

The Offense of the Cross

Galatians 5:1-11

Thank you for joining me for “It’s a Good Life.” Today our Scripture is going to be found in Galatians chapter 5.

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Now, in Galatians chapter 5 and all through the book of Galatians, Paul, the apostle, is trying to get people to understand that they’re not saved any other way than through Jesus. He tries to get the people to understand that they are saved. They have liberty in the Lord. He’s trying to get them to understand that the law cannot save you, but at the same time, he teaches that you’re not to go around trying to break the law. You don’t break the law. But the important thing to remember here is that Paul is teaching that we have liberty in the Lord.

And I want you to notice....you can read this entire chapter, but our Scriptures come from Galatians chapter 5, verses 1-11, and especially the last part of verse 11. Let’s read that entire verse now, Galatians 5:11. Paul says, *And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Now notice – then is the offence of the cross ceased.*

[T]hen is the offence of the cross ceased. Paul intends here to declare the offense of the cross never has ceased and never can cease. To suppose it to have ceased is foolishness. The salvation of Jesus is peaceful, mild, and benevolent. Yet, as we look back to history, we see that history shows it to have been assailed with the bitterest hate all along. It is clearly offensive to the unregenerate mind. The unregenerate mind simply cannot understand the things of God, and there is no reason today to believe that it is one jot or more palatable to the world than it used to be. The world and the Gospel are both unchanged.

And we look around us today and we see and we say that things are so bad today. Things have changed so quickly, and it’s become so bad and so many things are placed in our way to keep us from serving God, to keep us from serving Christ and to keep people from getting saved. But I’ve got news for you. The devil has used tricks all along to try to keep people from being saved and to try to keep Christians from serving God. And one of the ways that he does that is to place the cross in front of an unsaved person and say, “This is foolish. How do you think God can save you, a person like yourself. It’s only a fairytale.” Well, the devil places that there, and Paul says in Galatians chapter 5 and throughout these verses in chapter 1, especially. He says, if someone comes by and starts preaching any other Gospel – which there is no other Gospel, he says – if they

preach any other thing other than the cross to you to anyone else, let them be accursed. And I submit to you today that the world has not changed down through the ages. There are still people today who are trying to convince other people that the cross is of none effect, that it means nothing, that it's just a fairytale. But I've got news for you today. Jesus died for us. He shed His blood on the cross that we could have salvation.

Now, wherein lies the offense of this cross? Its doctrine of atonement offends man's pride. That's the big thing today. Man wants to save himself. He wants to puff himself up as God, and any wonder that that happens? No, because back in the Garden of Eden, man was tempted. He disobeyed God and the devil even from the beginning said, "If you eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you'll become as God. You'll be as good as God." Well, that's man's pride stepping in. Man thinks he can do things on his own. He thinks he can get to Heaven on his own. This is where the doctrine of atonement offends man's pride.

A man rose up in church one time to testify of God saving him. He spoke of Christ and His work but said nothing of any efforts of his own. Well, there was a person there, the leader of the service, and he was a legalist. That person was one who believed you had to do things to get saved, and he rose up and he said, "Our brother has only told us of the Lord's part in his salvation. When I was converted, there was a whole lot I had to do myself before I could expect the Lord to do anything for me. Brother, didn't you have to do your part first before God did His?" this man asked this man who had gotten up and testified of the Lord's salvation.

Well, the man in an instant, the other man, was on his feet. He replied to this legalist. He said, "Yes, sir, I had about forgotten my part. I didn't tell you about my part; did I? Well, I did my part

for over 30 years, running away from God as fast as my sins could carry me. That was my part, and God took after me till He run me down. That was His part."

You see, the offense of the cross is this, that man's pride says you can get to Heaven on your own, that you have to do something to earn Heaven, but the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ did it all for us, that he came and he died on that cross, and the Bible tells us that nobody goes to Heaven apart from Jesus. Now, in the book of John, chapter 8 and verse 32, it says there, *And ye ... know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* Well, what is that truth? Jesus, over in John 14, tells us what that is. In John chapter 14 and verse 6, the Bible says, *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* No man comes to the Father other than through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the cross.

Now, the cross in its simple teaching offends man's wisdom. Man is smarter than God, did you realize that? Well, of course, I'm being facetious here. We look around and we think that man is so brilliant. Man has become so smart that he's actually become dumb. Man has actually become stupid. He has realized that he is greater than God all of a sudden, which is not true.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verses 17 and 18, it says, *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.* 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.*

Now, folks, today, as I'm speaking to you, there are those who would tell you that you must be baptized in water in order to be saved. That is a lie from hell. Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 17, *For Christ sent me not to baptize....* He says, *[But he sent me] to preach the gospel.*

The Gospel is this, that Jesus Christ died on the cross for sinners, and you must be born again, not of water but of the new birth that comes by the Holy Spirit of God when you ask Jesus to come into your heart. If we throw something else in there other than the cross, then we see that man's wisdom is teaching that the cross has become an offense to man's thoughts, to his reasoning. It's therefore, that Paul says, if anybody comes preaching any other Gospel, which is no other gospel, let that person be accursed. There is no other way to Heaven other than through Jesus, His finished work. Not our finished work, but His work. It's not by works of righteousness which we have done – baptism – but it's according to His mercy that He saved us. It's through His blood, the work on the cross, that we're saved.

Now, there's many other things that I could point out to you here. I could say that the offense of the cross, it offends because the revelation offends modern thought. Once again, man has become so smart that he has become dumb. And then we see that how is this offense shown, the offense of the cross? It's frequently shown by the actual persecution of believers. More often, by slandering believers and sneering at them as old-fashioned fuddy-duddies, foolish, weak-minded, morose, self-conceited, and on and on the list goes.

Jack Hyles, a great preacher of the Word of God, once said, "I want to be willing to make enemies because of my position, but not because of my disposition." We need to represent Christ today in a humble spirit, in a spirit of "Lord, help me to win souls to You. Help me to present the cross in such a way that people will understand that You died for them and that You want them to be saved." That's the way we need to be as Christians today, humble. "Lord, help me to decrease and You increase."

And we see that this offense is shown often by omitting to preach the cross. Many nowadays preach a Christless, bloodless Gospel. Revelation chapter 12 and verse 11 says, *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.* So many preachers today are preaching a bloodless salvation.

There is no salvation apart from the blood. The preaching of the cross has become, to them that perish, foolishness. There is no other way to Heaven today other than through Jesus Christ through His shed blood.

What are we to do today with those preachers who are preaching a bloodless cross, a bloodless salvation? You're to shun them. You're to get away from them.

"Oh, but, Brother Woodard, doesn't the Bible teach us that we are to respect that individual for what they believe?" The Bible says that we are to respect that individual as a human being, as a person who needs salvation, a person who needs to receive Jesus Christ as Savior, to help them be saved from a devil's hell. We are to shun that person today who preaches any other way of salvation because there is no other way other than through Jesus Christ.

Are you saved today? Do you know you're saved? Do you know you're on your way to Heaven? Have you trusted Jesus as your Savior? If not, let me invite you to do so right now.

"Lord Jesus, come into my heart and save me today."

It's been good being with you today, and I trust you'll be with me again next week at this time, when you'll hear me say it is a good life. May the Lord bless you richly in my prayer.