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Chapter 2 – No Confidence in Man

Entrusted by God Recognized by the Church (vs.7-10)

Galatians 2:7-10: “But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.”

One of the wonderful things about this particular epistle is it emphasizes the glory of our gospel. The amazing gospel that we have; the good news of God.

Romans 1:16 says that we don't need to be ashamed of this gospel for it is the power of God. Have you thought about that? The power of God. It's not of man, and Paul really wants to emphasize this; especially to the Galatians because when we receive the gospel and the wonderful gift that God has given us; that is to say, not only of eternal life, but His great love for us in His pardoning our sins with eternal redemption, and we become a part of the family and inheritance of God and all the wonderful blessings that come with that. I mean, it's almost unfathomable. There's no wonder that Paul says, “I pray that the eyes of your heart will be enlightened.” That you would understand and comprehend all of the wonderful things that God has in store for you. As you begin to wonder and see these wonderful things, you begin to understand just how great the Father's love is for us.

Unfortunately, when we initially make that decision to receive Christ, we don't always walk in that. In other words, the moment that we come to receive Christ as our Lord and Savior, you can feel the burdens roll away and that sense of redemption. Guilt is gone, and gratification seems to be the whole thing that moves and motivates you. The love of God stirs your heart. In fact, you probably go around telling a bunch of people; almost becoming a little obnoxious about the wonderful things that God has done for you. You just can't keep quiet because the love of God that's been filled within your heart, as Scripture tells us, but something happens along the way. Before long, man starts putting his finger into things and things start going back

to “you have to do this” and “you need to do this.” People begin to put these regulations, and after a while it just gets complicated. You don’t seem to have as much fun anymore; you feel like everything is more a chore. So, there you are. What happened? Well, it’s one of the questions that Paul asked the church of Galatia because they started off really well. In fact, let me show you a couple of verses that in some way convey what the focus of this book is about.

In Galatians 1:6, Paul will throw out this particular phrase, “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel.”

Something happened. They were starting off well, and now they’re not. What’s going on?

(Galatians 3:1) “You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you...”

(Galatians 3:3) “Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”

Once again, what happened?

(Galatians 4:15) “Where then is that sense of blessing you had? ...”

At one time, you were just really excited about serving and eager about following the Lord. What happened?

In chapter 5, you see the same thing as he begins to say, “You were running really well to begin with.”

(Galatians 5:7) “You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?”

This is a letter about people who have made a decision, but now have found themselves in the quagmire of dos and don'ts; man has stuck his hand in it. Scripture continues to make that distinction between man’s religion and the relationship that you and I should be having with God. When you consider the religion of man, all of the burdens and oppressive things that he puts into that, it’s very intimidating. If you were to go through and list the different characteristics of the religion of man, you begin to realize that it always elevates man. That’s one of the reasons why 1 Corinthians 1 is written. Paul begins to deal with the church of Corinth, he says, “Ok. So, some of you are saying, ‘I’m from Paul,’ ‘I’m from Apollos,’ and ‘I’m from Cephas.’ What does it matter? We’re following Christ.” Man likes to put somebody up front and say, “We know this guy.” Then, they begin to identify with that. Man is always exalted in man’s religion. That’s what man does. In man’s religion, man is relied upon as far as the power. So, in religion, we perceive that if we’re going to get something done, we’re going to need money, right? I mean, we can’t really just rely on God. God’s not able to change lives without money. So, we have to have money; we have to have certain equipment in order to make something happen. Also, you have to have a certain education and degrees in order to be

a good minister and actually serve well. If you don't have those degrees, then, sorry, ministry is not for you. Although, it seems kind of bizarre that Jesus would go to fishermen. Nevertheless, if in fact you're going the route of the religion of man, you're going to go that way; the religion of man always seeks to please men. It's one of the statements that is made in Galatians 1. Galatians 1:10 is that favorite verse that I oftentimes go back to.

(Galatians 1:10) "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ."

There's something about the religion of man that says, "I've got to please man. I need the recognition by men." We've oftentimes read Matthew 6 as well as Matthew 23; it talks about the fact that they do all the deeds to be noticed by men. I mean, how horrible would it be that you actually did something that nobody saw? Why would you do that? Where's the credit? Isn't it far better to be called up to the pulpit for us to give you a little reward, and then the recognition that everybody knows you did something wonderful before the Lord? If you can think about it, it infiltrates the church. It doesn't take long before the religion of man starts coming in, and you begin to yield to the intimidation of man.

I think of John 9 as well as John 12. In John 9, you have this guy that's been blind from birth. He's finally miraculously healed by Christ. Of course, the son is going, "Jesus healed me! Jesus healed me!" Which is an embarrassment to the Jews. So, the Jews go, and they ask the parents, "Is this your son?" and they go, "I don't even know if we know him." What would cause the parents to deny knowing their child? Actually, it goes on and tells you why; because they were going to be thrown out of the synagogue if they didn't. So, they denied their son. I mean, that's intimidation if you think about it.

The same thing is seen in John 12. In which even the pharisees knew Lazarus had been raised from the dead.

I guess somebody was interviewing, "Did you see that guy being raised from the dead? Did you see him walking out of the tomb?"

"Uh, yeah. I guess I did. Wow, that was a big deal."

"So, is Jesus powerful?"

"I'm not going to say that because if I do, I'm going to be thrown out of the synagogue. So, I'm not going to give Him the credit that He deserves."

That's what it said, "Rather than the approval of God, they loved the approval of man." So, religion focuses on the power of man, pleasing of man, and the recognition of man. All these things begin to be a part of it.

There's an interesting passage in Colossians. It actually uses the words "self-made religion". It's an interesting term that should be recognized because man builds religion so that he can edify himself; elevate himself in some way.

(Colossians 2:16) "Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—"

In other words, if you're living in a world like that, you're doing what you're doing for the wrong reasons. Is there a right and wrong? Absolutely, but why are you doing what is right, and why are you avoiding the wrong?

(Colossians 2:18) "Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement..."

If in fact it's a holy thing to sacrifice, then "Ok, if I'm going to sacrifice, I want people to see it. So, I'm going to put myself in a monastery tucked far away and I'm going to deny myself all the wonderful trappings of the world. People are going to see, 'Wow, that guys more holy than anybody else.'" but we know it's not true. Man does that. In regard to the "self-abasement", are you going to suffer for following Christ? Yeah, but God's not asking you to go around poking your eye out. He's saying, "If I want your eye poked out, I'll do it for My glory." Man has a tendency to go, "Ok, I'm going to do it for God."

It's interesting the way this ends in verse 18, "the worship of the angels... inflated without cause by his fleshly mind".

"Wow, am I a holy person." If you're patting yourself on the back, it's the wrong person.

(Colossians 2:23) "These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence."

I mean, that doesn't change your life just because you've denied yourself certain things. The passage is telling us that man has a self-made religion that makes himself look righteous. However, that doesn't mean he is, and it's not the power that changes. The thing that Paul is wanting the Galatians to understand is to realize and rely on the power of God, not on the agency of man.

Once again, it's why he states in Galatians 1:1, "Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead)". This once again will be his great theme because once you begin to go into the realm of pleasing men, recognizing men, and making it a religion of works and deeds which you have done, it just becomes superficial and show. There's not a real change of heart. As Josh so aptly

put it in Galatians 5, it was for freedom that Christ came to set us free. You live in a world and a realm in which you want to do the right thing, but how does that come about? The answer is it only comes about through the power of the gospel. The power of grace cannot be fabricated or in any way integrated in the things that man does. Man can't in any way duplicate the power of God's grace. I think sometimes the thought is "If we get the music going, stirring up enough energy and get the people excited, then they're going to be filled with the Spirit." Well, if you have to be stirred up by music, that's not the Spirit of God; that's the spirit of the music. If I have to do something, if I have to put a movie on there to get you to cry and feel bad about something, that's the spirit of the movie. Hey, it works. It gets you moving to a certain point, but it doesn't change your heart. You might feel at one particular point in time more joyful or zealous, but what is the effect that is enduring? It has to be the Spirit of God. Quite frankly, if you look at the early church, I'm not sure that they had a lot of electronics. I know they didn't actually have any buildings, and that they were meeting in a house. If you think about it, some of the greatest works of God, whether it's in China or wherever you go in the world, are not in places where there's great flamboyance, but in places where there's great suffering; where there's great suffering, God begins to do a work in the heart of man. So, man begins to see what he really needs is Christ. When he receives Christ, there's such a change and there's a transforming power.

Well, Paul is wanting to take the Galatians out of man-made religion because he realizes that when man puts his trust in man, it's not sustainable and will not help you continue to remain true. The book of Hebrews will emphasize this as well; when you anchor in the superficial, all you get is sunk, but we have an anchor for our soul both sure and steadfast. The point is that if you anchor in what is real, that is to say, this gospel that literally transformed lives. Oftentimes, we preach the wrong thing. We throw the proverbial carrot out there and we want people to come and fill the seats. Maybe they feel good about filling the seats, maybe they even feel good about singing the music and memorizing it, but none of that is real. The gospel is what's real, and it transforms your life. Whether things are going your way, dippity-do-da, or not, you're still true. I mean, it doesn't matter. Unfortunately, we've relied so much on our circumstances and the things that are going on to actually delegate whether or not we're a believing Christian. I would say if everything has to be going your way in order for you to believe, you're not a believer. According to the book of Hebrews, the very evidence is that you remain firm until the end. Paul begins to reveal these things to the Galatians. Of course, the great emphasis is "None of this is of man. Stop listening to man. This is the power of God, and that's what I want you to focus on."

He does it in an interesting context here in chapter 2. Without me going into it to such a degree that you would just get lost with everything that Paul is saying, the emphasis is that the church in Jerusalem, which was the beginning of the church of God, Pentecost; in which the Spirit of

God came upon them mightily. There was a transformation of the lives to such a degree that all were proclaiming the goodness of God, and everybody was hearing in their own language. What a marvelous moment that was. 3,000 people were added to the church's number. The church of Jerusalem was this big place. I don't know how Mary, the mother of John Mark, put them all in her house, but we know that she had a big house that was open with a courtyard where this magnificent church forms. It doesn't take long for the church to in some way segway into the realm of Judaizers coming in and going, "Yeah, but you have to do this and this." So, God's saying, "The law is a tutor to lead to Christ." That's what you're going to see in the book of Galatians. In other words, the law reveals that you can't do it. Sometimes people say, "Well, I'm a pretty good person." Ok, let's look at the law. Do you do this? Do you do this or this? Have you ever done that?" Once you go, "Ok, I didn't do that." Ok, so, you're not a good person. The point is that we all fall short of the glory of God. That's Romans 3, right? There's none righteous, no not one. We all fall short of the glory of God. We have to admit that and that's what the law does; it makes us admit it. That's one of the statements that Paul makes in Romans 3. You have to admit you're a sinner. "Yes, ok, I'm a sinner" but that's all the law can do. It can get you to put your hands up and go, "Ok, I'm arrested" but it can't save you. Why? Because threats can never change your heart. You could say, "I don't want to go to jail" but you're still a thief in the jail; your heart hasn't changed. So, the whole point of the gospel is that it transforms your heart; everything begins to change at that point and Paul wants to emphasize this.

What's happened with the church of Galatia is that there's some that have begun to move in from the Judaizers, and somehow, they're influencing them, saying, "Yeah, but it's really about the law and having to do these things." Before long, people are not excited about following the Lord. It really just sucks all the joy out when people are going around over-burdening you with these things and laying heavy loads upon you as Matthew 23 says. So, Paul says, "No, Christ came to set you free. He wants you to do what you do because you love Him." He demonstrates this by actually giving an example of going to Jerusalem. Of course, many are saying, "No, no, you have to go through the law. It has to be through all these hoops that you jump." Once again, man putting his fingers in the mix. Paul says, "Ok, let me show you what I did. I went to the church at Jerusalem, and they said they saw in me the Spirit of God and that what I was doing was right." So, he gets the affirmation of the church, and he shares that.

That's actually where we pick up in Galatians 2:7, as he begins to use the phrase "on the contrary". In other words, there were some that had reputation that were saying, "You need to do things my way; you need to do it this way." Paul says, "No, on the contrary, that's not true."

(Galatians 2:7) "But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised"

(Galatians 2:8) (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles)".

Once again, realizing that those words are pretty much interchangeable; the Jews and the Gentiles, once again, circumcised and uncircumcised.

So, he's talking about the fact that God has raised up certain ones to minister to the Jews in a particular way. God has literally raised up certain ones to minister to certain people groups even though it's the same gospel. A very interesting point.

(Galatians 2:9) "and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John..."

That is to say, at that time in the church of Jerusalem.

"... who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles..."

His point being that if it was wrong to minister to the Gentiles and to tell them that the grace of God is enough, then they would have told them at this time, but the affirmation was given to them by the church at Jerusalem.

(Galatians 2:10) "They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do."

By the way, that's actually more than a caveat; even more than a confirmation. It is confirmation of the Spirit of God, and we'll talk about that in just a minute. What he's fundamentally getting to within this passage is that God did all the work. This is one of the things that I want you to see, not only in the gospel itself, as the gospel itself changes our lives, but God begins to direct our paths in a way that goes against conventional wisdom.

So, I want you to look with me in particular as Paul begins to talk about the fact that God was entrusting the work of the gospel to Paul for the Gentiles. Ok, we read that, and we go, "Ok, so what?" You don't know who Paul is. Paul is a Jew of the Jews; he is a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He writes this as he gives his testimony in Acts 22 and 26, even in Philippians 3; he says, "Do you have any idea who I was?" He was a Sanhedrin of the supreme court justice of the Jews. Jews dodged Gentiles. They didn't want anything to do with them. Here we're not just dealing with a Jew, we're dealing with a chief Jew; a guy in charge. So much so that he's going to persecute anybody that says grace is enough; the gospel of God. So, he's going to go out and kill or incarcerate people if he has to, but this guy has a zeal.

It's one of the things that he states in particular in Philippians 3, "The thing I was zealous for was the recognition of man. I was of the tribe of Benjamin. I did all these things; I did everything

according to the strictest sect of the Pharisees.” Now, what you have is a Jew of Jews, and God says, “Ok, I get your credentials. You’re going to the Gentiles.” I mean, there’s nothing that makes sense about that.

(Galatians 2:7) “But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised...”

God says, “Ok, you’re going to them.” Now, he then gives the example of Peter and what a bizarre thing that is because you have a guy that was living in Galilee; he was a fisherman. So, he’s not a scholar so to speak. Even to the degree that when you get into the book of Acts and in chapter 4, the pharisees are going, “We’re marveling that this guy seems to have some knowledge of Scripture and this guy has not been trained by us.” So, we know that Peter was untrained, he really didn’t know the laws of the Jews the way that he should. According to Mark 7, he didn’t even know how to wash his hands. That’s what it says, “Your disciples don’t even know how to wash their hands.” Well, they mean that “According to the rules and regulations that we’ve given them on how to wash their hands.” They didn’t know how to do that. On top of that, we know according to Matthew 12 that they weren’t adhering to the Sabbath day the way they should because they shouldn’t be gleaning the fields on the Sabbath day. The bottom line is he doesn’t know the ends and the outs of the Jews. God says, “I have an idea. I’ll send you to the Jews.” I don’t know if you’re getting this, but it goes against conventional wisdom and the prowess of the individual. So, you virtually have a miracle that’s taking place.

The question that you have to pose at this juncture is what would cause a guy that’s an expert in Judaism to go to the Gentiles? Then, what would cause a guy that’s not to go to the Jews? In Ephesians 3, the way that Paul describes this thing that happens, he uses the word “mystery.” So, if you were to ask Paul, “How did this happen?” He would go, “It’s a mystery to me.” The people at Ephesus loved mysteries anyway because they were in that magical world of witchcraft and all those things. So, if you used the word “mystery” there, you would have their attention.

(Ephesians 3:1) “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—”

He doesn’t say, “we Gentiles.”

(Ephesians 3:2) “if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace which was given to me for you”.

That would be the favor of God. Now, he’s not only talking about that God was favorable to him, but God has given him the Spirit of grace that made him see the Gentiles favorably. In other words, there’s something pretty miraculous that’s going on here. In this particular

chapter, it's the mystery of the miraculous thing of even the work that we do. How did you get into this job? I guess if you were to interview Paul, you would have to ask him that.

"How did you get here?"

And he'd go, "Don't know."

"Do you even like the Gentiles?"

"You know, I didn't use to, but somehow I really like them."

(Ephesians 3:4) "By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ".

What's the mystery? Well, to be specific...Why would I say that? Because that's what verse 6 says.

(Ephesians 3:6) "to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel".

The mystery is that the Gentiles are accepted.

Here's the greater mystery:

(Ephesians 3:7) "of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power."

Now, there's where I want you to underline, "according to the working of His power."

"Energeia" is the word that he uses which is where we get the word "energy".

"Where did you get the energy to go to the Gentiles?"

"God gave it to me."

It's the energizing of God, and when this word is used, this particular one is emphasizing that there's a superhuman power involved. It always has the connotation that it not only is a superhuman power that motivates, moves, energizes and empowers you to do something, but it's always a power that is displayed. The point of the matter is that the Gentiles could actually see that Paul cared for them.

One of the books that we recently went through was Thessalonians. In 1 Thessalonians 2, one of the things that you see is Paul saying, "I became like a mother to you. I sacrificed for you; I love you. You know that I love you." There's no way that those in Thessalonica didn't see that because he says, "and you received what I gave you, not as the word of man, but as the word of God." Now, why would they receive it as the word of God? Because they saw, "This Sanhedrin actually likes us, Gentiles. No, no, he loves us." He would pour out his heart for them. Now,

that's got to be a superhuman energy that would cause somebody to do a work that is so different than they are; of which I have partaken. Like I told my dad, I remember him asking me when I was young, "Wouldn't you like to be a pastor?" I said, "That's the last thing on earth I want to do." I had no desire to have anything to do with ministry. So, why am I here? I have no idea, but I can tell you this, I would rather be here than any other place in the universe. Now, where did that come from? The answer is, not from me. So, the very evidence of Christ in you, the hope of glory, is that oftentimes you'll do things that are not you at all.

Once again, you go back to 1 Corinthians 1, God has chosen the weak and the foolish things to confound the wise. Why does God use those? Because they would naturally boast in their own prowess, power and ability, but God is going to call them into a place in which they're very unfamiliar. In fact, Paul will even say, "God's strength is made perfect in my weakness." Paul made a really good Jew. He made a horrible Gentile, but that's the ministry that God gave him. Why? Because he's not good at it, and God's going to use him in that particular arena to where he won't rely upon the power of Paul; that he won't rely upon his credentials. I guess you could go to a Greek, and go, "I've gone to all the Rabbi schools." A Greek is going to respond, "So?" He doesn't care about that.

In this particular chapter, you begin to see this manifold wisdom.

(Galatians 3:8) "To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ".

How amazing is that? Once again, he repeats and calls this the mystery of God that it's been given to him; of this eternal purpose that it's been given.

If you look with me in Philippians 2, You'll not only see that it's a mystery that God will oftentimes place us in particular works that we do. Once again, Paul's whole emphasis is "I want you to understand that none of this is of man." So, how best to really convey that? Well, you show where you are, and you go, "How do you think I got here?" So, in Philippians 2, you're going to see the phrase, "God working in you."

If you go back to Galatians 2, he says this in verse 8, "(for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles)".

The phrase "effectually worked" is "*energeō*." So, "it's God energizing me." In other words, how is it possible that Peter would feel confident going to the Jews? He's an unlearned man; they've already said that. We know where he's from. In fact, we can hear the Galilean slur in his speech. We know that he's unlearned. So, I can just imagine Peter going, "They're not going to respect me." God goes, "Precisely, because when they hear the gospel, My sheep will hear My voice and they'll come. You won't say, 'You know what, I talked them into it,' 'I wowed them into it,'

'I was entertaining enough for them.' You're going to say, 'It can only be the gospel.'" That's what God does. We look at this all in reverse. We think that it's the job to actually put all of man's resources together and somehow, we're going to talk or wow somebody into the kingdom. If that's true, then it wasn't the gospel that did it. If it's the gospel that transforms you, it's a transformation that never goes away. It's a wonderful power.

We not only see in Ephesians that God works in a mysterious way in the sense of what He calls us to do, but if you look in Philippians 2:12, you're going to see the way you do it is miraculous. It has to be God that would make me want to preach, read and go into ministry. So, it's one thing to be like a Jonah, in which "Ok, I don't want to do that throw up thing again. So, I'll go." However, it's another thing to have the power of God. Well, I'll have you read it.

(Philippians 2:12) "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only..."

Well, that would be man's religion, right? "When somebody is there and watching, I'll do a good job; if there not watching, what's the deal?"

"... but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling".

Now, he does not use the word "*energeō*" there. He uses a word that is actually maybe like aerobics, "work out." So, he's saying, "put to practice your salvation; put it to work." What's your salvation? Your salvation is that God loves you. Your salvation is that God forgives sins. You're going to walk in the desire not to want to sin and in the desire to proclaim His love. That's just going to be a natural thing; you're going to begin to exercise that wonderful truth.

(Philippians 2:13) "for it is God who is at work..."

So, it starts off saying that you exercise your salvation, but it is God who is "*energeo*;" it is God who energizes you. God is the one that moves you. God is the one that causes you to be empowered to do this. Now, the question is "How do I know that God is the one empowering me?" Just like Paul was empowered to go to the Gentiles, obviously, Peter is called and empowered effectually; God is working in his life in telling him to go to the Jews. How do I know that God is empowering me? Well, that's the wonderful thing about this particular passage. His point is that God is empowering you to work and do His good pleasure. So, what does it look like? I'm glad Scripture actually defines what it looks like because I would be going, "What does it look like?" The definition is that you do all things without grumbling. So, I can tell you that every time I'm doing things in the flesh, I'm complaining and grumbling. I'll do it, but I'm not happy. Quite frankly, I'd rather be somewhere else. Not fishing, but somewhere else.

(Philippians 2:14) "Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

(Philippians 2:15) so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless..."

In other words, "that you would even prove yourself having the energy of God in you."

"... and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world".

I mean, you're either a light or you're not.

(Philippians 2:16) "holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain."

He goes on and begins to talk about just how transforming this power is in us. You begin to realize that this has to be God. I mean, that I would do what I'm doing, and that I would do it joyfully without complaining and grumbling, that's a miracle, but that's not all. When you come into Galatians 5, you begin to see what motivates you and that's one of the interesting points of the book. He begins to convey that wonderful motivation that is in us; that is the Spirit of freedom.

(Galatians 5:1) "It was for freedom that Christ set us free..."

Then he states this in verse 6, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working..." ("*energeō*") "...through love."

What does that mean? Well, faith is displaying itself as being operated by love. Why do you do the things you do? Why do you believe the things that you do? Another word for "faith" within the text would be "convictions." Why do you have the convictions that you have? The love of Christ controls me, and that's what moves and motivates me. What is this power in me that causes me to want to serve people rather than take from them? What is this power in me that transforms the way that I look at things to such a degree that I'm rejoicing in tribulation. Why would I do that? Why would I embarrass myself by talking to a complete stranger about Jesus? I can't help it. If you find yourself with these inhibitions and walls, guess what? That's not the Spirit of God and that's not our gospel. Let me say this, if you find yourself serving that way, you're serving for the wrong reasons; stop it. Get out of serving. It would be better that you don't serve than that you serve in a way that really brings disfavor to God because God loves a cheerful giver. Isn't that what Scripture says? So, without faith it's impossible to please Him. What's the evidence of faith? Working out; displaying itself through the love of God. That's how it's working out and how you know that you have something genuine. It's one of the reasons why Paul is trying to set the church free because they started off that way with the excitement of "I've been saved. God has changed my life; He has rescued my life." Then, somehow, they've gotten into this "I don't even feel like going to church. Why do I even go there? I have to work; I

have to do something.” I’m going, “Ok, so what happened? Where’s the Spirit of God? Where’s the motivating factor?”

If you look at the end here, in Galatians 2:10, he adds this, the thought might be a caveat or a condition that he adds in, but it’s more than that; it’s a confirmation of the Spirit of God.

“They only asked...”

That is the church. In other words, “the only stipulation that they put on”.

“... us to remember the poor...”

Now, you go, “Ok. So, he’s talking about taking a collection for the poor.” Well, yeah sort of. That’s absolutely true, but the word “poor” there is not just simply somebody that doesn’t have money. It is somebody that is afflicted; somebody that’s downcast; somebody that in many respects has not the ability to give benefit to anybody else. It’s one of the reasons why James will say, “Do you know what pure and undefiled religion is? You ministering to the widows and the orphans.” What is he talking about? Well, he’s talking about keeping yourself unstained by the world. You’re giving to people that can’t give back to you, and you’re not doing what you’re doing in order to be seen by men or to be recognized by men. The ministry that you’re giving to these people you may never have any reciprocity ever in your whole life, but that’s not why you do it, is it? The love of Christ constrains me, and I do everything that I do because of His love. When you find yourself getting a little irritated because you’re not getting pats on the back or nobody thanked you for what you did for them, obviously that’s not the Spirit of Christ. I don’t see Christ on the cross going, “Ok, who’s thanking Me?” He’s not there for that reason. He’s there to please His Father, and He knows that God is going to cause this to bring many sons to glory. He knows that. You may not see it today, but the reason why he does it is “I do all things to please My Father.” You go, “Where does that heart come from?” God goes, “From me, and I’m going to give that Spirit to you; it will transform your life. Now, walk in that Spirit.” That’s the whole point of the book of Galatians. Now, we’re going to go on and read some of the other chapters, but I’ve given you the synopsis. The point is that God, through this book, is taking us out of that whole thing of “I have to” and that man-made religion where you’re always worried about “what is everyone else thinking?” Why do you care about what everybody thinks? As Paul says in chapter 2, “Who they are makes no difference to me.” “You know these are the dignitaries.” Stop. God is the dignitary. You get to do it before God and He is your witness; He’s the one that you want to please. It was the most freeing day of my life when I decided just to please God. I mean, think of all the bosses that you just lost, and on this single day, you say, “The only one I want to please is the one who loves me so much.” So, how hard is that going to be? God just says, “Love Me with all your heart. Do what you do.”

I would just emphasize within this church that we need to walk by faith. Let the Spirit of God motivate you, but let me say something, if the Spirit of Jesus Christ is in you, you'll be a servant. There's no doubt about that. I've often asked myself, "What wouldn't I do for God?" and I can't think of anything. I mean, if God moved me to do something; the Spirit of God which is the Spirit of God's love; God's going to ask you to minister to people that aren't going to give back and that aren't going to be grateful. He's going to call you to minister to people that really can't benefit you in any way, but you can't help it and you're going to be happy about it. You're going to thank the Lord that you were even able in this day to suffer for the sake of righteousness. You are going to rejoice in that. Matthew 5 states that so clearly as well as James 1. I mean, we can go through all the passages that make reference of the fact that you were able to actually, as Peter will say, suffer for doing what is right. Wow. The glory of God rests on you, and it does.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for calling us into this wonderful work. We don't even really know how we got here, but we do know that we've been saved by Your power; the evidence of Your power in us as we're doing things that we never thought we would do. We're doing it in a way that we never thought we would do it, and everything seems to be out of motivation of a love for You. This is truly Your power working within us, and what a wonderful breath of fresh air in which we don't have this list of things to do. We do what we do because of our great love for You, and we operate in this wonderful realm. Thank You.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed, how are you serving? What's the evidence of Christ in you; the hope of glory? Have you gotten tired of doing stuff? Has it become a labor? Where is that sense of blessing that you had? Who's bewitched you into thinking that this is something that you do only if it meets the requirements of man; you get the recognition of man, the accolades of man, or if in some way you get the acceptance of man. If man is in the picture in any way, then that's not our faith, is it? So, I'm going to ask you just to come humbly before the Lord and say, "You know what, I'm just going to serve You; I'm going to serve You with all my heart. I call upon Your Spirit to breathe within me. As You tell me in Your word, I want to walk according to Your Spirit." If you've never received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the Bible says you do not have the Spirit of Christ within you, but at the moment that you believe, according to Ephesians 1, the Spirit of God comes within you; you're sealed until the day of redemption. That's a promise of God, but you have to really put your trust in Him. What that means is you believe that He's the good one, not you; you believe that He's the only one that could free you from your sins, not you. In other words, you take the man equation totally out, and you say, "It's all You." If you'll say that, God will save you and miraculously change your heart. Now, from that day on, keep walking in that Spirit.