gets right down to it, there is "none righteous, no, not one." It's hard for us because of the fact that we might be perceived in certain circles as better than somebody else. It's hard for us to perceive that we're like them. It was almost offensive when Paul began to talk to the Jews in which he begins to convey to them that we all have to come by faith in Christ. We all have to come to the realization that we all are sinners. His point is "Does Christ make us worse because He conveys this point?" He says, "No." He just reveals the depth of our malfeasant. We are criminals, really, within our hearts and we're rebellious in our nature. The fact of the matter is, if we were just honest with ourselves, we would admit that.

As he writes this letter, he understands that there are certain pockets, certain groups that perceive themselves as greater, and they perceive themselves as greater because they do good stuff. They are better naturally because they haven't done bad things. So, they have pulled together, and think, "We are this group of righteous ones." Paul says, "You need to stop that." The one thing that makes our gospel so unique and distinctive is we all admit that we're at the same place. We all admit that we need a Savior, that we are sinners, and that it's all Him and all of His righteousness; that I can never be good enough. If you've ever talked to somebody, I'm sure you've come across the fact that somebody will say eventually to you, "I feel like I'm good enough." And I'm saying to myself, "Good enough for what?" But the point of the matter is that

in their pride, they actually perceive that their prowess, their ability, somehow their strength and their wisdom to do good and to do right is within them. As Proverbs so clearly puts it, "Look, there is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death."

When you look at the Old Testament, in particular the Law, it begins to show you certain individuals in particular that I would say are better than us. One of them, case in point, is David. If we were to compare ourselves with David, as far as passion is concerned, do you even come close to the passion of David? None of us do, but Scripture is revealing in the Old Testament that no matter how powerful your passion is, you could never be righteous enough, and it would never sustain and maintain your righteousness. It would not do it, not yours. It would have to be something more powerful than that.

If you're looking in the realm of wisdom, well, there's nobody wiser than Solomon, but it's not his wisdom that could keep him on the right path. One of the books that we're looking at is Proverbs, in the earlier service. You begin to open up the book and you go, "Wow, this is pretty wise stuff." Yeah, it would be nice if Solomon would have done what it said. It would have kept him out of a lot of trouble, but the point is that all the wisdom in the world, all of the wisdom that you could even know about, could not keep you and maintain a sense of righteousness.

Obviously, as you look at the book of Job, even the Bible says this is the most righteous man on the face of the earth. But it wasn't his righteousness that could bring him before God. Finally, when this most righteous man on the face of Earth stands before God, he puts his hand over his mouth, and he goes, "I have nothing to say. Wow, I have no idea how righteous You are." It's sort of like the response of Isaiah in Isaiah 6. He sees the great power of God and the train of His robe filling the heavens, and all of the angels are going, "Holy. There's nobody like Him. There's nobody like Him." And he goes, "I had no idea what I was talking about."

So, all the way through, the Old Testament is revealing that by the works of the Law, no flesh should be justified. He's repeating this and hitting this at every single angle, but unfortunately, the perception is "I still think that I'm pretty good." So, Paul says, "Ok, here's the deal, you have to crucify yourself." Now, this is an interesting word in and of itself because of the purpose of crucifixion. Of course, we know that Roman citizens were not allowed to be crucified, and it's one of the reasons why Paul had his head chopped off. He's a Roman citizen. So, you lucky dogs, you just get your head chopped off. The purpose of crucifixion is to bring about pain and anguish; to elongate the suffering. So, the fact that Paul would bring in a word such as "crucified," and begin to in some way say that I have to become a part of that crucifixion, is really distasteful. We are crucified with Christ.

When you go into Romans 6, he said we've literally crucified our old self. I have found that crucifying my old self doesn't come easy. I don't know if you found that out. It's not like you can

just chop it off, and then it's off; it's excruciating. When you come, and receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and how wonderful that everything's new. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. God says, "Take up your cross and follow Me." And you go, "Whoa. Take up my cross?" And as you mature and get older, you begin to realize what that means. It means that there's a crucifixion involved.

Now, there are two things that he states in this phrase. They seem almost separate, but they really are not. The first is "crucified," and then the second part of that is "with"; "crucified with". We're going to take them as two different words, but in the Greek "crucified with" is one word. When we talk about the word "crucified," what exactly does that mean? Well, according to the passage, clearly it means, in the sense of the crucifixion itself, it's saying that this is not going to be easy. There's going to be a suffering, there's going to be an anguish, there's going to be a hardship, but you're going to do this willingly. You're going to go and do this willingly. So, what is the crucifixion against? In the book of Galatians, he actually gives us snapshots of what the crucifixion is about.

So, if you look with me in Galatians 5:24, he will use the word "crucified" again.

(Galatians 5:24) "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

So, right off the bat, he's telling you one of the things that are being crucified; that's your flesh, your senses, the desires, cravings that you have; the longings that you have that appeal to your senses. You're wanting those dead.

Connie and I've been trying to cut down. I'm not really happy about it. I said, "I can always tell when I'm about to lose weight." She goes, "How can you tell?" I said, "I get angry." I just can't seem to get over it because there's something inside of my head that goes, "I should not be denying myself of this." And I appreciate all the people that bake things and send them over. Thanks. It's inspiring my integrity. The point is it's not an easy process. I remember thinking when I had first come to the Lord, "Well, it should be easy now. The Spirit of God's within me. So, it should be easy." And God goes, "No, crucifixion is not an easy thing." And you begin to understand, and I've oftentimes thought it's bizarre, that man has always been willing to suffer for doing wrong. It's like a no brainer. He goes, "Yeah, yeah." I mean, "You do know you're going to have a hangover?" "Yeah, no problem. I don't I don't mind."

If you look at Adam and Eve in the Old Testament, God goes, "Ok, you have a choice." And they go, "Ok. So, to disobey God, I'm going to get suffering and pain and misery." "That's right." "Ok." So, why would somebody be willing to suffer for doing wrong? What's even more bizarre is that we're upset over the fact that we have to suffer for doing what's right, and God's going, "Why? You were willing to suffer for doing what's wrong. Why would you be upset to suffer for

doing right? Now, suffering for Me has a just cause. It has a purpose in it." That's why you have books like James and 1 Peter. There's a reason for this; good is being done, whereas before just bad was being done. God isn't taking away the suffering of this world. That's what this world is about. He's not taking away the pain. He's not taking away the misery, but He's giving you a purpose in the pain and the misery. It's no different than in one case, a person stabbing themselves or a person expecting and going through labor. The one has purpose and has pain, and the other is just self-destruction.

As you come to this, he's conveying that we're crucifying the flesh with its passions and its desires. Paul is basically talking about our confidence in these things. Here again, the point is that his confidence was in the ability of the flesh to find fulfillment, to find joy in desires. One of the reasons why we go to the places that we go, we do the things that we do, that we might even know in our head that it's the wrong thing to do, is that somewhere on the line, we're confident that it's going to bring us some sort of relief.

Paul says in Philippians 3, "Everything that I was confident in, I count as loss." He's not saying that you and I have got to throw away everything that we've ever done. He's basically saying that anything and everything that we've ever put confidence in, to believe that it was going to fulfill us, to believe that it was going to satisfy us, needs to be crucified. Let me just emphasize, that's not always going to be easy, but there is a conviction and a spirit that moves and motivates us to go beyond what our feelings are. So, the first thing that he says is that you have to crucify your flesh with its passions and your desires.

He makes mention of the second thing in Galatians 6:14. He kind of summarizes, but he says this, "But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Do you see that? "The world is crucified to me." Not only do we find ourselves putting confidence in the desires of our flesh to bring us some sort of fulfillment, but we put our desire and confidence in the world to meet our needs. The world has all sorts of suggestions on what can make you feel better. You and I have to crucify that so that we don't perceive the world as having that answer to security, safety, and our problems, as they will so oftentimes repeat that they're going to give these things to you. You and I have to actually divorce ourselves from that kind of conversation and mentality. "The world is crucified to me" is the second part of that, "and I to the world." That's really a lot of what this particular passage is about; the crucifying of the world to me and I to the world. In other words, there has to be this sense of willingness not to be accepted, not to be loved, not to be affirmed, not to be cared for by the world.

One of the statements that Jesus makes to His own disciples in John 15 and 16 as well, is "Hey guys, the world hated Me. They're going to crucify Me. What do you think they're going to do to

you?" Now, the point of that is you have to be willing to not be liked by the world. Oftentimes, I think it's more difficult than people going on diets because we're so attached to what everybody else thinks, and that's fundamentally the point of Galatians 1:10. Who am I seeking to please and who do I want the gratification from? Am I wanting, "Well done, good and faithful servant," or am I looking for "Atta boy, you're a part of us. You fit in with us. You're part of the world"?

The passage reads very clearly, "through which the world has been crucified to me."

I don't see that as a source of any kind of fulfillment.

"... and I to the world."

They don't see me as a part of them. One of the statements that Peter makes is that the world is surprised that you don't run in the same dissipation as they do. The point of the matter is that we just stick out like a sore thumb. In fact, we are oftentimes very offensive to the world in the sense that by doing the right thing, i.e. by being light, (Ephesians 5) we expose evil. I think what's interesting is it's not as much talking about the fact is that we're going around telling people that they're doing the wrong thing, but by virtue of us doing the right thing, we become a light that becomes offensive to people. Fundamentally that's the point of Christ. He went about doing good, and by the virtue of His goodness, He was offensive to those that were doing evil, those who were taking advantage of people. He was healing and helping people, He was mending people, He was caring for people; they were exploiting people, using people, taking advantage of people and they hated Him for that. So, there's a crucifixion involved, and this is what Scripture is wanting you to know; there's this sense of "I have to be willing to die." And I know I said it once or twice, but it's not going to feel good. When I think of being ostracized, I oftentimes think of that passage in Jeremiah where Jeremiah goes, "I'm sitting here eating alone. Nobody wants to be a part of my life. Do You have any idea how much this hurts that they don't want me in their lives?" And God says, "Fasten your seat belt, it's going to get worse." That's crucifixion. Now, you take out the excruciating pain, it's no longer crucifixion. The verse reads, correct me if I'm wrong, "I have been crucified."

The conjoining word with the word "crucified" that makes it one, is the Greek word "*syn*." It's actually a prefix within the word, but it's where we get our word "synagogue" which means to gather together; to be a part of; to be like minded in that gathering together, that you think the same, that you feel the same about something. Therefore, you come together to meet together because you're of like mind. Therefore, "*synagōgē*." The crucifixion is that we are crucified with Christ. The point of the matter is that we have the same thoughts as He does. We're doing this the same way that He is. If you look at this, you begin to realize there's a reason why He was crucified. Peter will talk about the fact that you did something wrong, you get punished, you

deserve it. I've seen people go, "I'm suffering. I'm suffering." I go, "Well, what are you suffering for?" "Well, I did this, and I did this." I said, "Well, ok." But the "crucifying with Christ" means that you're crucified for the same reasons as He is. In other words, you're identifying with the purpose that He has.

Let me give you an example.

(1 John 3:5) "You know that He appeared in order to take away sins..."

In case there's ever a confusion, "I wonder why Jesus came to Earth?" There it is.

"You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin."

Now, what is it saying? He doesn't like sin. So, what are we crucifying? Sin. I just never can understand, "I'm suffering." Well, are you sinning? "Yes." Then, stop because that's what we're wanting to be crucified, the sin in our life.

(1 John 3:6) "No one who abides in Him sins..."

In other words, this is not the pursuit of somebody that is following Christ.

"No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him."

Do you have any idea what He's about? "Oh yeah, we're like this." "What are you doing now?" "Sinning." Then, you're not like that because He is not sinning.

He says this in verse 7, "Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

(1 John 3:8) the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy..."

"Ok, now we're getting aggressive." "Do you have sin in your life?" "Yes." "Are you working hard to destroy it?" "It hurts." I know, but that's why He came, and that's what we've identified with. We have the same purpose. We have the same goal, and that's to destroy sin in our lives. Now, I know that a lot of people come to Christ and their number one goal is to destroy sin in everybody else's life, but your number one goal is to destroy sin in your life. Those who are born of God will do this.

The way that Peter puts it is this, in 1 Peter 2:24,

"and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness..."

That's pretty clear.

Romans 6:1, “...Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?” God forbid. The whole reason that He came was to eradicate sin. You've identified with Him. You're crucified with Christ. You have the same purpose that He does, but you know what's also interesting is that you and I not only have the same purpose, we have the same attitude in this purpose.

1 Peter, what a magnificent book it is. You begin to realize that one of the fundamental points of this book is to say, make sure your behavior is right. Now, Peter will refer to Christ as the paragon of suffering for righteousness. Once again, he'll say, “Don't ever suffer for doing wrong, but if you suffer from doing what is right, this is great because you've chosen your way to suffer.” All who live godly will suffer but let me just say this, all who live ungodly will suffer. The question is what are you going to suffer for? Look, I want to go down suffering for doing what's right. I mean, there are some causes worth dying for, and if you don't have a cause worth dying for, I don't think you have a life worth living. You begin to die and suffer needlessly with all the things and the self-indulgence that you bring to yourself. You and I have crucified that, but if you look in 1 Peter, he begins to give this marvelous example throughout this book that we need to suffer the same way that He does. In other words, the same attitude, the same behavior. I mean, it's one thing to say, “I'm going to suffer for Christ.” Good for you. Now, are you doing it the way that He suffered? He gives example after example. He starts off with the guy going to work. He goes, “I got this really, really mean boss.” And he goes, “Ok, submit to him and don't argue with him.” You go, “Ok, are you sure that's the way to go? Because it doesn't feel good to me.” It goes, “Yeah, it's probably a thorn in your flesh, right? Ok, good, because you've just become crucified. What does he say in 1 Peter 2:12? Make sure that your behavior is excellent. So, he begins to describe this.

(1 Peter 2:20) “For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it...”

“Patiently endure,” what does that look like? Well, it doesn't look like you throwing tantrums. It doesn't look like you kicking the dog. I can give a lot of examples, but I don't know if I need to give too many metaphors, but you patiently endure it.

If you look at the end of verse 20, “...this finds favor...”

I do think it's interesting that it doesn't end with “you did what was right; this finds favor with God.” It doesn't end that way.

“...patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.”

How many times have we done the right thing with a terrible attitude, kicking, screaming, and yelling at people? “Well, what are we supposed to do?” I'm glad you asked because it says this in verse 21,



“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example...”

How do I get crucified? What does being crucified with Him look like?

(1 Peter 2:22) “WHO COMMITTED NO SIN...”

Ok, so you didn't do anything wrong, right? “No, I didn't do anything wrong, and they still hate me.” Good. We're on the right track.

“...NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH.”

So, you haven't been covering up, lying, or cheating. I mean, your heart's in this right? You're not being deceitful.

(1 Peter 2:23) “and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.”

Is that the way you did it? Because if you didn't, you weren't crucified with Christ.

I like the way that he puts it in 1 Peter 3 in particular, he goes, “Look, if you want to inherit a blessing, then refrain your tongue from evil; your lips from speaking guile.” (1 Peter 3:10)

(1 Peter 3:11) “HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.”

And you go, “Well, good. If I do all those things, everything will go ok.”

Then, he puts it this way in verse 14,

“But even if you should suffer...”

Up to that point, I'm going, “Ok. Maybe things are going to go ok.” I mean, with Peter, it's not a really big deal that you suffer. It just doesn't seem to be a big deal to him. At one time, he seemed to be scared to death of it, but now, no big deal.

One of the statements that he makes in 1 Peter 1 is “Look, if necessary, you've been distressed for a little while with various trials.” Of course, these people were losing loved ones. They were losing their home, losing everything they owned. He goes, “A little while. There's no problem. Pretty soon we'll be with God.”

“But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED,

(1 Peter 3:15) but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts...”

As it goes on and says in verse 16, “and keep a good conscience...”

Because I know that sometimes some of us could put on a smile and look happy. I think usually when I'm putting on a smile, looking happy, it just looks like I'm growling, but some people can do it really good. When you're putting on that face, it's not a good conscience.

(1 Peter 3:17) "For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right..."

As he goes on and says in 1 Peter 4:12, don't be surprised that you have to suffer for doing what's right. Here. Again. There have been very few people that I've ever heard say, "I'm shocked that I had to suffer for doing what's wrong." But when you do something that's good and do it right, and you have to suffer for it, you go. "This shouldn't be." And God goes, "What kind of world do you think you're in? Do you think you're in a friendly place? Do you think that they love Me?"

(1 Peter 4:12) "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;

(1 Peter 4:13) but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ..."

"Share," that would be "sharing with."

"... keep on rejoicing..."

Do you naturally think that way? I don't even think that way. Hebrews talks about the fact that Christ is on this cross, and it literally says He thought nothing of the shame. One of the great texts in Hebrews is "because He knew He was bringing many sons to glory." Have you ever thought about it this way? We have an opportunity today to suffer with Him, the same way, the same purpose that He suffered. We have the opportunity to show the world how He suffered. In fact, we'll take it another step, you're the body of Christ; the body of Christ is still suffering for the sins of the world. How you suffer is going to be just as important as you suffer.

Let me show you the picture. A passage that oftentimes seems enigmatic; that Paul would even say such a thing almost seems maybe, perhaps a little prideful, but it's not. It is factual in the sense that we are the body of Christ, and the sufferings not done yet. Now, it doesn't mean that He hasn't paid fully for our sins, but it means that the world is still torturing righteousness.

(Colossians 1:24) "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions."

Did you catch that?

(Colossians 1:25) "Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God,

(Colossians 1:26) that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints,

(Colossians 1:27) to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

What would cause somebody to willingly suffer for bringing the gospel to somebody? What would cause somebody to willingly suffer while proclaiming the gospel, to be hated, and continue to love the very people that were hating them? It would have to be Christ in you, the hope of glory. It would have to be a power that's not you.

(Colossians 1:29) “For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.”

Paul's wanting to convey that this whole crucifixion thing has to be a power that goes beyond what we are able to do. I would not naturally think that way, but as Paul will go on to say in Galatians, God has given us the spirit of his Son which cries out “Abba! Father!” And as John will put it so succinctly, as Christ declares to His disciples, “I came to do everything the Father wanted Me to do, and I want to do it in the exact manner in which He told me to do it.” And that's the spirit of Christ within us. The love of Christ constrains us to be crucified, to go through pain and hurt.

When you read through Corinthians in particular, Paul will go into some detail about his sufferings for the church. I mean, in some cases he was beaten. In other cases, he was shipwrecked. In other cases, he was abused and stoned to death. He says, “Why do you think I do this? The love of God is in me, and I've been crucified with Christ.” We take these phrases, and we take these words, we even put them to song, but my question is, do you have any idea what you're saying? You're dying to all of those fleshly desires, because you're saying I put no confidence in those things to give me a joy; I put no confidence in the world to give me any joy. Quite frankly, I have no confidence that the world can give me any kind of affirmation. So, I don't even seek their affirmation. I don't care if they don't like me. That's one thing, but then to do it the way Jesus did it, with Christ.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, we come before You today, and it's our desire to die to the old self. We're new people in You. People don't even recognize us. I mean, we used to be hateful, hating one another, but when the kindness of God, His love for mankind appeared, You saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but it was according to Your mercy; somehow the Spirit of Your mercy, of Your compassion, of Your love dwells in me; the zeal for the Father, the

house of the Father, for the people that we know that You're bringing to yourself. As Paul so wonderfully put it, that I would most gladly spend and be expended for the souls of God's people. Father, that's a different way of thinking. That's the way that takes me beyond human reasoning, and how wonderful it is that that's the gospel. Great is the mystery of godliness. How mysterious is it that one moment we would be so self-indulgent, and the next moment we would be willing to die for another? That has to be God. Dearly beloved, this is our gospel. This is how powerful it is, and if you've genuinely received the power of God, you can do no other. Maybe we just have to examine our hearts.