

Galatians

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[0 : 0 0] the words which I trust the Lord will enable me to make a few remarks will be found in the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians chapter 2 and part of verse 20 the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians chapter 2 part of verse 20 the life which I now live the whole verse reads I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me 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 clearly divides his life into three parts there was that life which he had lived a life which was opposed to God a pharisaical life a life in a dead form of religion a life which he looked back upon with sorrow and shame when he was so zealous in the outward form of the Jews religion and then he was brought to meditate upon the life which he now lived his present life and then there would be times as we read and that portion was very much upon our mind as to whether we might be before this evening in writing to the Hebrews but now there was this time this life and then he goes on in the Hebrews but he says but now they desire a better country that is and heavenly where God is not ashamed to be called their God the life which

I now live and as Paul was writing that he asked that life which he now lives that life we now are living the present the past can never be altered but we're living in the present life and there is that which is to come this present life must and shall come to an end how we know not when we know not but this is certain that however comfortable we may be however certain we may be of our religion and our hope in death this life this present life must come to an end but there are those who are quite happy with the life which they now live they have no fear because like Paul they have a religion which was very satisfying to the flesh and Paul speaks even in this very portion the life which I now live in the flesh and it seems rather strange that

Paul knew something of a religion which was of the flesh and now he seems to bring this very life which was in the flesh into a spiritual view whereby he was able to liken it to a different life to what he had before and it is good when we're able to compare the life which we have led and to be brought to a hope that the Lord has changed things so that we can say the life which I now live is different to the life which I did live well now there are those people who look upon the life which they now live as being so different to the life which they have in the past lived because they tell you that they've been converted others may say they've accepted

Christ as their saviour and therefore they lead a different life they refrain from the pleasures and the things which they once took pleasure in and they are of the opinion because of this and they may attend a place of worship but they're quite safe and they have no thought with regard to the ways of God they have no right understanding with regard to the blessedness of the gospel and the reality of it therefore they are resting and building upon a false foundation very solemn if that is your position and if you are trusting in the life which you now live because if you are living this life in your own strength when all your strength is taken away that life which you now live will suddenly come to an end and that religion will also come to an end but

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Paul had been brought by the Holy Spirit to see that the way of salvation was not by the fulfillment of the law of God by the flesh there is that awful legality which is in our nature all of us possess it where we think that perhaps by trying to fulfill the law well then we shall obtain favor with God but how Paul like all the Lord's people will have to prove that the life which he now lives he's unable to fulfill the law as much as he would desire to and if you're rightly taught well then you must confess that you would fulfill that law if you could you would live wholly you would live with regards to that law before you constantly before your eyes and there would be that within your heart to fulfill it have you noticed something of being able to fulfill the law in measure and when perhaps we've been able to do something oh how quickly

Satan will come and tell us how good we are and so you see even if we were able to fulfill the law it would be death to us that is if we fulfill the law in our own strength but as man cannot possibly fulfill the law of God however good it is and here we would not despise the law of God we'd love it but we cannot attain unto it we can never fulfill that law in and of ourselves but as Paul says here the life that I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God now he came to a wonderful conclusion he could see that it was nothing but eternal love the love of God that verse that we just sung has meant much to me at times as I meditated upon the love of

God and I'm sure it would have been a favourite with Paul on such love my soul still ponders love so great so rich so free and so when one is brought to see that although we're unable to live the life that we would when we would do good evil is present with us yet we would not hide under this we would not shelter under our weakness but rather would we confess our weakness and we would seek the help of God that we might live a more gracious a more holy a more prayerful life but how we need much grace to do this when one is enabled perhaps and sometimes as I reflect and look upon my own life the life which

I now live I wonder what sort of life it would have been and would be if it were not for the work of the ministry which we were forced into how easy it would be to give it all up and sometimes as we feel the almost the point of doing it to be rid of it all and yet there are those times when we felt the goodness of the Lord to us as he has led us and called us out of nature's darkness and where we would desire to praise the Lord for his goodness and for his mercy to us in this and how even this very portion this second chapter of Galatians was on one occasion made a great blessing to us and how the Lord led us with regard to his word that we were able to take a step which we could not have taken without his help how

I believe all the Lord's people are troubled about their religion not only the servants of the Lord the Lord's people if your religion is true you're going to be troubled about it because it won't be the religion that you would like it to be you'll find that there are those things which are disappointing you'll find that you're unable to even do the things that you would desire to do and as you come perhaps to the house of the Lord and you come seeking that the Lord will be with you perhaps you you find that your mind is occupied with everything apart the things which it should be and then there are those occasions when you feel drawn to seek the Lord in prayer secretly and how perhaps you may even venture and approach the

[11 : 37] Lord with one or two words in secret and before you have gone very far you find that your mind is so occupied that you're not even thinking let alone praying and it may be some moments afterwards or even hours afterwards before you realise what has happened the life that I now live it's not a life to be proud of it's not a life that we would glory in the life that we now live is a life which we if we are rightly taught we're ashamed of a life which we would not glory and when one is able to feel a little of the gospel shed abroad within our heart and what the gospel really means is the life that we would be free from I don't believe for a moment that when the child of God feels the love of God shed abroad within his heart this present life however much faith he may have the more faith he has the more he will depart from it the more he will want to be rid of it the more he will see that there's an emptiness in it and as you go on surely you'll find that even your religious life becomes more tainted becomes more sinful there were those times where the hymn writer says those peaceful hours

I once enjoyed it seemed as if he was looking back upon his past life those times when the Lord first came and that first love where his heart was so full of love toward the Lord or what a life that was when there was that nearness when one was able to find sweetness in the word to find access at the throne of grace to fill the precious blood of the Lord upon our conscience and thus to feel that and believe that our sins were pardoned and that we should at last get to heaven all the life that we had led and then how foolish we thought that we would never never again go back to that old life of fear and doubt and unbelief and sin and guilt but the life that we now live is subject to changes and how we have to prove it even with regard to the

Lord's people how we have to say as the hymn writer said an earthly brother drops his hold is sometimes hot and sometimes cold but can we go further and say with reality that Jesus is the same the life that I now live you may say well of course the life you now live is a totally different life to what I live sometimes I believe it is I believe as I come before the people I have to confess that my life is far worse than theirs

Jadi happen into God v confessing through about things experiences that you and I can have if we are the people of God in the flesh is a feeling sense of unpunished sin and guilt. And whatever that thorn in the flesh was and the Lord hasn't seen fit to reveal it in his word but we do know this that all the Lord's people have a thorn in the flesh in some way or another.

And how they pray to the Lord that it might be removed. And if your sin is a thorn in the flesh to you, you must do thank the Lord for because there are many upon this earth that know so little of sin let alone knowing that it's a thorn in their flesh a painful experience too. But how he besought the Lord that it might depart from him. But the Lord saw faith that it should not depart because he was now living in that life, that present life. But the Lord said my grace is sufficient for thee and so that in your weakness there will be my strength.

[16 : 40] And so even in the life which Paul led he lived this life by faith in the Lord Jesus. Well now then if we are truly taught the Lord sin will be a reality to us.

It won't be something which we will gloss over. Today we hear so little of sin and the more we speak of sin well then the less popular we become.

People don't want to hear of sin. But how can one speak of salvation without speaking of sin? And how can we know anything of the Saviour's love unless we know something of what he suffered for sin?

If we don't know rightly what sin is well then we don't know rightly what the sufferings of Christ were and what it's all about. But when one is brought and taught of their own sinnership and of the consequences of sin the consequences of unpardoned sin and then to be brought into this blessed gospel and when we come to enter into a little of the the life which Paul lived he said I neither received it of man neither was I taught him but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

and this is one of the things which man cannot understand and which he will not understand that all the preaching and whatever men do it cannot save a soul it must be by the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ through the work of the ministry through his word through any other means.

[18 : 37] It's rather significant that although Paul was in this dead form of religion that when he was quickened into divine life it wasn't in a place of worship it wasn't as he was devout in his prayers but he was on the road he was on a journey he was seeking to destroy the church of God and the Lord quickened him into divine life.

Well now you and I perhaps may not have such a marked evidence of that life within but can we look back upon the past life and can we say that the life that we now live is different to the life which we have led.

There was a life when we were unconcerned a life a life when we were not concerned with regard to eternity a life when we had no desire to depart a life when we thought so little of God a life when we knew so little of his power a life when we knew so little of the value of prayer a life when we knew nothing of feeding under the ministry of the word a life when the word of God really meant nothing to us but now things are different now we're able the life that we now live we live by the faith of the son of God now we can only do this unless Paul I believe was able to see it was through the son of God by faith of the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me there are those times when we look at the life which we now live and it would be hypocrisy and presumption for us to say that the

Lord loved us because we don't feel it we don't see how we care it seems impossible that the Lord should love such as you and I and yet it's not what a person tells us a person can tell us a thousand times that they love us and that has no effect at all and therefore there's got to be an evidence there's got to be a proof of that love to us before we're able to accept before we're able to believe that that person truly loves us and so it is spiritually we cannot possibly rest in the promises and the dead letter of the word and you won't be able to take this word as so many do and say well of course God is love and therefore he loves the whole of the human race we heard a woman say once a woman that made application for one of our Christian homes and she said well of course

I don't believe that God who is love would ever punish man eternally she didn't believe in internal punishment in other words she didn't believe the word of God but the child of God he believes this and he not only does he believe it but he believes that God would be judged in damning him eternally and so this is revealed to him and he believes it but then as the Lord reveals to him the gospel and the way of salvation he can see the beauty of a demonstration of the love of God the love of God is demonstrated to him and then there is a response you see love is not one sided if there is true love there must be a response if it is mutual love now we love him because he first loved us according to his word now if we truly love him it is because he first loved us and there will be that response known and felt within our own heart in the life in which we now live we shall feel faith at times in exercise where we shall be able to grasp and believe that he did love us perhaps he has sung as I have occasionally or not as often as we would he saw me ruined in the fall yet loved me not with standing all he saw me in my lost estate his loving kindness oh how great now when the

[23 : 42] Lord then teaches his people he shows them how unworthy they are to receive this love he shows them that they cannot merit it that they do not deserve it and there is a natural love whereby a person can be kind and considerate and therefore love would go out to that one for the very things which they do their kindness and their consideration but when there is nothing to be seen but sin filth and corruption then for that love to be shed abroad within that heart and for the Holy Spirit to work within their heart there is a response that will come forth beyond all that corruption and where that soul is able to ascend in love and adoration unto his

God the life which I now live I live by faith that is although one is able to unable to grasp it and yet they believe it they believe it just as if well it is the very substance of things hopeful there is a substance in faith although faith is invisible although faith cannot be defined and yet to the child of God there is a substance in it it may sound a paradox but it's perfectly true because if there is any substance in your religion it must be faith and it must be faith through the Son of God now the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God and so that one is brought to believe in the blessedness of this gospel and how

Paul was able to set it forth in such a clear and a precise manner or far better than we are able to and how he sets it before the churches as he speaks of himself sometimes we feel perhaps we've said too much with regard to our own experience but Paul he never apologised for speaking with regard to his experience of those things which he had handled tasted and felt of the good things of life and as in this chapter and in this portion of the word he gives a clear demonstration that how he was called by grace and how he was separated from his mother's womb in other words how he was separated from the flesh how he was separated from all the things of his present life and how he looked forward by faith to something which would be far better and so this present life there was the past life there was this present life but he was anticipating something which would be far superior to this present life and this was by faith in the

Son of God and what he could see in the Son of God which is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ and on the past day we spoke of the those in the fiery furnace and there was one with them like unto the Son of God well now in our experience we may not be able in this life to clearly define that the Son of God is with us but there are those things which take place in our life which are so clear it must be one like the Son of God our religion must be like those characters of old and although perhaps we cannot have that full assurance of faith as we would desire in the life which we now live there are those times when surely we have felt well there must have been one with us in that fiery furnace there must have been one with us in that deep distress like under the

Son of God who supported us who removed as it were our bonds so that we had that liberty to walk around even in the fire even in those painful distressing times we were able to walk as it were in fear of the Lord and walk in this present life with that faith which we had in the Son of God believing that he loved us that these things which he brought us into were in love and not in that wrath which awaits the ungodly and then another thing which the child of God can see in the life in which he now lives that the Lord does deal with him the Lord does correct him the Lord does chasten him but he can see love in this who loved me now so few that talk about the love of God are able to talk about the love of

[29 : 18] God in chastisement they're unable to talk about the love of God when they were in the fiery furnace love of God is manifested it's all very well to say well of course I love the Lord and the Lord loves me I've heard so much of that rubbish this last few years without any foundation at all and you ask these folk for the foundation of their love and they seem to be at a loss they say well of course the Lord loves me and of course I love the Lord but we want a demonstration of it we want the proof of it in our own experience don't we now if it's a life of faith it's not a life of trusting upon creature married it's not a life of trusting upon the dead letter of the word it is a faith which we know you can't have faith in a person you don't know you can't have faith in anything you don't understand and so there was a teaching which Paul received in his experience which caused this faith you see people today they seem to think well as we teach faith to be a gift of God that it's something which is just given but it's not whilst we know and believe that faith is given by

God yet it is something which is brought about by experience it is an experience which brings about faith now Paul could never speak of the life which he now lived by faith in the son of God if he hadn't experienced it and this is where so many go wrong where they talk about faith but they never experienced it now Job knew what faith was and he knew what it was in the fiery furnace when he was in that deep distress he said though he slay me yet would I trust in him now that is a clear demonstration of faith and one of the most clearest I believe in the word of God and it is an experience to be brought into I don't think I would be wrong in saying that I believe I know I've walked with Job as he one has been brought into that place and where

God has given such precious faith through his son to believe that although he slayed me yet will I trust in him now we're not always there are we Job wasn't always there Job we find we say oh that I were as in months passed but he also knew what it was to have this faith in this life by the son of God the life that I now live now it must be by faith it would be impossible for the child of God to walk through this life without faith in the son of God now faith it ebbs and it flows sometimes there is great faith sometimes there is little faith but that faith is exactly the same whether it's little or whether it's great it is the gift of God and there is that which works within the heart which sometimes the

Lord brings his people into a certain exercise and it begins with a little faith and there's doubt is the Lord in this is the Lord in this matter am I right in taking this step and so there is this little faith in the life in which you now live and then as the Lord unfolds his purposes and his ways so that faith increases and faith becomes stronger and how that faith as one is brought perhaps in a time of trial as the trial comes upon them that faith can be strengthened in such a way that we may say well I can't understand that person however they can stand up to that trial that they're passing through it doesn't seem to have any effect upon them no because it's the faith of the Son of God but there may be another occasion when the

Lord has given you faith and when you've said to the Lord yes Lord I can do anything it matters not what I'm brought into like Peter I can die Lord with him I can do anything and then the Lord withdraws that faith and one feels then their own weakness they seem to shrink and how they would even go to the length that Peter did in denying their Lord the life that I now live it's not a life to be proud of and yet when one is able to look back and see the way which the Lord has led us in the life in which we now live where the Lord has given us here a little hope here a little there a little line upon line precept upon precept and so the Lord has gradually in the life which we now live revealed a little to us of his own dear son he didn't come to us in a moment

[35 : 00] I know it does with son the Lord is a sovereign in this there are those who are brought suddenly to see the way of salvation and then there are others where this is gradually opened up to them but the life hereafter will depend upon the life we now live here ah you say well now that's creature married it's not it's definitely not but if we never know anything of the love of God shed abroad within our hearts here if we know nothing of faith in this present life here we shall never know anything of the love of God in eternity on the other hand if you and I have ever felt the reality of the love of God if ever you and I have had that sufficiency of faith to trust entirely upon the

Lord Jesus for our salvation having been brought to realize our own weakness where we've had to say if ever my poor soul is saved Jesus Christ must be the way the life that I now live is a life of faith Paul didn't mean and far from it he didn't mean that every step he took that every breath he took was a life of faith any more than your life is but he was speaking in a general sense that his salvation that his hope was based upon faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and how he goes on to speak of this wonderful gospel that the Lord led him into and then how the Lord brought him into that place where he was did not confer with flesh and blood there was wisdom in this and how sometimes when one has received a blessing or how good it is to get away even from the Lord's dear people not to confer with them to keep it as it were to yourself how many a time perhaps one has had a blessing in the house of God and how they've gone to another and foolishly expecting that one to receive the same blessing and where there's been as it were a damper put upon it and where the spirit has been quenched or far better if we feel anything of these things to be away to find some secret spot where we're able to enjoy these things but the life which I now live

Paul was speaking here in a very personal way and true religion is a very personal thing I and so in our religion it will be I and the Lord the life which I now live and the life which we now live surely the life which we will live must depend upon this so that if you and I have truly known on how difficult it is to believe in even as we say it would tell others those times when we have felt such nearness to the Lord those times when we have had this life of faith within surely that is the seal for the life to come surely that is a preparation for the life to come now the life that we now live is a life of faith the life before the life of faith was the life of unbelief and so you see these are the three parts of

Paul's life the life of unbelief and blindness the life of faith whereby he trusted entirely upon the marriage of the Lord Jesus I will bring the third part through the fire there will be that life which is to come where faith will not be required where there will be that full assurance and where Paul will say the same with all the church of God that I might live unto God and where he will live unto God eternally and eternally praising that God 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 however favoured a man may be even in the ministry it is impossible to speak of this love and to speak of the love in such a way whereby the Lord gave himself for such wretches but the

Lord has prepared a life whereby his people will be able to speak about it where they will not be hampered and where they will be forever telling this glorious story throughout eternity of that blessed glorious Son of God who gave himself for me or what a mercy if you and I know anything of the life of faith in the life that we now live or may we however weak however small our faith may be may we thank God for it and may we ask him for more more tokens more evidences so that the life that we now live we may live more to his honour and more his glory we must lay may the Lord have his blessing amen