

I want to preach to you this morning. Thank you for that trumpet. I appreciate the trumpet. It made me think of some things. I used to love hearing Bob play the trumpet. We would go caroling and these guys would all take their instruments. When I was in about the fifth grade, our school offered free music lessons. I told my dad I wanted to play the drums, and he said, "Yeah, right." So he gave me, I said, "Well, buy a used trumpet, see how that works." I loved playing that trumpet. The problem was, I made up my own stuff. That was the real problem. My brother's bedroom and mine were a half-attic. We were up in there, and I would be up there practicing. Getting to practice wasn't a problem; I loved to practice. I would get up there and play, but I was making everything up. One day my dad came up, grabbed that trumpet out of my hand, put a football in my hand, and said, "Go outside and play." I never saw that trumpet again. That was the end of that. So I appreciate people who can do that. That is, for the most part, a true story.

I. The Anchor Verse

Galatians chapter 2, if you would turn there this morning. I wanted to do something maybe a little different than what I've normally done. There's a verse in the Bible that means a whole lot to me, and I want us to take a look at that together because, for me, it is the most important verse in the Bible. As the guy said, "Somebody came in and said, 'Boy, that's my favorite verse.'" Well, they're all my favorite. It's hard to pick just one out.

In 1967, I was attending our church camp. We didn't have our own camp at that time; we were at a camp called Ohio Baptist Acres. I spent most of the summer up there as a junior counselor. I was entering my senior year of high school, and I went to camp. I honestly didn't really want to. I wasn't, how do I say this? Well, if you're not right, you're not right, and I wasn't right. I wasn't off doing terrible things. Somebody asked me, "Did you ever drink alcohol in your life?" I said, "No." He said, "What kept you from doing that in school? Was it your love for the Lord?" I said, "No, it was the fear of my dad." Sometimes that works just as good. The Lord uses that. I would have been a dead man, I guarantee it. I wasn't a model Christian, that's for sure. I don't know that I was deep into the world, but I was pretty much just going through the motions. If you've ever been there, you know what that's like. You go to church and put the smile on, you do everything you're supposed to do, and sit in church, "Amen," all that stuff, but inside, it just wasn't right.

We had a preacher there you may have heard of, Dr. Ruckman. He came to camp every year for two weeks. We used to have two-week Bible conferences, and he would preach. I always liked Brother Ruckman's preaching and everything. My parents and I always sat down front. My mother would sit between me and my brother, and she would lovingly put her arms around us because she didn't want to hit me during church, but she could pinch me really good. She used to say that in the old church, where Bob's parents lived and where Bob and Barb lived when they first got married was right across the street from our old church. They used to cart us out when we were naughty. They didn't have junior church or anything. They used to cart us out. Every service, four, five, or six kids would be carted out to the foyer. They'd whack us around and tell

us not to cry and bring us back into church. My mom told me they always tried to pair us up when we were out there, "I hope your son marries my daughter," and all this silliness.

Anyhow, I liked Brother Ruckman when he came. He was preaching that night on Joshua and the Battle of Jericho. I had a "Leave It to Beaver" Christian life. For those of you who don't know "Leave It to Beaver," I think they just did a remake; you can look it up and see. But I had a "Leave It to Beaver" childhood. We lived in a suburb. The street was lined with trees. We rode our bikes up and down. Our parents sat out in the front. Four families from our church lived on that street, and it was just, always in church, always all those things. I heard about Joshua since I was a little kid. I've heard all kinds of messages on it, just about every way you could preach it, I heard it. But Brother Ruckman that night did something that God used to change my life. He approached that thing from an angle that if I had heard it, I didn't remember it. I know there's nothing new under the sun. As a preacher, I settled a long time ago that I was never going to preach anything new. Somebody's already going to preach it, and probably better. But I never heard this before.

He didn't talk about the huge walls. He didn't talk about the army that was inside. He didn't talk about the inexperience of the children of Israel in warfare. He focused not on the battle; he focused on surrender. Surrender isn't something you generally think about when you're going into battle. When you go into battle, you go to win. In any sport, I never played a football game where I didn't plan to win, and I never played a basketball game. Somebody came up to me last night and said, "Did you really play basketball? Why did it always look like this?" Yeah, I did. I always wanted to win, and I'd win anywhere I could, pretty much.

Brother Ruckman started talking about surrender, and it wasn't the armies that were going to surrender; it was Joshua that had to surrender. Joshua was given a battle plan. It was probably the stupidest thing that anybody ever thought of. It just didn't make a whole lot of sense to get the army together and put all of the priests and the ark in front, and all the priests and all the things, and march around seven times. Then on the last day, "Okay, here we go! Everybody, we're going to blow the trumpets and shout!" Now, Joshua had to go sell that thing. As a preacher, there have been times when I've had to get up and sell people on something. We've never done anything where we've had any money in our church. That's the truth. We've never had any money. We bought a \$50,000 building with no money. Honestly, we didn't have a penny. There were four families, and none of us made any money. We just said, "Well, we've got to have a place to meet." There was this two-room schoolhouse that was for sale, and they wanted \$49,000 for it in 1981. I said, "I think that's the place God wants us to go." I had to sell that to these guys. They said, "Where are we going to get the money? We can't borrow the money. Where are we going to get the money?" I said, "God's going to have to give it to us. He's going to have to give it to us." That property is now worth \$750,000. We don't owe anything on it. We still don't have any money. By the way, when you buy an old building, you just keep paying and keep paying.

Here's my point: preachers sometimes have to go before the people and say, "Here's what God told me. Now listen to me. This is what God told me to do. I need you to get behind me. I need you to pray about this thing. See that it's what God wants." We have to sell it to you. "This is what God wants." I'm telling you, sometimes people look at you like you're a tree full of owls.

They just look at you like you were some kind of a weird person. You'd have to sell the thing. Joshua had to get this battle plan and sell it. Here's how he sold it: he surrendered to God. He said, "Have at it. I trust You. I believe You. I'm going to step out in faith. Here we go." I used to say this all the time: when you see an open door, you head for the door and you say, "Lord, I'm going to the door. I'm going to the door. The door's right here, Lord. I'm stepping through it. Now, if that's not where You want me to go, You close it before I get through that thing." So you have to surrender to God's will.

Well, I wasn't surrendered to anything. By the time he got done preaching and drawing that night, God had me. He had me. That night they sang, "I Surrender All." Every time we sing it in our church, it just almost kills me because that night I surrendered it all. After that, I wanted a life verse. I am not a fisherman by any means, but I know enough that if you're in a boat, you probably ought to have an anchor. I needed an anchor. I needed something that when it got as bad as it was going to get, I could go to that thing and say, "This is my anchor." Dr. Subbaco used to tell us, "You got to get a life verse." I wanted a life verse, and the verse that God gave me is this verse. It's a very familiar verse that you know, verse 20 of chapter 2.

Galatians 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

I want us to take some time this morning and look at that verse. God, I thank You this morning for all You've done in my life. Lord, I can't imagine how Your will included me being a preacher, but it did. God, we need to be surrendered. If we're going to surrender, we've got to understand, God, what You did for us. So I pray this morning, I don't know hearts. I can't read hearts, Father. I don't know who needs what here. I haven't any idea. I know one heart, and it's the one You gave me, and this is what You put on my heart. God, would You do something with it today? Not just that we come to church, but that You do something in our lives, change us, work in us, meet those needs. May Your Holy Spirit fall upon us. Then, Father, as we speak of Your Son, may we glorify Him, lift Him up, for it is all about Him. I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

I want to say this before I get started about Brother Herb. I like to give everybody a hard time, to be honest with you. It's just sort of my fun. I don't have much fun in life. But Herb was a real friend to us when we started our church. We were up in Vermont, and nobody thought we should go to Vermont. Dr. Subbaco didn't think I should go to Vermont. They said, "You're never going to build a big church up there." Well, they were right about that. Mel was afraid we were going to starve. They were all worried about Kathy. They didn't even care about me; they were worried about Kathy. We had a three-week-old little girl, a brand new baby girl, moving to Montpelier, Vermont, which nobody knew anything about, except my mother-in-law said, "Do they have doctors there?" At times it was a pretty lonely place. It really was. Herb and Judy were real friends to us. They financially helped us, as did Bob and Barb, and a lot of folks did. Well, not a lot of folks, but some folks did. I never sent out prayer letters or anything. These were just my friends that were afraid Kathy and the baby were going to starve, so "We're going to send Lake

some money." I appreciate Herb and Judy. I really do appreciate them. I like to give them a hard time, but I appreciate them, as I do your pastor. I know what it's like to be alone, serving God and thinking nobody's around and nobody cares. I'm going to tell you something: if you don't pray for each other, there are people on an island in your church that feel like, "I'm not with it. These guys are all hootin' and hollerin', and I just, I'm not there yet, and I am by myself." You better pray for each other because it's the prayers of God that got us through 36 years in that place.

This verse is my anchor. Last night I spoke about the outward man perishing and the inward man needing to be renewed day by day. What I want to share with you now today is the life that we live. This verse has two halves to it. If you take it and cut it in half, like you would an orange or an apple, just slice it in half. Think of it in a circle, and you're going to cut it in half. The first part of that starts with, "I am crucified with Christ." It starts with death. Then it moves to life: "Nevertheless, I live, yet not I." The second half of the verse reverses it. The second half of the verse starts with life: "And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Then it ends with death: "Who loved me and gave himself for me." Together, the two halves form a circle of life, not the cartoon circle of life, but the real circle of life, the life that we live in Christ.

II. It's Not About You

Folks, I can't imagine you would ever forget this, but I did, so you might. Don't ever forget that this is not about you. It is not about you. Preachers have a problem. We get up and preach, and people say, "Oh, I so enjoyed that message. Oh, you were so wonderful. You were so great." I know you're lying, but we start to think, "Wow, I am somebody. I'm something." You get puffed up, and you learn a lot. You know what the Bible says: "Knowledge puffeth up." You can't take it in and not give it out. So we need to concentrate a little bit on the fact that this is not about me. This whole thing is not about me. It's not about Bible Baptist Church of Central Vermont. It's not about Old Paths Baptist Church. It's not about any other church. It's not about Camp Baptist Temple. It's not about any other church. It's about Him. It's never been about the churches. It's never been about the people. It's always been about Jesus Christ. We've got to remember that. We've got to remember it's not about us. "Well, the pastor hurt my feelings." Did Jesus ever hurt your feelings? Never hurt mine. I've hurt His. He's never hurt mine. You know what? When I hurt His, He doesn't leave me.

Paul starts here, and he says, "I am crucified with Christ." The message of the cross was central in Paul's ministry. It was his heart. Now, I'm not saying it wasn't John's heart, and it wasn't Luke's heart, but boy, it was Paul's heart. You know what I've known in the ministry? God uses all kinds of people. He uses all kinds of people. What we do is we sort of look around and say, "Well, I got to find somebody like me." I looked around and said there was nobody like me. "What am I going to do?" God uses people. He puts them in different places. He gives them different things to do, and He says, "It's not about you. It's about Me." Bible Baptist Church is not about me. Last year, we had a 35th anniversary. I didn't want to do anything, but my daughters, you know how daughters can be. What a pain in the neck they are. They insisted on doing something, and they

did a big hoopla. The only good thing is I got two tickets to the Ohio State games, 11 rows from the field, and they lost to Michigan in the last three seconds of the game. I've never forgiven my daughters for that. No, it was nice. People came, people that used to come to the church and they retired and moved away. Some kids that had grown up in the church and went to college and moved away came back. Lots of people came back, and oh, they were so nice, and they were so friendly. But you know the truth of the matter is, I didn't have to do anything. I never did anything. Anything that's ever happened in your life has been God. It's always been Him, and we've got to focus on Him.

III. The Personal Cross

Paul's heart was the cross. He's a little upset with the Galatians when he writes this letter. He starts in Galatians chapter 3, verse 1.

Galatians 3:1

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

What has happened to you? Why have you left what it's all about? His message made the cross personal. How personal is the cross to you today? Is it a symbol you wear around your neck? I see football players doing this after they win or after they did something good. They never do it when they miss the football. They never point up to them and say, "Thank you, Lord, I just missed the tackle and the guy scored. Thank you, Lord." It's down to the second buzzer. The national championship is on its way. It's a Kansas City guy going to shoot the ball. "Out! Oh, praise the Lord!" No. You see, you know what that stuff is? It's a symbol. What does the cross mean to you?

Paul writes again in Galatians chapter 1, verse 3.

Galatians 1:3-5

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

Wow. You know what? Jesus came for a specific purpose. When the angel came to Joseph, he said, "Listen, don't be afraid to take Mary to be your wife, for she's going to bear a son. His name is going to be Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Paul knew that because he was a sinner and got saved. He was a religious sinner. He was a church-going sinner. He was a robe-wearing sinner. He was a Pharisee. You read, he said, "I was a Pharisee of Pharisees. I wasn't no sissy like these guys. I believed it. I went after it. I was into it. I wholeheartedly was after it." Then God knocked him off his horse and saved him, and his whole perspective of life changed because now the cross, that instrument that Jesus died on, that became the reason that we preach, not the cross in the wooden structure, but the fact that Jesus Christ was crucified. Bob said it last night: from the foundation of the world, it was always God's plan. This wasn't some plan that we dreamed up. This wasn't some plan that we'd get rich. I'm going to tell you something: if I was

going to choose something to get rich, it would not have been what I'm doing. Now, I'm not complaining; God has been good to me. But if my motive was to get rich, first of all, I wouldn't have been to Vermont. I'd have gone to Florida. That's where all the rich people are. They retired from the North and go down there.

IV. Objections to the Cross

Not everybody likes that message of the cross. They didn't like it then. A lot of people don't like it now. The problem is still the same. The cross has always created this problem. Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 18:

1 Corinthians 1:18

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.

It is the power of God. We're talking about power and prayer. If Jesus hadn't died, our prayers wouldn't be anything more than those people who pray to dead saints. The power is what Jesus did. Every bit of power that we get is from Him and because of what He did.

Why do people get so upset with the cross? Three reasons: who, how, and why. All are hinted at in these opening verses.

1. Some object to the claims of Christ. The Gospel insists that it was not just anyone who died, but it was God's Son, God come in the flesh. In Paul's day, that was foolishness. "What? Your God died? Are you telling me that Jupiter? Jupiter would never die for anybody. Apollos? He would never die. Saturn? Never die for anybody. Your God died? What foolishness is that? A God can't die!" Several years ago, I had a couple in our church, and his brother was a Jehovah's Witness. He was visiting with his brother and he said, "I bet your pastor wouldn't come and talk to our, whatever he was." And he said, "I bet he would." I could just see the conversation. So he called me and he said, "Would you go talk with this guy?" Now, I've been in these conversations before, and they don't go anywhere, but I went because I wanted him to see. So I said, "Sure." So we went, and I'll tell you what I did. I brought my King James Bible, and I brought a New Testament, a Textus Receptus New Testament with me. I got one on my shelf. I can't read a word in it, but I got one because it looks good. I took it with me. When Ed Bird saw that Greek New Testament, this is the truth, he said, "We'll just use your Bible," because he already knew he was in trouble. He was in trouble. So he says, "Where do you want to start?" I said, "Let's go to John 10." We spent two hours in John 10. Finally, and I wasn't going to blink first; I had to stay there for a week. Finally, this guy says, "Well, I've got other things I have to do." Now, there were about, they didn't tell me we were going to have a crowd, there were about 10 Jehovah's Witnesses there, and me and this family. It was a setup. So when he got done, I said, "Let me ask you one thing." I said, "Anybody's mind changed?" Nobody's mind changed. One of those guys said, "I will never believe God died." And I said, "You, sir, are going to hell." Packed up and left. You see, it's the same today. It's foolishness to them. How many times have you read, "Oh, these Christians, they believe in the Santa Claus, and they believe in the fairy tales, and the Easter

bunny, and all that." They say all this stuff. I always want to ask them, "Why do you know all about that stuff? You talk more about the Easter bunny than I ever did. You're more worried about Santa Claus than I ever was." I want to be careful here. I don't know if anybody still believes in that guy, and I don't want anybody to get mad at me, but I want to tell you, that guy's a liar. Santa Claus is. He says, "I'm keeping a list and I'm checking it twice, and I am going to find out who's naughty and nice. And if you're naughty, you will get nothing." Nice guy. And on Christmas morning, every kid that was naughty still got something. That guy's a liar. You know what Jesus does? He says, "I already know you're naughty. I don't have to check a book." And He says, "If you'll trust Me, I'll give you eternal life." Jesus never lied about it. He said, "If you don't, I'll send you to hell." Wow. Jesus doesn't lie. Santa Claus does. That's another sermon.

2. Some object about how He died. Crucifixion was not a pretty picture. I'm not going to go through the gory details. You know it. You've heard it. I'm sure you had it explained to you. It was not a pretty picture. It might have been one thing for the Messiah to die, but in that way, hung on a tree, cursed, that's too much. That cross is over the top. Those Jewish folks said, "No way could our Messiah ever hang on a tree because if he was hung on a tree, he'd be cursed."
3. The clincher was why He died. The Gospel claimed that He didn't die for His own crimes, and that He didn't die because He was a victim, although He was a victim of lies and viciousness. He didn't die for that reason. He died for me. He died for me. That's how this verse closes: "And gave himself for me." That's the heart of the Christian message. We can forget that. Let me try to use an analogy that might seem a little simple, but you know, I get the gist. A couple of you guys have been kind of, you know, I'm not going to sing the Clemson song. Herb said, "Oh no." I got a feeling they lost, and if they lost, I won't be as brokenhearted as you think I will. I tell my church it's all part of the show. I mean, I love them, no misunderstanding. A football game in the sphere of life doesn't mean a whole lot. Those kids, whichever team lost, those kids will be devastated for about 24 hours. Then some of them will be drafted, and there'll be millionaires in a month or two. Do you think they're going to worry about that game? About losing? No, they're not. Here's a reality: what Jesus did for us is not a game. It lasts longer than just a 24-hour period. It lasts the rest of your life. That night, that Friday night in August of 1967, Jim Lake knelt at an old-fashioned altar and wept his eyeballs out and said, "I will go anywhere, anytime, anyplace. I'm giving it all to You." I gave it to Him then, and I haven't taken it back. I don't want it back. He didn't send me where I wanted to go. My life plan didn't come out the way I thought it would be. I thought I was going to be Jimmy Lake, the great evangelist. I'd have a trailer and everything and travel the country and preach. It didn't work out that way. He gave Himself for me. An evangelist tells a story. Several years ago, he was preaching in Philadelphia. A guy came up after he got done preaching on the cross. He said, "You know, I don't really appreciate you spending so much talking about the cross because I think it's Jesus' life that is so much more important. If we could just take the tenets of His life." The preacher said to him, "So if you saw the tenets of Jesus' life, how He lived, would you live that way?" He said, "Oh, I absolutely would." He said, "Then let's start at the beginning. He did no sin." He said, "Have

you ever sinned?" And the guy said, "Well, yeah, I've sinned." He said, "Then you don't need an example. You need a Savior."

V. Crucified with Christ: Dying Daily to Self

"I am crucified with Christ." The next part of that verse says, "I am crucified with Christ." It means that we have to die to ourselves. That's not just a one-time event. Paul says, "I die daily." I die daily. As wretched and as corrupt and as perishing this outer man is, this thing is a pain. It's strong. It hangs on. It means business. It will drag me off in a heartbeat. It would just as soon drag me off and throw me into the pit of hell as look at me. I have to kill it every day. I die daily. This flesh is no good. You spruce it up. Yeah, you know, I shaved this morning. Unlike some people, I shaved this morning. But if I had a goatee look that bad, I would shave. You're just jealous. When I had my open heart surgery, I didn't shave. It was almost two weeks, and man, that thing was the ugliest looking beard you ever saw in your life. My wife says, "That thing goes or you go."

We work on these bodies. Man, we take care of them. We love them. We look in the mirror. You girls say, "I hope he notices my hair." And the boys say, "I hope she notices my hair and look how nice I look." And you guys look kind of crummy. But anyhow, it's, you know, "I hope they notice me," and you work on them getting to notice you. You do all this stuff you have to do. We spend all that time. We've got to kill this thing.

"I am crucified with Christ." Jesus said in Luke chapter 9, verse 23:

Luke 9:23

And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

You have to pick up that cross every single day. You can't get up one day without saying, "I am dying to myself. This is Your day, God. I'm giving it to You. I'm going to live for You by Your grace, by Your strength. I want to live for You today." Because if you don't do that, the flesh is going to win that day. Now you might go through that and say, "Ha, it didn't win." Yeah, it did. Mel used to say this all the time, "You want to keep it? Give it away." I changed that. I tweaked it a little bit. You want to have real life? Then lose it. I wouldn't trade a minute for my last 66 years with the trials and the tribulations. I don't know what's coming yet, but I wouldn't trade a minute for it because this is the life that He's given me.

Paul says in Romans chapter 6, verses 1 to 2:

Romans 6:1-2

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

It's a good question, folks. If we're dead to sin, how can we live therein any longer? Galatians chapter 3, verses 26 through 28 says this:

Galatians 3:26-28

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

By the way, let me just, this is a sidebar, let me just throw this out: you're not getting in without Jesus Christ. Faith in Him is it. Coming to church won't work. Getting baptized won't work. Giving money won't work. Living good won't work. Looking good won't work. Nothing will work but faith in Christ Jesus.

Somebody said, "You're a sexist." And I said, "You're stupid." I'm not the sexist. I want to tell you something: you women have every privilege that I have in Jesus Christ. Every privilege. My wife is as fine a Christian woman that I've ever met in my life. She is absolutely equal with me in Jesus Christ. I am not closer to Him than she is. She doesn't walk in my shadow. She has her own shadow, but God laid down some parameters and said, "Here's how it's supposed to be. The man is supposed to be the head." "Oh, I'm going to get all messed up about that. Oh, I'm not going to be my head." Well, you're going to go headless then because you're going to have a problem. You know what Jesus did? He submitted to His Father. Was Jesus equal with God? Yes, He was. He said, "I put Myself under His authority in the role that He came in the Son as the Son of God." He submitted Himself to the Father. The head of man is Christ. The head of Christ is God the Father. He's absolutely equal. My wife and I are absolutely equal, but there is no doubt who the head is and who the neck is that turns the head. We are equal. Don't fall for that trash.

I am dead to self. He says, "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been made to drink into one Spirit. Listen to me. I had a guy tell me one time, "That's water baptism, and you got to be baptized in a Baptist church to be in the body." And I said, "What have you been smoking?" I mean, that's the dumbest thing I've ever heard. I never heard that until I started hanging around in Baptist churches. Well, I've had guys say to me, "You know what? The translators messed it up because we all know that the Church of England didn't want to make, the translators didn't want to make the Church of England upset, so they just took the word baptism and made it Baptist. When if they really would have translated it, it would have been immersion." Well, let me ask you something. Do you really need to know that to understand what baptism is? You're going to get that word confused with sprinkling. Have you ever sprinkled anything into something? Look what that verse says. It says, "We're baptized into one body." Have you ever sprinkled anything into? No, you sprinkle on top of. You don't sprinkle it into. You know what? When you put something into it, you put it into it. Does that make sense? So if you, when you die, they ain't going to sprinkle dirt on you. They're going to throw you in the ground and cover you up. They're going to immerse you into it. When you got saved, you got immersed, you got baptized, you got put into Jesus Christ. You don't have to change the Bible. You just got to read it. You can't sprinkle, you don't sprinkle anything into. I showed him that. He said, "Oh, I never thought of that, but I'm still convinced." Well, that's the problem. You're not

looking for answers. You start with the answer and then look for a question. We are put into Jesus Christ.

By the way, that's what water baptism is a picture of. We used to have our baptisms. Don and Debbie Lorenovich were one of the first, were the first family in our church. Years later, they bought a nice place out in Brookfield, and their property came down right to the pond. There was a famous bridge there. It's a floating bridge. There was nothing that was floated, and people came from all over the place to go to the floating bridge. They would swim off of it. They would fish off of it. You would drive over it. I drove over it a lot of times. So we would have our baptism down there. We'd walk down to their pond in the summertime. All the people were over on the bridge. They were swimming and fishing and everything. I'm talking not much farther than from here to the staircase. We'd start singing on the shore, and the heads would start looking up, "You know, what's going on?" Then we'd get people walking out into that water, and I'd be out there baptizing people, and they're over there taking, that was before phones, you know, taking pictures. I know they went up, "You will not believe what we saw in Vermont. It's old-fashioned, really old-fashioned. These people went out there, and they were dunking them in the water." I can just hear the story. "Oh, it was so, you didn't have any understand, understand what that was." You know what that was? That was a testimony to those folks about what Jesus did for them. He put them into Christ. When you get baptized, you're putting the uniform on.

I had a fellow in my church. He wanted to do discipleship. He wasn't a member of the church. I said, "You can't do it. How can you do discipleship if you're not a member?" And he said, "Well, I don't," he said, "I'd like to join, but you say I have to be baptized." I said, "That's right." And he said, "Well, I'm not going to be baptized." And I said, "Well, then you can't do discipleship." And he said, "Why in the world is it so important?" I said, "Let me tell you something. Have you ever gone to a basketball game or a football game, and the players get there and they say, 'We want to wear our own uniform. I mean, we just want to wear our own thing. Sorry, coach. I know our colors are beautiful red and gray, scarlet and gray and white. I know that's the colors, coach, but I'm going to wear blue and yellow.'" No, I don't think that's going to happen. No, you put on the same, you put on the same uniform. I said, "And you know why that is? That's to identify who's who. If you're not willing to identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, how in the world are you going to be a disciple? You can't disciple somebody when you ain't a disciple yourself." They don't go to church anymore.

VI. Christ Lives in Me: The Indwelling Spirit

One of the biggest objections to the Gospel of grace has been, "It's too easy. It's too cheap." Let's look at that. "Nevertheless," he says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Here's something cool: you got put into Christ, and He got put into you. You got saved. You became part of the body, and Jesus got inside yours. This ease, "It's too cheap." The Gospel is just this idea of just believing and being saved without doing anything. "It's just, you just make it cheap." We have somebody who does a sign, and I don't care about it. They, I forget what they put. They put something on it. A kid that used to be in our church now goes to a Presbyterian church, and he's really deep, you know, he's 26 years old. Never, I better be careful. My wife said, "Yeah, yeah,"

because his mom and dad still go to the church. Anyhow, he said, "Oh, that sign offends me. It offends me." I said, "Well, don't look at it." I wouldn't think it's a friend to me. I just don't look at it. If I'm watching something on TV and it offends me, I don't call up the TV. "Oh, I'm so offended." No, I just turn the channel. "Don't look at it." Offend you? How silly can we be? "Oh, you've made the Gospel so cheap." Well, it's better than cheap. It's free. How much better can you get?

Listen, I bought cheap things for Christmas. I went to Walmart and bought cheap things for my grandkids. My kids are out of it now, just my grandkids. I went and got them stuff, and it was a cheap sale, you know, "Hey, here's a sale. It used to be \$6.99. Now it's \$2.99. It's worth 87 cents." But I'm getting a sale. It's cheap. I'm going to buy it. It's cheap. Just because it was cheap didn't make it free. I went to the cashier and I said, "You don't understand. This is a gift. Gifts are free." She said, "You don't understand. You're not walking down to the store without paying for that stuff." I said, "It's a gift." She says, "It is a gift, but you're going to pay for it." Let me tell you something: what Jesus did for me was a gift. It didn't cost me nothing, but it cost Him everything.

There's a fellow in our church. He's a good man. He's moved down to North Carolina. If he's listening, I don't care. He likes me anyhow. When I led him to the Lord, he said, "Pastor, there's nothing free in life." I said, "You're right, except this. And this wasn't free. It's just free to you. It's a gift to you. Somebody else paid for it." His eyes opened up, and he got saved. The Gospel doesn't say that how we live doesn't matter, because it does. It says that our own lives will never be good enough, though you should live right. I got a cousin who said, "You know, Jim, if I," he's a Pentecostal preacher, and he said, "If I believe that you believed, I'd just get saved and go out and do whatever I wanted to do." I said, "You know what the problem with you, Clayton Dean, is? You want to do that. You don't think you can. I can do it, and I don't want to." There's a difference there.

This idea that the Gospel doesn't tell us how we should live. Yeah, we're supposed to live. You know what? The Christian world is getting it kind of screwy today. I told one guy, I said, "You're," he's always, some of the young guys get on me. I wear a tie. You don't have to wear a tie. I understand that. I like to wear a tie when I preach. I like to wear a tie. I don't do it on Wednesday nights. I'm not doing it today. I don't feel like I'm failing God because I'm not wearing a tie. I was going to wear a T-shirt, but I didn't want half of you to faint. But I understand none of that matters. I understand that, but I'm going to tell you something, you know, "Oh, music doesn't matter, and this doesn't matter." And it's all, you know, they're getting all this stuff. This guy said, "Jim, you're just a Pharisee." I said, "You know what? You're a greater Pharisee than I am." He says, "I am?" Then I say, "Yeah, you're a Pharisee in your legalism or in your freedom. You're a legalist about your freedom. What do you care if I wear a tie or not? If I don't care, you don't. What do you care?" The young preachers say, "Oh, Brother Jim, why are you wearing a tie?" I said, "Well, why don't you?" "Well, I don't want to." "I do. What's the problem?"

You know what the Christian life is like? I've been waiting to take this out of my pocket. It's like a glove. You know what? This glove is useless until this happens. Now I can do all kinds of

things with this glove. It'll keep me warm. It'll serve me. It'll do all kinds of things. It's not the glove. It's what's in the glove. See, it's not you. It's what's in you. Here's what he says: "Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Christ lives in you. Without Him, here you are. Without Him. You got Him? Let's go for it.

VII. Living by Faith: The Danger of Another Gospel

"I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Now it goes on to say, "And the life which I now live, I don't live by my faith. I live by His faith." You know what that second half starts with? It starts with living. God didn't save you to die. He didn't save you to sit on a lump somewhere. He didn't save you to sit and study the Bible and do nothing. I don't believe you do that, but just in case you were thinking about it, God saved you to live until He decides not to. The question is, what kind of life are we going to live? What kind of life are you going to live? Well, he says, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me," ends up with death. You see what that is? It starts with His cross. It ends with His cross. It starts, listen, death brings life. Life is what it's all about. His death gave you and gave I life.

Here's what he says. By now, in this letter, the Apostle Paul is ticked off. He's frustrated. Since it's God's Word, guess who's not happy? He says this in Galatians 5:16-17:

Galatians 5:16-17

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

You've got a problem with the lust of the flesh, and that doesn't have to be sexual, folks. That can be with anything. You know what the lust of the flesh would have been in my life? If I'd have said, "I'm going to do a high state game instead of going to go preach." That had been the lust of the flesh because it's what my flesh wanted to do. If I let my flesh control me, that's what lust is. That's why I've got to kill the thing every day. You don't do what you want to do; you do what God wants to do. The only way you can do that, how you do that? You walk in the Spirit. Here it is. It's in you. Here's why: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit." That's the battle you have. The basic, the first lesson, well, maybe not the first lesson, but one of the first couple of lessons in discipleship is about this battle that goes through in your life. I've been in that battle since 1957. I must have PTSD or whatever it is, PST or TPO or something. Post-traumatic stress syndrome. You'd think I'd get that. 57 years in the same battle, never let up. I won some and I lost some. I won them when I walked in the Spirit. I lost them when I walked after my flesh. The Christian life lived in this world with all of its temptations and all of its appeals. That life is hard to battle, and you can't win without Jesus Christ.

The difference is, you're no longer in jail. The reason some of you are no longer on drugs, no longer drinking, no longer cheating, the reason you're not doing any of that stuff anymore is not because you just turned over a new leaf. It's because God got in you, and when Jesus Christ got in you, it changed, and it won't change unless you let it change. This old flesh says, "I want it. I

want it." "Well, you can't have it." "Well, I want it." "No." "Well, I want it." "No, you can't have it. That's no good for me." You see this commercial on TV, that song about a guy looking in the mirror, he's drunk, and the guy in the mirror is trying to get him to drive. That's a good commercial with the exception of this problem: 99% of the time, the guy in the mirror wins, and they get in the car drunk. Why? Because the flesh wins without Jesus Christ. Our only hope of victory to overcome sin comes through believing and allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us to victory. "And the life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

What was going on in Galatia was this: Paul came through there and he started a church. People got saved. He taught them about the cross, taught them about the freedom they had in Jesus Christ. There were Jews and Gentiles in that church, but mostly Gentiles. But man, they got saved. They had sweet fellowship. Paul stayed with them and taught them, and he loved them, and they loved him. But Paul's calling was to keep moving and start another church, to keep moving on, not to stay in one place, but to keep moving on. When he left, some others came in. These guys also had trusted in Jesus Christ. They were also Christians. They came from some other churches and they said, "We hear that the Apostle Paul had been here. Oh, we love Paul. Yeah, Paul's a great guy. I'm telling you what, that guy, he believes the book. He's great, but you know what? He's a little fanatical because he left some things out. He didn't tell you that really, if you're going to be a follower of Christ, who by the way is the Jewish Messiah, you need to follow the Jewish law. You need to start worrying about what you eat. You need to worry about what days you make holy."

Now, I let our young people go to a stock car race one Sunday afternoon. One of the kids in the youth group was driving in the race. So I said, "Yeah, you guys go ahead and go. You have your youth thing and then go do that." Some guy in my church came, and he was madder than a wet hen. He brought a John R. Rice book to me on why Sunday was the Sabbath. I said, "Well, you can read John R. Rice. Let's read what Paul says in Romans." Paul says in Romans that we don't have any holy days. You don't have to know your own if you don't want to, but if I want to, I can. He said, "Oh, you can prove anything by the Bible." I said, "Yeah, the truth."

Paul writes to them because they became bewitched. They started following that. He says in Galatians chapter 1, verses 6 through 10:

Galatians 1:6-10

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 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. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Throw him out. Get rid of him. Folks, our goodness, our works, our righteousness will never save us. Amen. Well, I got news for you. It also won't allow us to serve Him. You can't work from the outside in. You've got to work from the inside out. That same older fellow, and I love

him, I do. He's still in my church. He took it not well, but he took it. He's still in the church. His wife was sitting in the car crying. She said to me, I went out, she said, "Pastor, every church we go to, he ruins it." I take him out and I say, "You tell your wife everything's okay." He said, "Everything's okay." Got in the car, and I bet he got in here full on the way home. His daughter said to him, "I should just go to another church." I said, "Be quiet. Don't want him to go to another church. Just get right."

I tell him, he's always, he said, "You never preach on long hair." I said, "Where have you been for the last 50 years? These young guys don't have long hair. I preach on spiked hair." No, I don't really. He always liked it. We got a youth guy in our church, and he's got these spikes always. Every time I see him, I tap his head. I said, "You can't change people from the outside." That's what was wrong with fundamentalism. They wanted you to get saved and then change the way you live. You can't change the way you live. That flesh is too strong. I love that illustration the brother used about the angels. I said, "I'm going to use that. Clean that up and use it." Listen, if Satan can convince one-third of the angels in heaven to leave heaven when they've seen God, you ain't no match for the devil. No match at all. You need somebody in you that can meet him. Here you are facing the devil on your own. You're this. What you need is somebody in you that can make a fist and slug that guy right in the face. That's what you need. And that's Jesus Christ. It's never going to be you. You're never going to live good enough to do it. You're not saved by works. You're not kept by works either. You're not made righteous by works. We walk by faith.

VIII. Conclusion: It's All About Him

I'll close with this. My life verse. The verse that's helped me a lot. The verse that I've ignored sometimes. It says:

Galatians 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

It ain't dead yet, folks. It's on its way, but it ain't dead yet. "The life which I now live in the flesh, I don't live by my faith. I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." Let me tell you something. I've had people treat me really, really nice. I've got a wife that's lived with me for 39 years. If you don't think that was a problem, you're not paying attention. I took her and a three-week-old baby up to Vermont. Her mom and dad were screaming bloody murder. She was crying all the way. Everybody thought we were going to die up there. Thought we would freeze. Thought we wouldn't have any food to eat. I didn't have a job. I didn't look for a job. I was just hoping that Bob and Herb and Mel and a few others would kick in and help us.

You know, when I got ordained, I got to tell you this story. I got a million stories. I preached one morning, this is a true story, I preached one morning, and it was kind of long. My wife came out of that nursery. She was in the nursery. We had like nine babies in this nursery. She came out of that nursery. She said to me, "I am buying you one of those electric collars that they put on dogs." So she's crabbing about it. We're driving home. My daughter from North Carolina called

her mother in the car. She said, "Mom, you won't believe it. I was in the nursery in church this morning. Matt was preaching. That's her husband. And he preached over an hour and 20 minutes. I could have killed him." And Kathy said, "Yeah, your father did the same thing." She said, "Let me have the phone. Let him have the phone." She said, "What are you doing preaching that long? How can I get yelled at? How can I get yelled at for my daughter for what her husband did? That isn't fair." I said, "All I have to say is that this woman has lived with me for 39 years in the most unique circumstances that there ever was. We didn't know a soul up there. I didn't go with a team. We were the team and a three-week-old baby." The first Sunday we brought Becky, the one that yelled at me, we put her on the front pew. We really thought big. We had 30 chairs set up. We rented a hotel room. I had 30 chairs set up. We put that baby on that thing. We knelt down and said, "God, send somebody." And we had eight people. That was Don and Debbie Lorenovich, two of their daughters, and a single woman. Church started from that. Church started from that because:

Galatians 2:20

The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Nobody's ever done that for me. He gave Himself for me. He gave Himself on me. I appreciate the men that fought in the service. My dad was a World War II vet. He was attached, well, he was not attached. That was the whole thing. He was, I won't say the word, it's an illegitimate company. He said, "Not a company, an illegitimate group." He wasn't attached to a company because they were in communications. He was wounded. I'll tell you, I appreciate what he did. I always wanted to go back to Normandy with him. He would not go. He wouldn't even talk about it. I wanted to go back. He wouldn't go. I appreciate what my dad did. A lot of you men, I understand you got a fellow in the field right now out of your church. I appreciate those fellows. I really do. But I'm going to tell you something. When Jesus died, He didn't die for a cause or a country. He died for me. He died for me. Jimmy Lake, that little rascal, He died for me. He took blame for my sin, not just the sin that I had committed by eight, and believe me, there was plenty there, but the sin from eight through 66, and however long I got. He hung before His Father, and He said, "Lay it on Me. Blame Me. I'm the one that's guilty. He's not guilty. I'm guilty." He became sin for me. He just died in my place. He became guilty for me. A holy, righteous God. You're right, fellows. Jupiter would not do that. Saturn wouldn't do that. So why are you worshiping somebody like that? No government's ever going to do that for you. No preacher's ever going to do it for you. Your wife and your husband's not going to do it for you. They can't. Jesus did it for you.

Galatians 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Paul said, "That is the key on how you're supposed to live." Francis Schaeffer wrote a book a long time ago, "How Shall We Then Live?" It was a great book, but I could abridge it and say, "Romans 2:20 is how we should live." That's how we should live, folks. Christ in you.

Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We thank You, Lord, for what we heard last night, what we heard today. Lord, we know that You prepared the hearts of the speakers to preach to us what You wanted us to hear, and what You wanted us to have. Lord, I just thank You for them coming here and taking their time from their ministries to minister to us. I pray, Father, that we will have listened to everything that they have said to us. Lord, we just thank You for the fact that You loved us and You died for us. Sometimes, Lord, we take that for granted in our own lives, and we get all sidetracked with everything else that we think really matters when the truth of the matter is, there's only one thing that matters. That's the fact that You came down and You died for us. Lord, You lived on this earth for 33 years, and then Your Father took You back. It was a time when You were at the apex of Your ministry and Your life, but He decided to cut short Your ministry and to take You home to be with Him. The reason for that is because He intended for us to fulfill what He started. We are His replacement. We carry on. He gave us a good model, Lord. You gave us a good example. You gave us everything we needed to see what we needed to be. Then You pulled Him out of this earth. You put Him on a cross so He could die for us, that we might have the privilege to finish the work that He started for You.

Help us never lose sight. Help us not to get sidetracked on all the other issues in life that we deem so important, but in reality, they're nothing. Help us not to focus on the things, Lord, that turn us against You in Your Word. Help us not to focus on the things of the world or ourselves or all that we think we are and lose sight of the fact that all that You are. We come and we go in life, and we do pretty much what we want to do. Most of us, God's people, never find and fulfill the real purpose and the real reason that God came down and died for us. Help us to see that. If just one person would get that out of here, it could literally change the world. If just one person saw and left today with the focus and the purpose and the perspective, to be able to do what God wanted them to do without all of the side issues, with all the stupid stuff that just so tries to access and the sin that just so easily besets us. If we could just stay focused on the fact that it's about Him, not about us. It's not about our light affliction or the things that we go through or the things that we don't like or the things that we do like and how we shut our prefaces up that, "Oh, Christianity has to be the way I think it has to be," but it has to be how You want it to be. That we give our lives to You. We've found faithful in all that we do for You. Lord, that we just stay the course in these last days. Lord, You help us just to be faithful. Help us to take every man and every woman that comes into this church, every young man, every child, every teenager, and help us mold them and build them and transform them that they too might finish the work that You started. Lord, we just thank You now and praise You as we go on our way today.

As Mary, when she was confronted with what God was going to do with her and the Lord Jesus, how overwhelming that must have been. How she saw and didn't understand all that He was about to do with her and through her. Yet one of the greatest places in the Bible, when Mary was confronted with all that God was going to do, the Bible simply says, "And Mary pondered all these things in her heart." May we today, with what we've heard, with what we've seen, with

what we've felt, with what we've experienced, as the Holy Spirit of God walked up and down these aisles and touched each of our lives, may we too throughout this day and throughout the rest of our lives ponder these things in our heart. We'll thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.