

Gospel Sermons That Save Souls



JACOB VIEWING JOSEPH'S BLOODY COAT WHEN PRESENTED BY HIS UNFAITHFUL SONS

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Are Feelings Reliable in Matters of Salvation?

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. ***“I know I’m saved because I feel it right here.”***

1. Story told by brother Lafayette Pounds about his neighbor in Canadian: While leaning across the top of an old sedan discussing the Bible, the neighbor said “I would not trade the feeling I have right here (thumping his chest) for a stack of Bibles as high as this car.”
2. A co-worker of Mother’s came into the office one day and asked: “How does one know that she has had a religious experience? I think I have had one. Last night as I prayed by the side of my bed I was overcome with a tremendous sense of calm. I felt as if I were as light as a feather. Do you think I had an experience and am saved?”

B. ***Is it true that our feelings are evidence of the forgiveness of sins?***

1. Does the Bible teach that feelings are sure and certain indicators of the forgiveness of our sins?
2. Is one acting in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament when he accepts as the assurance of salvation the subjective urgings of his emotions?
3. The Bible tells us we can know we are saved (1 John 5:13). The question is: “How do we know we are saved?”

II. DISCUSSION:

A. ***Feelings Can Mislead—***

1. Jacob *felt* that Joseph was dead (Genesis 37:24ff).
 - a. Joseph sent to Dothan.
 - b. The brothers conspire to kill him because of envy.
 - c. Reuben has a plan, but is foiled by the providence of God.

- d. Joseph's brothers kill a lamb and soak his coat in the blood.
 - e. Jacob believed the false report and "rent his garment, and put sackcloth upon his loins and mourned for his son many days... and he said...I will go down to Sheol to my son mourning."
2. Saul *felt* that killing Christians was the right thing to do (Acts 26:9).
 - a. Said consented unto the death of Stephen (Acts 7:58; 22:20)
 - b. Saul persecuted the church (Acts 8:3).
 - c. Paul said that he killed Christians with a clear conscience (Acts 23:1).
 - d. However, Saul was later converted to Christ (Acts 9:6ff). He admitted that he was chief among sinners (1 Timothy 1:15).
 3. Apollos *felt* that John's baptism was the right one (Acts 18:25).
 - a. Apollos was "*fervent in spirit*" when he preached (Acts 18:25).
 - b. He taught "*boldly*" concerning Jesus Christ (ibid.).
 - c. However, he knew only John's baptism (ibid.).
 - d. Aquila & Priscilla helped him to better understand truth (Acts 18:26).

B. Feelings Are Produced By Evidence; They Are Not the Evidence—

1. In New Testament cases of conversion the "feelings" relating to salvation were produced after the evidence of pardon was present.
 - a. The Pentecostians were "*added to the Church*" and then "*eat their meat with gladness*" (Acts 2:41, 46).
 - b. The Samaritans "*gave heed unto those things which Philip spake*" and then "*there was great joy in that city*" (Acts 8:6, 8).
 - c. The Ethiopian Nobleman was first "*baptized*" and then "*he went on his way rejoicing*" (Acts 8:38, 39).
 - d. It was not until Paul was obedient to the "*heavenly vision*" (Acts 26:19) that he ended his fast of three days and was strengthened (Acts 9:6–19).
 - e. At Antioch of Pisidia in Galatia many believed the gospel, which they heard and were filled with joy (Acts 13:48, 52).
 - f. The Philippian jailer heard the gospel and was baptized with his whole

house, then they rejoiced (Acts 16:34).

g. At Thessalonica they believed the word that they received of Paul (Acts 17:4) becoming followers of them with joy (1 Thessalonians 1:6).

2. Nowhere in the Bible is there any Indication that an alien sinner was assured of his redemption through his experience with his emotions.

C. How Do We Know We Are Saved?

1. Assurance of salvation is predicated upon what is written in God's word.

a. **1 John 5:13**, "These things have I unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye believe on the name of the Son of God."

b. **John 20:31**, "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name."

c. **1 John 2:3,5**, "And hereby do we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments...But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him."

d. **1 John 2:17**, "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

e. **1 John 2:24, 25**, "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise which he has promised us, even eternal life."

f. **1 John 3:18,19**, "My little children, let us not love in word; neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him, (cf., 1 John 5:3).

g. **John 6:68**, "Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

h. **John 17:17**, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth."

i. **Acts 13:48**, "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and

glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”

- j. **Titus 2:11–13**, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

2. Answering objections—

- a. “The New Testament teaches that conversion is a better felt than told experience in John 3:1–8.”

(1) Jesus declares that there are two agents in the “new birth,” water and the Spirit (John 3:3, 5).

(2) These two agents are baptism and the gospel (Ephesians 5:26; Mark 16:16; Romans 10:17; 1 Peter 1:22, 23).

(3) The water in this passage cannot be the water of physical birth (cf. John 3:6).

(4) Neither is being born of the Spirit like the “wind” in this passage. Verse eight compares “every one that is born” to the wind.

- b. “The New Testament teaches that the Holy Spirit gives us an inner-witness that we are the children of God in Romans 8:16.”

(1) The passage does not say what is attributed to it. It says “with” not “to.”

(2) There are two “spirits” which give concurrent testimony in this passage (cf. John 8:17, 18; Deuteronomy 19:15; 2 Corinthians 13:1).

(3) There is the testimony of the believer (cf. John 3:11; Acts 26:19).

(4) There is the testimony of the Holy Spirit (John 15:26; 1 Peter 1:11; John 5:39).

- c. “1 John 5:10 says that the believer has the witness of God within himself.”

- (1) Yes, but what is the witness?
- (2) It is "The record God gave of His Son...which He hath testified of His Son" (vv. 9, 10).
- (3) John said, "These things I have written unto you...that ye may know that ye have eternal life and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:13).
- (4) This is the witness of the Spirit which is "the truth" (1 John 5:6).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. *Feelings are not a reliable measure in matters pertaining to salvation.*

1. Feelings can mislead.
2. Feelings are not the evidence of pardon, but they are the result of that evidence.

B. *The only reliable measure in matters of salvation is the Word of God.*

What It Means to Believe in Christ

John 3:16

I • INTRODUCTION:

A. John 3:16 the “Golden Text” of the New Testament presents:

1. The Greatest Being—*God*
2. The Greatest Motive—*Love*
3. The Greatest Need—*the World*
3. The Greatest Sacrifice—*He Gave His Only Begotten Son*
4. The Greatest Offer—*Whosoever*
5. The Greatest Condition—*Believeth*
6. The Greatest Tragedy—*Should Not Perish*
7. The Greatest Promise—*Everlasting Life*

B. John 3:16 the Most Abused Text of the New Testament—

1. People often insert the word “alone” as if it were in the text and accuse us of not believing John 3:16 because we their conclusion based upon this misreading of the text.
2. Many say, “All I need is John 3:16.”
 - a. “Don’t talk to me about water baptism John 3:16 doesn’t say anything about being baptized in order to be saved.”
 - b. Neither does it say anything about repentance of sin or confession of faith in Jesus Christ. But that doesn’t mean that repentance and confession are not necessary.
 - c. Every word in John 3:16 is true, but not all of the truth on being saved is found in John 3:16.

3. Every word in the Bible is true. If I must set aside part of it because of what I believe a certain passage teaches, something is wrong with what I believe.
 - a. One can never do less than what any one passages requires; but one may have to do more than what any one passage requires.
 - b. One must accept all the Bible teaches on the subject under consideration, not just what is taught in any one passage on the subject.
 - c. This is true of Jno.3:16 where the subject of faith in Christ and salvation on the ground of that faith is the subject.
 - d. When we learn all that the Bible teaches on the matter of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, we are then in a position to understand and accept what John 3:16 teaches, and to know what it means to believe in Jesus Christ unto salvation from past sins.

II • DISCUSSION:

A. The Bible Teaches Salvation Is Through Faith—

1. By faith, we have everlasting or eternal life (John 3:14–17).
2. We are also justified by faith (Romans 5:1).
3. Salvation is by faith (Romans 3:26–28 Ephesians 2:8–9).
4. One's heart is purified by faith (Acts 15:9).
5. By faith we are born again (1 John 5:1, 4).
6. By faith remission of sins is obtained (Acts 10:42, 43).
7. All of these passages teach salvation faith, but do they teach salvation by faith only? There is a difference.
8. *Again, every word in John 3:16 is true, but not all the truth is found in John 3:16.*
So it is with these passages and the subject of salvation; we must accept **ALL** the Bible teaches on this subject.

B. The Bible Also Teaches That Salvation Is Through Obedience—

1. One has eternal life by faith, but it is also by obedience (John 3:36, cf. ASV).
2. Justification is by faith, but it is also by obedience (Romans 1:5; 6:16–18; 16:25, 26; James 2:14–26).

3. The same is true of salvation (Hebrews 5:8, 9; Mark 16:15, 16, cf. 1 Peter 3:21, Acts 22:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1–3; 1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:6–10).
4. We have learned that one's heart is purified by faith, but the Bible also teaches that one's soul is purified by obedience (1 Peter 1:22; John 8:32).
5. We are born again of faith, but we are also born again through obedience (1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 2:29; 1 John 4:7; 5:1).
6. Likewise, remission of sins is by faith and also by obedience (Romans 6:18; Acts 26:18; 2.38; 22:16).

C. How Do We Harmonize These Statements?

1. We do not have to harmonize them; the harmony is there all ready, if we will only recognize it.
2. If we must *make* what we teach harmonize, then something is wrong with what we teach. Many try to *make* the Bible teach things which it does not teach; to do this they have to twist and pervert and destroy the harmony which is all ready there (2 Peter 3:16).
3. Inspiration gives the answer and shows the perfect harmony which exists (Galatians 5:6, 1 John 5:3; John 14:15, 21, 23–24; James 2:14–26).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. The Obedience of Faith:

1. This is what it means to believe in Jesus Christ unto salvation.
 - a. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9).
 - b. "Ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him" (Matthew 21:32).
 - c. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15–16).
2. Even the Son of Man obeyed (Hebrews 5:8; John 9:4; 6.38; Luke 22:42; John 12:48–50).

B. Yes, It Is by Faith, But Not by Faith Only!

1. It is plain to see that the Bible teaches salvation by faith, but not by faith

only.

2. It is also easy to see that the Bible teaches salvation by obedience, but not by obedience only—just works.
3. Thus the two, faith and obedience, work together or cooperate in the matter of one's salvation from past sin.
4. Any interpretation of John 3:16 which separates the two—faith and obedience—must be wrong (John 3:36; see Acts 6:7; Romans 1:5; 16.25 26; Acts 14.12; Hebrews 3:18.19).
5. God's love is great enough and the gospel is powerful enough to save all who will believe and obey (Romans 1:16.17; 1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:6–10).
6. Friend, the one who believes on Jesus Christ unto eternal life, as John 3:16 teaches he must do, is the one whose faith moves him obey his Lord in baptism for the remission of his sins and to faithfully serve him as a Christian.

The What & How of Conversion

Matthew 13:13–16

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. What Does Conversion Mean?

1. Webster defines *convert* as to “turn around, to transform, to transmute, to translate, to alter,” or very simply “to change.”
 - a. Auto body and detail shops use the word *conversion* to describe customized changes made in a vehicle that transform it into a specialized use.
 - b. Re-modeling contractors will speak of *converting* a garage into a room having different use (e.g. we recently *converted* part of the old auditorium into an office).
 - c. Milk, flour, salt and baking powder are combined in order to be *converted* to bread.
 - d. Dollars can be *converted* into lira, marks, pounds or pesos.
2. Thayer says the Greek word *epistrepho*, which is sometimes translated *convert*, means “to turn to, to cause to turn, to bring back.”
 - a. Literally, the word is used of:
 - (1) Turning around (Matthew 9:22; Mark 5:30; 8:33; John 21:20)
 - (2) Returning to whence one came (Matthew 12:44; 24:18; Luke 2:20)
 - (3) A resurrection, that is, the spirit returned (Luke 8:55; cf. James 2:26)
 - (4) Turning toward a thing (Acts 9:40; 16:18; Revelation 1:12)
 - (5) Making a return visit (Acts 15:36)
 - b. Metaphorically, the word is used to describe the process whereby a sinner is transformed into a saint, the process by which a child of the

devil becomes a child of God (Luke 1:16–17; 17:4; 22:32; John 12:40; Acts 3:19, 9:35, 11:21, 14:15; 15:19; 26:18, 20, 28:27; 2 Corinthians 3:16; Galatians 4:9; James 5:19–20; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 1 Peter 2:25; 2 Peter 2:21–22).

3. Conversion is described in the Scriptures as:
 - a. A healing (Matthew 13:15)
 - b. Becoming as little children (Matthew 18:1–6)
 - c. Turning the disobedient to wisdom (Luke 1:16–17)
 - d. Having ones sins blotted out (Acts 3:19)
 - e. Forsaking idolatry for Christ (Acts 14:15; 1 Thessalonians 1:9)
 - f. Turning from error back to the truth of the Gospel (James 5:19–20)
 - g. Returning strays coming back into the fold (1 Peter 2:25)

B. The Essentiality of Conversion—

1. I do not believe that anyone would deny the essentiality of conversion.
2. The Scriptures teach that men must be converted (Acts 3:19; Matthew 18:3; John 12:40; Matthew 13:15).
3. Simply, unless you are converted you cannot go where Jesus is (John 8:21).

II. DISCUSSION:

A. There Is a Divine Law Which Effects Conversion (Psalms 19:7)—

1. That which needs to be changed in man is the heart or soul (Psalms 19:7; Acts 15:9; 1 Peter 1:22; James 5:20; Acts 28:27; cf. Isaiah 6:10; 2 Corinthians 3:15–16).
2. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is employed to change the heart of the sinner into that of a true saint.
 - a. The Gospel has the power to convict the heart of sin (Hebrews 4:12)
 - b. The Gospel has the power to purge the heart of any conscience of sin (Hebrews 10:16–22; Acts 15:9).
 - c. The Gospel has the power to transform the heart to serve Christ (Romans 6:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:9).

3. Specifically, the gospel effects the transformation of a sinner into a saint by leading him to faith, repentance, and baptism into Christ.

B. How Does the Gospel Change the Heart?

1. The heart of man is changed by faith.
 - a. Not the blood pump, nor just the emotions.
 - b. But the mind or the intellect, the seat of affection and allegiance (Hebrews 4:12; 2 Corinthians 9:7)
 - c. The preaching of the gospel is necessary to having faith which effects a change in trust and affections (Ephesians 1:12–13).
 - (1) We are no longer trusting in:
 - (a) Riches (Mark 10:24; 1 Timothy 6:17)
 - (b) The Law (John 5:45)
 - (c) The flesh (Philippians 3:4)
 - (d) Ourselves (Luke 18:19)
 - (2) We no longer love:
 - (a) The world (James 4:4)
 - (b) Sin (1 John 2:15)
 - (c) Family (Matthew 10:35–39)
 - (d) Pleasure (Matthew 16:24–26)
 - d. We cannot be saved without faith (Acts 15:9; Romans 10:8–10, 13–17), but conversion is not complete at the point of faith (Acts 11:21; James 2:24; e.g., John 12:42; Acts 2:37–38).
2. The heart of man is changed by repentance (Acts 2:36–38; 8:22; Romans 2:5).
 - a. The gospel, when preached and believed, brings men to repentance (Matthew 12:41; Luke 11:32; Acts 3:19; 15:19; Romans 2:4–5; 2 Corinthians 7:8–11).
 - b. Repentance is a change of will followed by a corresponding change of conduct (Matthew 21:28–29).

(1) This is one intended accomplishment of conversion (Luke 1:16–17).

(2) Consider some things repentance is not:

(a) Sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10)

[1] Sorrow is antecedent to repentance, it must complete its work. The former effects the latter.

[2] One cannot repent without being sorry toward God, but there is a sorrow that will not produce repentance (e.g. Matthew 27:3–5).

(b) A general desire to reform (Matthew 21:29)

[1] God is longsuffering and gives us time to repent (2 Peter 3:9, 15; Revelation 2:21). But, His mercy does not extend to the continued practice of sins. God does not wink at sin.

[2] It has been well said, “Repentance is the difference between ‘I will not’ and ‘I will.’ Where there is the will there is the fruit (Matthew 3:8).

(c) Quitting one sin (Mark 1:5)

[1] Thayer makes it clear that repentance requires “a hearty amendment of life;” however, not all changes in life are the result of godly sorrow which works genuine repentance of sin (Matthew 27:3).

[2] Many have quit one sin or another out of fear of the physical or emotional consequences, but not out of reverence for God.

(d) Belief (Mark 1:15; Matthew 21:32)

[1] Denominational doctrine leaves the impression that repentance *is* faith; however, the two are distinct (Acts 20:21).

[2] It is the goodness of God that leads to repentance (Romans 2:4–5). An unbeliever cannot repent, but a believer can repent (Acts 2:36–38; 17:30–31).

c. However, conversion is not complete upon repentance (Acts 3:19;

26:20).

(1) Faith prepares the heart to repent, and repentance changes the heart with regard to the manner of life, but neither changes the fact that one bears the guilt of past sins.

(2) God forgives and has stipulated at what point he forgives sins.

3. The heart of man is changed by baptism.

a. The gospel reveals the necessity of baptism and qualifies the candidates (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27; Acts 22:16; etc.).

b. It also reveals the design or purpose of water baptism which is to be cleansed by the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5; Acts 22:15; Rom. 6:3–4; Colossians 2:11–12)

c. When the penitent believer is baptized his sins are forgiven and his conscience purged of dead works (Hebrews 9:14; 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Are You Converted?

1. Have you believed on Christ?
2. Have you repented toward God?
3. Have you been baptized into Christ?

B. Repent and Be Converted that Your Sins May Be Blotted Out.

The Problem of Sin

Romans 3:23

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. What would you say is the greatest problem facing mankind today?

1. World hunger
2. Nuclear proliferation
3. A collapsing world economy
4. Over-population
5. The threat of an ecological cataclysm
6. (Name another major world concern)

B. Sin is man's greatest problem—

1. None of the above, even all, compares to the irreparable harm and destruction sin causes humanity.
2. However, most men today mock sin and deal only with the symptoms.
3. Therefore, let us consider sin from the biblical perspective in order that we might learn the severity of our can problem and find a solution for it.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. The Nature of Sin—

1. The Bible uses HAMARITIA to signify sin.
 - a. Literally, "a missing of the mark."
 - b. A term borrowed from archery.
2. The Bible uses other words to reveal the nature of sin.
 - a. ADIKIA, "a deed or deeds violating law or justice," translated as "iniquity" or "unrighteous" (1 John 5:17; cf. Psalm 119:172; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Romans 1:29–32).
 - b. ANOMOS, "without law, literally, lawlessness." In 1 John 3:4 the term

is used of a rejection of divine authority (cf. 2 John 9).

c. OPHILEMA, “an obligation satisfied only by the exaction of the payment or penalty.” Jesus used this word to describe sin (Matthew 6:12; cf. Luke 11:4).

3. Therefore, SIN has the nature of a crime. It is a violation of God’s law, which demands a just punishment by the penalty prescribed (Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Romans 6:23).

B. The Element of Sin (or How Do We Sin?)—

1. Doing what God has said we are not to do (Genesis 2:17, 18; 3:6, 17).
2. Not doing what God has said we must do (Matthew 7:21, 24–27).
3. Adding to what God has commanded (Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:19; 1 John 3:4; 2 Samuel 6:3; Numbers 4:1–15).
4. Taking away from God’s word (Matthew 23:1–3; 15:5,6).
5. Making substitutions (Genesis 4:4; 2 Kings 5; Leviticus 10).

C. The Cause Of Sin—

1. Some things that are not the cause of sin:
 - a. The law of God (Romans 7:8–13; Galatians 3:19–22).
 - b. The desires of the flesh (Romans 6:12–14; 8:13–14).
 - c. Inherited depravity (Romans 5:12).
 - d. Inherent imperfections (Ephesians 5:17; Psalm 119:11; John 12:48)
 - e. Ignorance (Leviticus 5:17; Luke 12:47–48).
2. The first sin is a case study of all sin (Genesis 3:1–6; 1 John 2:15–16).
3. Sin is caused when desire is enticed and will yields (James 1:13–15; 1 Corinthians 9:27).

D. The Consequences of Sin—

1. Temporal consequences (Proverbs 13:15).
2. Spiritual consequences (Genesis 3; Romans 3:23; 1 Timothy 5:6; Hebrews 3:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:9–12; Hebrews 6:1–8).
3. Eternal Consequences (Romans 6:23; John 8:21–24; 14:1–3; Revelation 21:8).

E. The Remedy for Sin—

1. Remedies that will not work:
 - a. Sinless perfection (Romans 3:23; Galatians 3:10—12).
 - b. Works of law (Galatians 5:1–6).
 - c. Meritorious works (Matthew 6:2, 5, 16; Titus 3:5).
 - d. Morality (Acts 10, 11).
 - e. Honesty and sincerity (Acts 9).
2. The blood of Christ is the only remedy for sin (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:11, 12; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:5; Ezekiel 18:20; Ephesians 5:6–9; 1 Peter 3:18).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. What Do We Need to Remember About the Problem of Sin Today?

1. Sin is a crime against God.
2. All men are guilty of sin and liable to be punished.
3. Christ paid the penalty for our sin.
4. We can escape the consequences of sin only through Christ.

B. What Are You Going to Do About Your Sin Problem?

Why Few Enter the Narrow Way

Matthew 7:13–14

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. We Are All on a Spiritual Journey—

1. Regarding earthly destinations there are many ways open to man.
 - a. Illustration of going on a trip.
 - (1) There are many different modes of travel and many different routes.
 - (2) Some routes are better than others (Interstate Highway System vs. auxiliary roads).
 - (3) Some means are more satisfactory (airplane, bus, automobile).
 - b. Yet, while traveling different routes and using diverse means, even unsatisfactory ones, we all will eventually arrive in San Francisco.
 - (1) Even the most indirect routes will get you to where you want to be (e.g. my trip to El Paso several years ago).
 - (2) However, even in earthbound travel there are some modes and routes that will not achieve our desired end.
 - (3) I suppose a man could set out from here for San Francisco on a burro, but even he couldn't get there by going east!
2. But as to the destination of our spiritual journey the Bible declares that man has only two routes from which to choose, or to follow:
 - a. One is the strait or the narrow way which leads to life or eternal salvation.
 - b. The other is the wide or the broad way which leads to death or eternal damnation.

3. Concerning the strait or the narrow way leading to life, Jesus gives a command with reasons for doing so, and then makes a startling, and to some, an almost unbelievable, statement: "Few there be that find it."
 - a. This implies that *many* will not find it.
 - b. This is difficult for many to accept.
 - c. Few truly do believe it.
4. Jesus obviously spoke the truth, and there must be reasons for it being true. This needs and deserves study. Therefore, it is our purpose in this study to offer some reasons why few find and enter the narrow way.

B. Many Fail To Enter the Narrow Way...

II. DISCUSSION:

A. But It Is Not Because Most Have Been Predestined to Eternal Destruction—

1. Hyper-Calvinism and its theory explained:
 - a. "That independent o the foreseen merits of the one, or the foreseen sin of the other but solely in fulfillment of His sovereign purpose or decree He elected some to salvation and predestinated others to destruction."
 - b. Note the system of Calvinism:
 - (1) **T** – Total depravity
 - (2) **U** – Unconditional election and reprobation
 - (3) **L** – Limited atonement
 - (4) **I** – Irresistible grace
 - (5) **P** – Perseverance and preservation of the saints
 - c. One man said: "He literally whipped me into line. I was literally black and blue all over before the Lord finished with me."
 - d. This has given rise to the following summation: If you don't have "it," you can't get "it". If you get "it," you can't lose "it." If you lose "it," you never had "it."

- e. **Caution:** Not all professed Calvinists are hyper-Calvinists; there are “shades” and “degrees” of Calvinism.
- (1) But they all have one thing in common—one thing that is peculiar to Calvinism: the doctrine of the imputation of Jesus Christ’s personal righteousness to the believer.
 - (2) They may disagree among themselves over the T-U-L-I-P doctrine, with some holding to all of it and others only a part of it. But they all hold to the doctrine of the imputation of Jesus’ personal righteousness to the believer, and say that without that no one could be saved.
 - (3) Even some brethren deny the TULIP doctrine of Calvinism and yet teach a form of Calvinism by teaching a form of the imputation of Christ’s personal righteousness to the believer.
2. The following logical consequences of the Calvinistic TULIP doctrine will show how false and damnable such a doctrine is. If that doctrine be true:
- a. It casts a reflection on the mercy and goodness of God and makes God wholly responsible for the many not finding the way, hence responsible for their damnation.
 - (1) The Calvinists deny this, but doctrine teaches it.
 - (2) But, 1 Timothy 2:3–6 and 2 Peter 3:9.
 - b. It makes the Lord’s exhortation “enter ye in at the strait gate” pointless.
 - (1) For the “non-elect” couldn’t enter if they wanted to.
 - (2) And the “elect” are already in the narrow way, or will be when the Lord gets ready for them, with no possible way they can resist his call.
 - c. It makes the gospel and the preaching of it useless as far as saving men either here or hereafter (but Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1–2; Mark 16:15–16; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 2 Thessalonians 2:13–14; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:18–25).

- d. This theory makes Godly living unnecessary to one's salvation—for once saved, can't be lost; sins do not damn the saved—Sam Morris' statement—others say, "lost his reward," but not his salvation (Titus 2:11–14; Hebrews 12:14–15; 1 Corinthians 9:27; 2 Peter 2:20–21; 3:17; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1).
 - e. This theory logically places Christ's work in opposition to God's decree Luke 19:10.
 - f. This theory logically declares that man is in no way responsible for his final destiny (Acts 2:40; Philippians 2:12; Revelation 22:14, 18–19; 2 Corinthians 5:10, 20; Ecclesiastes 12:13–14).
3. Why preach the gospel at all if hyper-Calvinism be true? Fortunately it is not true.
- a. Christ died for all (Hebrews 2:9).
 - b. The gospel is for all, not just for the few (John 3:16; Mark 16:15,16; Matthew 28:19; Luke 24:46–47).
 - c. He invites all to come and be saved (Matthew 11:28–30; Revelation 22:17).
 - d. Each and all may either reject or accept His invitation (John 5:39–40).
 - e. Which will it be with you?

B. But It Is Not Because They Could Not Know How to Enter—

1. Can you imagine the Lord saying "enter," and then making it so complicated man cannot know *how* to enter?
 - a. Such would be a reflection on God's character, His power or His intelligence, or on all three.
 - b. There is no way God, who is all-powerful, all-wise, and full of mercy, would require entrance by a certain way, as He has done, and then make the way of entrance so complicated and mysterious that an accountable person could not know how to enter it, or how to follow it after entering it.

2. There is not one thing that:
 - a. Directs man into that way that he cannot understand, if he will try.
 - b. Directs man how to live in that way that he cannot understand, if he will try.
 - c. Man needs to know concerning salvation that he cannot understand and do, if he tries.
3. Proof that “any man” can know and do God’s will (John 6:44–45; 7:17; 8:32; 13:17; Ephesians 5:17; 3:3–9; Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46; Romans 6:16–18).

C. Some Fail to Enter Because We Failed to Show Them the Way—

1. Some seem to think that only preachers, elders, deacons and Bible class teachers are obligated to teach others.
2. The Bible obligates all who have the ability and the opportunity to do it.
 - a. The gospel was to be carried to the world by the chosen apostles of Christ (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Romans 1:14–15; 1 Corinthians 9:16; 2 Corinthians 5:17–20; cf. Colossians 1:23).
 - (1) They were special messengers.
 - (2) They had a special mission.
 - (3) They enjoyed special providence.
 - b. While we are not special messengers on a special mission, and though we are not ambassadors of Christ, as were the apostles, we are obligated to teach the word to all—whenever and wherever we have the opportunity (2 Timothy 2:1–2; cf. Hebrews 5:10–14; 1 Timothy 4:16; Acts 21:28; 8:4, 11–19; 18:24–28; Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:3–4; 2 Timothy 2:24; Jude 3; 1 Peter 3:15).
 - c. What a power it would be if the whole church became involved in teaching the Word of God every time an opportunity presented itself!
3. Do you not feel the divine compulsion to show them the way?
 - a. Song: “You Never Mentioned Him to Me” (*Sacred Selections* #92).
 - b. N.T. saints went forth to tell the story of Christ. Brethren, by thinking

that baptisms must be associated with “church services,” we are effectively practicing “spiritual birth control.”

- c. If all Christians went forth to teach and baptize we would soon face a “spiritual population explosion”.
4. Let us not use our text as an excuse for our own indifference!
 - a. The one who needs to be taught the gospel has as much obligation to search for it, learn it, believe it, and obey it as we do to take it to them.
 - b. God will hold them accountable for their unbelief, but He will charge their blood against us (Ezekiel 33:6; Jeremiah 6:17–19; Hebrews 13:17).

D. Some Fail to Enter Because of Prejudice—

1. Many have heard but their prejudice prevented their accepting and obeying it.
2. Prejudice:
 - a. Is “pre-judgment without due examination.”
 - b. It may be either in favor of or opposed to.
 - c. “In religion prejudice amounts to an opinion usually unfavorable formed before a careful examination.”
 - d. It is a serious evil which:
 - (1) Causes disrespect, anger and mockery (Acts 7:57; 17:32; 22:22).
 - (2) Closes ones’ eyes against the truth (Matthew 13:15).
 - (3) Makes men dishonest (Matthew 28:11–15).
 - (4) Crucified Christ (Matthew 27:19–25).
 - (5) Prevents people today from being saved.
3. Note some present-day examples of prejudice:
 - a. “What’s good enough for my parents is good enough for me.”
 - (1) It should be: “What the Lord authorizes in his word is all I want.”
 - (2) The Jew who rejects Jesus could also say this about his parents.
 - (3) The idolater who rejects the idea of one God could also say this about his parents.

- b. "If my parents didn't go to heaven then I don't want to go."
 - (1) If lost, they must feel as did "the rich man" in Luke 16:27–31.
 - (2) You have a very low opinion of your parents if you think they want you to be in torment with them!
 - (3) Why do you think being lost in hell with your parents testifies of your love or honors their parentage?
- c. "It makes no difference."
 - (1) People who know and believe the Bible never say this.
 - (2) Would you say this about the automobile you would buy?
 - (3) How about the doctor you use to operate on your spouse or child.
- d. "Water salvation, water dogs, tadpoles, mosquito, water is not the savior, there is no power in the water."
 - (1) The Baptist preacher who said to Curtis Porter: "Only two things are born of water—tadpoles and mosquitoes." Porter said, "Since you can't be a Baptist without being born of water, which one are you: tadpole or mosquito?"
 - (2) No, water is not the Savior, Jesus is.
 - (3) Neither is faith the Savior, Jesus is.
 - (4) But both are necessary to salvation by the Savior who stated both as conditions of salvation by His blood.
- f. "Any one who says you must be baptized to be saved is a liar, or is preaching a lie."
 - (1) To make such a statement one assumes the burden of proof to demonstrate the lie.
 - (2) Furthermore, you must endure the rebuttal. You cannot make the charge and refuse to allow a man any defense.
- g. "Church isn't essential to salvation—Church is not the Savior."
 - (1) The church is the saved—the ones the Savior saves (Ephesians 5:26).

(2) If the church is non-essential to salvation, Jesus' death wasn't necessary since it purchased the church (Acts 20:28).

4. Examples of prejudice among members of the church:
 - a. "Brother So and So" teaches...
 - b. "I had rather go to hell for doing it the wrong way, than to go to hell for doing nothing."
 - c. "We have been doing it this way for all these years."
 - d. "Well, the pioneer preachers didn't preach it that way."
 - e. "You know he writes for..."
 - f. "Well, I've heard that he believes..."

E. Because They Follow a Preacher, Their Parents or the Majority—

1. There are many false prophets gone out into the world disguised as gospel preachers (2 Corinthians 11:13–15; 2:17; 4:1–4; 2 Peter 2:1–2).
2. We are to "try the spirits" (1 John 4:1).
3. We dare not love parents more than the Lord (Matthew 10:37).
4. The Bereans were commended for investigating (Acts 17:11–12).
5. If the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch (Matthew 15:14).
6. If you follow the majority:
 - a. You are seeking the most popular way, not the Lord's, and might be anything—depending on where you are.
 - b. You are traveling the broad way to destruction.
 - c. Had you followed the majority:
 - (1) You would have perished in the flood.
 - (2) You would have been destroyed in the calamity of Sodom.
 - (3) Your body would have perished in the wilderness.
 - d. The truth is that few will be saved (Luke 13:23–27).

F. Others Fail Trying to Enter With the World on Their Backs—

1. They have a divided interest; they try to love the world and the Lord at the same time (1 John 2:15–17; James 4:4; 2 Timothy 4:10; cf. Matthew 6:24, 33).

2. The gate is too narrow to enter carrying the world, or any part thereof, on our back—all of it must be left outside.
3. This was the tragedy of the “rich young ruler” (Matthew 19:22).
4. We must escape the corruption of the world (2 Peter 1:4; 2:18–20) in order to enter the eternal kingdom (2 Peter 1:11).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Why Do Many Not Enter the Narrow Way?

1. Not:
 - a. Because they were predestined to destruction.
 - b. Because they could not understand.
2. But:
 - a. Because they are blinded by prejudice.
 - b. Because they were not shown the way.
 - c. Because they blindly follow others.
 - d. Because they try to enter with the world on their backs.

B. How Shall They Enter?

1. By doing the will of God (Matthew 7:21).
2. Jesus is the Saviour of all that obey Him (Matthew 5:8–9).
 - (1) Believe (Romans 10:9–10)
 - (2) Repent (Acts 11:18)
 - (3) Confess (Romans 10:9–10)
 - (4) Be baptized (Acts 2:38)

Nothing Is Impossible!

Luke 18:27

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *The Texts*—

1. **Genesis 18:14**, “Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.”
2. **Jeremiah 32:17, 27**, “Ah Lord GOD! Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee...Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?”
3. **Luke 1:37**, “For with God nothing shall be impossible.”
4. **Mark 14:35–36**, “And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.”
5. **Luke 18:27**, “And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God” (cf. Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27).

B. *The Texts in Context*—

1. The statement from Genesis 18 refers to the birth of Isaac. Sarah was barren and 90 years old. Abraham was nearly an hundred years old. God affirms of Himself that it is within His power as the Creator to cause that, which cannot bear to bear, and that which is old to be as if it were young. Sarah gave birth to Isaac the next year just as the Lord had said.
2. Jeremiah attributes to God the power to accomplish all things in this context in consideration of His ability to fulfill His promises to Israel.

Nebuchadnezzar had taken some of the people captive and would soon destroy the city of Jerusalem. However, Jeremiah assures them that God will bring them back to their land and give them their Messiah because nothing is too hard for God.

3. In Luke 1:37 Mary marvels at the news that she will give birth to a son since she has not “known” a man. However, Gabriel assures her that is no impediment to God’s purposes since “nothing is impossible for Him.” Mary gave birth to Jesus just as God had said never having known a man.
4. In Gethsemane Jesus agonizes over His impending death and prays that God would spare Him from it. He prays confident that nothing is impossible for God. However, He also prays “in the will of God,” that is, Father not my will but Thine be done. The Scripture says it was necessary that Jesus die (Hebrews 9:23). There is no doubt that God could have delivered Jesus, but it was not His will to do so—so that we might be saved.
5. Finally, Jesus affirms the omnipotent power of God relative to salvation. The Disciples had just witnessed the rich young ruler go away from Christ rejecting eternal life. Jesus remarks that it is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye than it is for a rich man to enter into heaven. When the Disciples heard this they marveled, “Who then can be saved?” Their comment reflects their knowledge of man—their familiarity with his weaknesses and his passions. Jesus’ answer reveals his confidence in the transforming power of the Gospel and abundance of God’s grace.

C. Application of the Text—

1. Occasionally, I encounter a man or woman who is convinced that their sins, their wickedness and their weaknesses are beyond the pale of the mercy of God; that they are incapable of being redeemed from the servitude of Satan and the filth of the mire of sin. This is not true! Nothing is impossible for God.
2. The saved are guilty of a likeminded unbelief. When we decide for others

without their consent or dissent that they are not interested in the Gospel do we not diminish the power of the Word of Christ and confess our lack of faith that with God all things are possible?

3. The plan of this study is to revisit some very familiar Bible stories with a view of convincing all that nothing is impossible for God regarding your salvation and the salvation of the world.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Rahab the Harlot—

1. Joshua 2:1–22 recounts the story of how Rahab saved the Israelite spies. Verses 9–11 indicate the conviction that Rahab had with respect to Jehovah. Her faith was perfected in her obedience to the commands of the spies (James 2:24–26).
2. Rahab is identified as a harlot, that is, a prostitute (Joshua 6:25).
 - a. Her sin was punishable by death in Israel (Genesis 38:24; Leviticus 21:9; Deuteronomy 22:21; 23:17).
 - b. This is one reason why the statement, “Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive,” is made (Joshua 6:25). She is seemingly the least likely candidate for mercy among the citizens of that place.
 - c. However, it is her faith that brought forth God’s grace and mercy (Hebrews 11:31).
3. However, the love, grace and mercy of God can even transform a harlot into a citizen of his kingdom (Matthew 1:5).

B. The Woman at the Well of Jacob—

1. This is another example of someone we might consider a most unlikely prospect for the Gospel. However, our Lord acted without regard to her past and proceeded to make her a useful vessel in the kingdom.
2. Notice how our Lord brought this woman to faith:
 - a. He began by addressing her on a topic of mutual interest—water. He was thirsty and she had wherewith to draw. Thus, the job begins.

- b. However, Jesus quickly turns the conversation toward spiritual matters by piquing her interest with a statement that would certainly call for further explanation—“he would have given thee living water...springing up unto everlasting life” (4:10, 14).
 - c. Next, Jesus directs the woman to a consideration of her real needs in order that He might explain to her “living water.” He directs her, “Go call thy husband” (4:16).
 - d. Now, convinced that He is a man with answers to spiritual questions she asks him concerning one of the great religious questions of the day—where should men worship. Notice that this is not the question Jesus answers, again He masterfully turns the conversation to a much more important matter—“worship in spirit and in truth” (4:24).
3. Most people in the world today are just like this woman.
 - a. They are confused and do not understand what true religion is.
 - b. They have a deep desire, though often unspoken, for knowledge of God and His word. They are looking for answers.
 - c. They have sins and burdens to bear that must be challenged and to which the power of the Gospel must be directed.
 - d. People are looking for someone with the answers to their problems. Jesus can and will “tell us all things” (4:26).
 4. Now, this woman becomes a truly great vessel in the kingdom of Christ. She immediately sets out bring others to hear Jesus.

C. Zacchaeus, the Publican—

1. Luke 19:1–11 tells us about this “wee little man” and how he climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus. What started out as an act to satisfy curiosity turned into an opportunity for salvation. That day another son of Abraham met his blessing (Acts 3:24–26).
2. Zacchaeus was a publican, a Roman tax collector.
 - a. These men were despised by their fellow countrymen as traitors and

hated for their corrupt practices and rapacious exactions (Luke 3:12–13; 15:1,2; 19:7–8).

b. They were classed as sinners with harlots and drunkards (Matthew 21:31–32; 11:19; Luke 19:7).

c. They were regarded as men lacking any spirituality (Matthew 5:46–47).

d. However, there were many of his class that welcomed the words of the Saviour being transformed by their power (Luke 5:29; 7:29; Mark 2:15--17; Matthew 9:10; 21:31–32).

3. We are not told what Jesus said to this man that day; however, we do know that it had a profound life changing effect upon him:

a. He gave half of his possessions to the poor (cf. Luke 18:26–27).

b. He made quadruple restitution to every man from whom he had extorted revenue unlawfully (cf. 2 Samuel 12:6; Exodus 22:1).

c. In effect, he bankrupted himself that day for the Kingdom of Heaven.

4. What little faith we manifest in the Gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16) when we are discouraged in seeking souls by the negativism that Satan sows in our hearts. Repentance exacts a heavy price of some men, but when they know the value of their souls its pocket change.

D. *The Woman Taken in Adultery*—

1. On one occasion the Pharisees brought a woman to Jesus whom they had taken in the very act of adultery (John 8:3–11). Their purpose was evil and contrary to the law (not because they wished to stone her, but because they had not brought the man also). The primary lesson is in His dealing with the Pharisees in exposing their hypocrisy and partiality in handling the Law on this matter. However, the secondary lesson is found in his treatment of the woman.

a. So many miss the point. They turn Jesus into a compromiser and make His grace licentiousness (cf. Jude 4) by misapplying His words.

b. When Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn thee,” he had reference to the

temporal, civil penalty for adultery. He was without sin and qualified to “cast the first stone;” however, His mission was to save not destroy (John 3:17; Luke 9:56).

- c. Jesus also said, “Go and sin no more.” What power in those words. What comfort. The sinner who receives God’s grace can go and sin no more.
2. Jesus repeatedly shows us that the Gospel has power in the most remote corners of life.
 - a. Here was a woman who certainly needed the grace of God.
 - b. Jesus held out to her the hope of a better life, a restored relationship with God and the bright prospect of eternal redemption.
 - c. Jesus in seeing what she was understood what she needed.
3. We must follow his example of seeking and saving the lost.
 - a. Let us be offering salvation to all men rather than judging them on the merits of the character of their sins.
 - b. Remember that Jesus’ mission is our mission; we are sent to save not destroy. Too often we get caught up in condemning sin that we do not get around to showing men the light that will lead them out of darkness.

E. The Woman Which Was A Sinner—

1. While Jesus was in the house of Simon there came a woman (evidently a harlot) who washed his feet with her tears, dried them with the hairs of her head, kissed them and anointed them with ointment (Luke 36–50). Jesus’ host marveled that He allowed the woman to even touch Him knowing what kind of woman she was.
 - a. Jesus used the occasion to tell the parable of the two debtors that were forgiven of their debts, drawing his auditors to the conclusion that he loves most who is forgiven most (7:47).
 - b. Jesus describes this woman’s faith as great because she appreciated the

magnitude of hers sins and the abundance of grace necessary to forgive them. While on the other hand Simon was like that one unto whom little was forgiven. His debt was smaller, but he still couldn't pay. He didn't appreciate God's grace toward him for comparing himself to others (Luke 18:11).

2. Do not think that only "the good go to heaven."
 - a. If there is any good about us it is because of the grace of God (1 Corinthians 15:10). Whatever we have accomplished it was not on our own for God is our helper (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:11).
 - b. All of us at one time were as you are (1 Corinthians 6:9–11).
 - c. And while you may not think that I was ever as bad you, I was never so good that I did not need Jesus just as much as you. Because whether it was little or much, it was more than I could pay!
3. Sin is the great equalizer. None of us have anything of which to boast (Ephesians 2:8–10), except of the great grace of God (1 Corinthians 1:29–31).

F. The Jews of the Captivity—

1. During the seventy years of captivity in Babylon certain of the Jews had taken wives from among the women of the nations whereunto God had scattered them (Ezra 9:1,2).
 - a. Ezra he called those in Israel that were faithful to fast and pray before Jehovah concerning the sin of Israel (9:3–15).
 - b. While Ezra prayed, the people that were guilty gathered themselves to him at the Temple (10:1–2). After the example of Shechaniah the confessed their sin and made a covenant to put away their strange wives (10:3–6).
 - c. Once this revival began in Jerusalem, a proclamation was made that all who were guilty must repent or else be cut off from the remnant of Israel (10:7,8). There was a tremendous turning to the Lord in repentance from throughout the whole nation (10:9–17) even among

those that had wives that given them children (10:44).

2. These Jews were confronted with their sin, the consequence and punishment thereof by a convicted and resolute congregation of God's people. The end of such a display of faith was met with weeping, repentance and conversion.
3. Why was there such success in this matter? It was because men were made to "tremble at the commandment of our God" (10:3). The Gospel has that kind of power (Acts 24:25).
 - a. However, that power must be realized in the lives of those that seek to wield it. Ezra was reduced to weeping and mourning over those that were in sin (10:6). Those that went forth with the proclamation had bound themselves in a covenant with God to obey Him (10:3).
 - b. Is it because we are not as resolute in our convictions and steadfast in our obedience our efforts to sway others are ineffective?

G. *The Persecutor Saul of Tarsus—*

1. Paul describes himself as the "chief of sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). There were many things which he did "contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). He persecuted Christians casting them into prison and consenting in their deaths (Acts 26:10–11).
2. How could such a man as this who obviously hated Christ and Christians ever be transformed into a follower of that awful Nazarene? Paul tells us.
 - a. He said, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19).
 - b. Paul could not resist the evidence presented in the Gospel message.
 - c. Others had seen Christ, he had watched them die for their confession; and, now, he was called upon to do the same (26:15–18).
3. It is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus that brings men to salvation.
 - a. We are not going to win them to Christ with entertainment, psychology or "customer service."
 - b. It is the blood that saves! It is the resurrection that assures! It is the

Gospel that convicts and converts.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. *There Is Nothing Impossible With God!*

1. Rahab the harlot was saved.
2. The Samaritan Woman at Jacob's well was saved.
3. Zacchaeus the Publican was saved.
4. The woman taken in adultery was saved.
5. The woman who was a sinner was saved.
6. The Jews of the captivity were saved.
7. Saul of Tarsus was saved.

B. *You, too, can be saved!*

1. Believe unto righteousness (Romans 10:9–10).
2. Repent unto life (Acts 11:18).
3. Confess unto salvation (Romans 10:9,10).
4. Be baptized unto the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

The Constraining Love of Jesus

2 Corinthians 5:14

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *The text in context* —

1. Paul is defending his apostleship and ministry to the Gentiles and the Corinthians in particular (cf. 3:1).
2. This apostleship involved the deliverance by the aid of the Holy Spirit of the New Testament to men (3:6). In the performance of this ministry Paul and the others did not faint, but renounced everything of the world in order to deliver it and preach Christ (4:1–6).
3. In order to do this Paul suffered many things at the hands of ungodly men and false brethren (4:8–15). He was encouraged in his ministry by the knowledge of reward which was before him, immortality (5:1–10).
4. While others thought he was insane and could not understand what there was in the Corinthians that was worthy of his efforts Paul attributed his unflinching labor to the constraining love of Christ (5:11–14).

B. *What does it mean to be constrained?*

1. “To press in on every side” like “a strait that forces a ship into a narrow channel” or “a cattle squeeze” that “pushing in on each side force[s] the beast into a position where it cannot move.”
2. “To hold completely” metaphorically “to urge” or “impel” the soul.

C. *How does love constrain us?*

1. God said to Israel through the prophet Jeremiah, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee” (**Jeremiah 31:3**).

2. Love is a force like no other.
 - a. Like a magnet attracts an iron nail, so the love of Christ draws us.
 - b. It does not overpower us and make us act against our will. It does not take from us what we do not will to give. Rather, love gives and forgives, suffers and forbears. What no army can take love will receive as a gift and offering.
3. Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto myself” (**John 12:32**).
 - a. The compelling power of the love of Christ is found in the gospel story, that *Wonderful Story of Love*.
 - b. “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.”

II. DISCUSSION:

A. A story of eternal love (Ephesians 1:4 —

1. The love of Jesus for man pre-existed man’s existence.
2. Creation is the product, not the cause, of our Lord’s love for us (Colossians 1:16–17).
3. The universe was not some toy Jesus made to play with. It is the outworking of his eternal plan for a people whom He should love.

B. A story of unconditional love (Romans 5:6–8; Ephesians 2:4–5)—

1. The love of Christ for us was not conditioned upon anything good, lovely, pure or righteous about us.
2. Jesus loved me when I was in sin and rebellion against Him.
3. He loved me when I did not love Him (**1 John 4:10**).

C. A story of personal love (Galatians 2:20)—

1. Jesus’ loves me, personally.
2. He loves you, personally.
3. We must know that the love of Christ is personal. Had I been the only one, Jesus would have died for me.

D. A story of sacrificial love (Ephesians 5:2)—

1. Love's greatness is measured in terms of what it gives.
2. Jesus left heaven (2 Corinthians 8:9). He gave up equality with God (Philippians 2:5–8).
3. Jesus walked through the valley of the shadow of death up "Calvary's mountain" and died.

E. A story of forgiving love (Revelation 1:5)—

1. Jesus hanging on a cross between two thieves prayed, "*Father forgive them for they know not what they do.*"
2. All the sins and transgressions I have ever committed are forever forgotten and washed away in the fountain of Immanuel's blood.

F. A story of enduring love (Romans 8:35, 39)—

1. Just as Jesus loved me before I ever existed, He loves me now and always will.
2. There is not anything that will ever cause Jesus to stop loving me.
3. In this we rejoice because even though we err again, I know that He will intercede for me and plead for God to pardon (**Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25**).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Does The Love of Christ Constrain You?

B. He Loves You!