

Father, again, we ask that the eyes of our hearts can be opened to understand all that you've done for us, the greatness of your love, the nature and fullness of your grace towards us. Father, I pray also that we would embrace it in our own lives and not just understand it. And finally, we would we we stop and give you thanks for all that you've done for us. And we acknowledge our love for you and the wonderful gifts that you've given us in Jesus name.

Amen. So we have gone from the plan and purpose of God, as Paul understood it. And the fact that what happened in Christ didn't happen just happened. It was all part of a predetermined plan of God. And last session we looked at the centrality of Christ in that plan. And I was kind of encouraged at the end of last week when we finished talking to some folks, because you're so quiet last week, had I kind of gone right over the top of your heads and so on and encouraged to think there was more that you wanted to ponder what was what was being taught.

Tonight, we moved to the third of the of foundational beliefs of Paul upon which his ministry was based, and that is that salvation is by grace, through faith. And one ought to say that I'm not going to really go into it at all in this session. But that is not only are we saved by grace, but through grace. Through faith, we actually enter into God's kingdom, our community, the church, which in Galatians six 16 Paul calls the new Israel, and that will be the subject of our next session together, as Paul has this profound has to go through a profound transformation of his thinking that as a Jew, he'd always believed all the purposes of God, the plan of God, the grace of God, the blessings of God were for the Jews in the Jews and for the Jews and so on.

And he goes. And once he realized that the Gentiles, fellow heirs, the promises of God, that his concept of the people of God has to be changed. And of course, his whole theology of the church, his understanding of the nature and purpose of the church, his birth, and we'll kind of we'll explore that because it's the second half of Ephesians Chapter two. The whole thing is not up for us. But but I need to say it tonight because Paul would never and this is something for us to listen very carefully to what Paul had no concept of individual salvation.

That one was saved into a personal relationship with God. He had no concept like that. His concept was that one was saved into a new community which had a relationship with God, and that was God related to his people. And that's not to say that they that as individuals, one is not blessed, but one has to say at times one is both blessed and cursed because of what happens in the community. And often, as the community is blessed, we get blessed whether we deserve it or not.

And there are times when we will suffer as part of the community, not because we deserve to suffer. And there's this concept of a corporate personality or a concept of a people of God, which is foundation that pulls understanding. And it's important that we understand right out front that salvation is entrance into the new Israel. It's it's like a way into a covenant community. And it's that community with which God has made a covenant relationship so that the new covenant, which we enter.

By our faith in Christ, you know, is a covenant in which we become part of the people who have a relationship with God. Now, please understand, I'm not saying we don't have a personal relationship with Christ and we relate to one to another and we pray to him personally. I'm not I'm not saying that at all. But what I'm saying is that Paul's understanding, however, is that that that we are saved, too, or brought into a new covenant.

And through that covenant, we've become part of a new community. And my concern would be that once we talk about salvation, that because it will seem like we're going to do it, it would seem like we're talking about salvation as a personal thing. And whilst it's a personal response, it's for Paul. It's always there's always a corporate reality, which we might call the kingdom, we might call the kingdom of God or we might call the church or whatever it is.

But this is that sense. And that'll be important for us as we kind of unpack this together. And it's easy to say, and I've written in the beginning to say, well, and it's not my works, Paul tried that doesn't work, works, don't work. And our starting point is going to be Ephesians Chapter two as we're moving

through from verse one through verse ten. And we might read it and then we'll get into it. Paul says, As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the rule of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient, all of us believed among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following our desires and thoughts like the rest, we were by nature, objects of wrath.

That's God's wrath. But because of his great love for us, God who was rich in mercy made us to live with Christ even when we were dead in our transgressions. It's by grace that you've been saved, and God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. And we looked at that last week in order than the coming age, as he must show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ.

For his by grace, you've been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves. It's the gift of God. It's not by works so that no one can boast for you. Are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do? And in here we have, you know, the richness of really his theology of salvation, we sense can be centered in Christ. But let's let's pick it apart and decide who will break it apart into basically four four parts and then we'll add an implication at the end of it.

So the first is in terms of the nature of Paul's view of what the gospel is, one has to say it's his understanding of the nature of the human condition before the coming of Christ. And we can look at it in one through three. He said we were dead in our transgressions and sins, now pull one, the U.S. is dead in this sense means that that the capacity we had for our relationship with God is lying dormant like a volcano.

It's just not active. It's not that capacity is destroyed. It's just not functioning. Do you remember from Genesis when when the Lord said God says to to Adam during the day you eat of the fruit of this tree, you will die. And Adam and Eve, both of the fruit now, they didn't die and didn't die physically, what died was their intimacy with God. That's what they put out of the garden. They were separated from God, but in their capacity for a relationship with God didn't die.

But the relationship itself had died. That was the consequence. And therefore, we want to say that the first way forward understand the human condition is that man is alienated from God. There is there's an alienation of separation. Philip, if you go back to Tadas three, which we referred to last week. In entire three versus three. It says at one time, you were foolish, disappointed, deceived and enslaved by all kinds and passions and pleasures, we lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.

You know, it's it's it's a description of the consequences of alienation from God. They are more specific. Unfolding of this occurs in Romans Chapter one, which we'll have a look at. As one study starting verse 18. Paul says the wrath of God has been revealed from heaven against all the old godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what we now, Martin, might be not about God is playing to them because God has made it plain to them since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power, divine nature, have they clearly seen being understood from what has been made so the men are without excuse for whether they knew God.

They neither glorify him as God nor gave thanks to him. But their thinking became futile. Their foolish hearts were dark, and although they claimed to be wise, they became fools. They exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images and man to invoke images of man to look like mortal men and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore, God gave them over to their sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity, the degrading of their bodies with one another.

They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worship and serve creative things rather than the creator who has gone forever. And he says because of this, God gave them over the shameful us and unpacks it. Now, what you've got then, Paul's understanding is firstly that before the coming of Christ, the man was alienated with God, No. One, and secondly, that he was actually hostile towards God.

Thirdly, man had created gods of their own making in substitute for God.

And fourthly, and God had chosen to basically abandon man to the consequences of his own folly. And a general sense that is true, Paul says it is true in a general sense it's true. But what we're going to find is that that God did not leave himself without a witness of what it's really like both in creation, the creation of things which are made is revealed. And there was always an ongoing witness of the nature of God in creation if man chose to see it.

You can observe, he says, the nature of God and its qualities and so on in creation. But secondly, he goes one step further. He gives the law, which is the second point, which we're going to sort of go into, and you give the law and in the law there is a further and deeper, a much more profound understanding of the nature of God. But given the nature of what humanity had done, God says, well, if that's the way you want to live, if you really want to be dead in your relationship with me, if you want to live, really want to live the consequences of a life separate from me.

I know I was going to do to you, it's going to kill you. It's going to offend is going to kill your bodies. And and in you know, at the end of that passage, I didn't go on to but in Romans one verse twenty seven. And it's talking about homosexuality. This is in the same way men also abandon their relationships with women and we're inflamed with lust for one another. Men commit an indecent acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion, which of course is coming in, which is what we see today.

You know, the consequence of homosexual acts is physical death. And it didn't begin with AIDS. There was a problem and it was equally true in those days. There's a there's always a consequence of it. I'm not saying all AIDS comes from sexual acts because we all know that's not true, but we know that that is a primary means of transmission of disease and death. Now, what Paul actually says at this point is that the nature of the human condition before Christ come is that there's this alienation between man and God, where they're separate and unconscious of of that just not in relationship.

But he would actually go further and he'll say there's actually a hostility towards God. And then it goes further and he says the consequence of the absence of worshipping the true goal of the worship of false gods, and then he says and a consequence of that is a lifestyle which totally reflects the fact that you're not in a relationship with God. And God basically took his hands off. That was the judgment of God, was to not the way God judged was rather than protect men from his folly.

He let men fully experience the consequence of this folly. And there was this kind of a passive judgment, and so Paul's understanding is that when Christ came, wasn't my judgment had been stayed, God had already judged mankind in their sin and let them fully reap the consequences in their own bodies of their sin. And and Cole would say that it's it's when John was an absolute and total rebellion against God and what they believed in, the worshipping of other idols and living in moral lives isn't it's in that state.

That God has mercy and sends a signal. It's it's not just that there was anything in the nature of mankind which would attract the mercy and the love of God. You know, it was like the people that I wish there was this fasting and praying for God to reveal himself at the mercy of God appears when man's an absolute rebellion against God. And he says that he writes he writes to feel the same way, he writes Colossians the same way he prostatitis, the same way he writes to Romans the same way.

And he says, you know, folks, that's what we were. And we might say, well, you know, I wasn't I wasn't involved in homosexuality, I wasn't involved murder or adultery, but then you talk about hating God or disobeying parents and malice and envy and jealousy and all sorts of things. And so starting point of his doctrine of salvation is and that's what we were. And of course, the understands and that'll be one of our series in this series, he'll come to us and say actually that life which we used to live, was so much part of us.

That's what we've got to change. That's what we declare is dead in our baptism. And now let's turn what we believe to be dead, end to reality is being dead by being transformed as part of the Christian

life. But that's what we were. And it's pretty grim, but it's so there are no it's interesting how poor just a number of times. He goes into these lists is kind of description of the nature and nature before we were before Christ came, because for Paul it highlights the incredible grace of God that given that's what we were like he's sending of his son, was just this incredible act of love and mercy there in Romans five, it says fault.

And while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He died young. So that's just that's the kind of the starting point. I think we do. We do it. It is certainly a disservice if we think we can understand the incredible love of God without understanding the fallen mankind. It's only a. we really see that our fallen state that we understand how great was God's love and mercy and when you when you're trying to share the gospel with someone.

And they believe they're a good person. You've got no. Because they actually don't believe they need to be sat there and deceived policies concerning their goodness. Because outwardly, they may seem to be good or respectable, but God knows what's in the heart, pornos, what's in that? And you would like to reflect on that whole. OK, Jim. OK, let's move on then to the next issue, which is really important. The next thing I know I could have put three is two or two or three, it was a toss up as to which order we did this, but I've elected to talk about the purpose of the law in a positive sense before I talk about it in a negative sense.

But we'll deal with the negative. Is this a very interesting passage in First Timothy, Chapter one? And this little section we're going to do in two and three, particularly in two, is we've got to get right on. We've got to get this right and you've got to understand it right. Or you can join a whole group of heretics which existed in the 4th century, which will try and prevent so. I started with six, it says in verse six, some have wandered away from the and turned to meaningless talk.

They want to be teachers law, but I do not know what they're talking about or what they are or what they say confidently affirm. I kind of love that, isn't it? You know, I speak with great confidence like a man that's, you know, message and sure. Speak more loudly, you know, and says we know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is made for not for righteous or the righteous, but for law breakers and rebels, the ungodly, the sinful, the unholy, the irreligious.

For those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murders, for daughters, perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers and for whatever whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine. Which conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which is entrusted to me. Now, this is a very important pass because it makes clear that the law has a purpose and it's only for sinners, is not for the righteous. I want you to kind of hold that for a second, but to understand that that there's no place I'll make the statement that I announced on the tape.

And if you stop the tape, you lose. You can call me a heretic. But there's no role for the law in the life of a Christian. And we'll come back to that. But I'll live and die by that statement, because that's what Paul believes. He does not believe that the law is for the righteous, but only for the godless. What then is the purpose of the law? Well, let's turn across to Galatians, Chapter four.

Moving is good. There's nothing wrong with the law. And, well, I was not ready for twenty one. And he's writing to believe this is he says, tell me you want to be under the law. I am not aware of what the law says. It is written that Abraham imprisons a man by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son, by the slave owner was born in the ordinary way and his son by the free woman was born as a result of a promise.

Um. He's he's got two different kinds of births, a natural birth, a spiritual birth, or really what he would call one is law and one of spirit. Now, we could then go back to chapter three. Galatians three. Process is the law opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not. Forever had been given that could impart life and righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But the scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised been given through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Before this faith came, we held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we're no longer under the supervision of the law that this is Paul's understanding is that the law is good so long as it leads you to Christ. It's good. It's great, we're not saved by it. Our faith saves us by the purpose of the law is to confront us with our sin that we might be aware of our need for grace.

And we could unpack this at great length from the Book of Romans. But because Paul makes a statement in the Book of Romans, you know, until a law came, I was not a sinner. Meaning that I was not condemned by my sin, there was nothing to condemn me, but when the Lord came to me and when I was condemned, the law did its work and condemned me and kept me continuing to condemn me and continue to condemn me.

Then I got to the point where I was so condemned by the law I had to appeal to God for this. You know, I was the only candidate to receive grace. You know, without the law, I might even consider myself to be good enough for God to love, for God to accept. Without the law, I might be ignorant of my sentence on the law could never save me. But in fact, the law in reality kept me in a prison of condemnation, awaiting the coming of the mercy of God.

Like a custodian or a prison keeper or the home people. We use the word like a tutor, someone who instructed me of my need for grace. And if it's used that way, it's good. But the moment you try and use the observance of the law as a meaning of getting the favor of God, it becomes a curse because you can never do. You can never meet its requirements. I want to slightly digress at this point on this issue.

And again, open up an issue which will be a major study in the new year when we start, which will be no, I think it's not number five in this series. And St. Paul's understanding is that and and we'll kind of get into the course of it in the next section of it, because on us that his life was someone who tried to please God by keeping the law. That was his life, you know, that was his pre-Christian experience.

And he honestly, it's a curse blessing. What he calls the curse the. And he understands that you can't please God by living under the law. All that does is bring a curse because you continually fail, you continually feel a failure. And no, the salvation comes by moving from law to faith. But we're actually going to discover that victory is changing our lives. Living a righteous life, living a life which pleases God will happen the same way we'll pass from a legalistic kind of Christianity where we try and become righteous by keeping God's law to a learning what it is to change our life through faith.

You know, the whole subject of Ephesians four and five and Colossians two and three, it's the whole it's the money we save by faith. We live by faith, as I said. So it'll be a whole different approach because tragically, many Christians can't get saved by grace and then try to live under under the law. And the Christian is reduced to a series of do's and don'ts. And that's the nature of that understanding what the faith is. And it probably means that they've never understood what real faith is, even as of saving faith.

And so the purpose of the law is good, and this is that this is the issue we need to tie down. We need to turn to Romans five. Verse 20, it says the law was that and said that the translation, so the trespasser might increase, that was the knowledge of sin might increase. And with that, increased grace increased all the more so that just as soon reigned in death, so Grossmont ran through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And this is what this is what has been happening. OK, Paul starts preaching the gospel and says, I get saved by the law. You've got to save by grace. The sole purpose of the law is to make you be aware of your need for God's grace. And he kept saying, the Lord, get rid of the law about all the world to make you want to get rid of the law. And he says, you know, the greater the role, the greater the sin, the greater the grace, the need for grace.

And then people began to say about Paul that Paul says it doesn't matter what you do, God save you progress. Because the more you say, the more God's opportunities progress towards you. And so in

Chapter six, first one, he says, what shall we say then? Shall we go on singing so that grace may increase? And he says, by no means we died to sin. How can we live to it any longer? Now, I want to I want to you.

This is where Paul was misunderstood. And where I think many Christians misunderstood, Paul said the Lord brings the knowledge of sin. So we need grace. So people heard this and said, well, then if I'm going to say about race, maybe the more I send, the easier it is to get saved. And I've heard young people make this kind of kind of statement that was good for me to send because then I really knew I needed Grace.

And Paul Further says is that once the law has done its work and was the knowledge of sin so that we, through faith receive God's grace, the law has done its work. Its work in our life is finished. Now, while we probably would say the temptation to say is, well, sorry if I no longer live under the law and I'm saved. Then I'll leave a lawless life. I'll be safe, but I'll just say I once saved, always saved and saved Hallelujah.

Doesn't matter what I do, I'm always saved and not no one around the Lord and Paul stands. And this is really important to say we'll pick this up in the end. But his answer is so Christians are trying to say it's grace plus Lord. Really, that's kind of the teaching the Seventh Day Adventist Church gracelessly, you got to have both. And so someone becomes a Christian and then immediately people in the church begin to tell them what they can and can't do.

They begin a dumb law on. And they think they're helping people by immediately giving them law once they become Christians, for example, if a young couple who are living with one another clearly involved in in immorality comes to our church and they get saved and give their lives to Christ and they get saved by grace on a Sunday night, and then they go to a home group and the people are living with them in their home and finally living together. The temptation is for people to say what you're doing sinful.

You've got to separate and merely impose law on them. You might be sitting there saying, but it's wrong. Paul knows that all the law will do is make them will condemn them. It doesn't have the power for them to be able to see sin. The law does not have the power to help us not see. It only has the power to condemn us. It's a sign going into the territory of Australia next year, but it's important in terms of understanding, of course, coming from the polls, the answer is that the only thing which has the power to actually change the way we live is the work of the spirit and the truth of the gospel.

John, John, when he says, you know, the location Moses for Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ, as you said, he understands what the spirit can change our hearts. The Lord never changes the heart. Now, suppose this is the human condition. The law is needed to condemn people, bring them to the point of their need for grace. But it's very dangerous. Paul will never say anything other than the law is good, he never blames the law because the law.

Right. He used is good. But the moment you misuse it, it becomes the curse. And if we if we go back to to Ephesians two, perhaps we'll do this third sex and then we'll have a discussion time go back to Ephesians to. And we read, you know, it's by grace, we're say through faith, and this is not for undoing, it's a gift of God, not of works. This anyone should based. Paul knows out of his own experience that through keeping the law, which is the concept to work through observing the law, no one can be saved.

His testimony, if we got to Philippians three, this is Paul's only his personal testimony. And to begin with, he he says, watch out for the dogs, and that's people who want to lead you back under the law. And he says in verse four, if anyone else thinks he has reason to put confidence, the flesh needs his own effort. I have more. And for else, all his religious credentials circumcised on the eighth day, the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, the Hebrew Hebrews in regards the law, Laura Pharisees, Fazila persecutor of the church.

As for legalistic righteousness, I was for an outward observance of the law. But whatever was my

prophet I now consider the word really there is done, given West translated delicately loss but stronger than that for the sake of Christ, for what is what I consider everything a loss compared to surpassing greatness of Jesus Christ, my Lord, for whom I've suffered the loss of all things. I consider them rubbish, that I might gain Christ and be found on him having not having a righteousness of my own, which comes from the Lord, but that which is through faith in Christ Jesus, the righteousness which comes from God and is by faith, his own experience.

Was he done. Everything is wrong. His parents have done everything right here, this incredible religious zeal. But it was all external. It was an outward observance. It wasn't the righteousness which comes through faith. It wasn't that which could change the human heart. In Galatians four, and if you're not familiar with that, the whole Galatians epistle is Paul writing in this, he taught them the gospel as he understood it. And then after it left, people had come in and said, grace is not enough.

You can be saved by grace. But you also got to keep the law. And the whole book of Galatians is dealt with. The fact that basically through the early part of Chapter five, he's saying it's not through law, it's through the promise, it's through faith. And he makes this statement in Chapter two chapter. Thiviers 14. He says all her life observing the law are under a curse for threatened curses, everyone who's not continue to do everything written in the book of the law.

Clearly, no one is justified before God by the law because the righteous will live by faith. The law is not based on faith. On the contrary, the man who does not who does these things will live by them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For those written curses, everyone who hangs on a tree, he redeem us. And all of the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the spirit and.

Just going back to the end of Chapter two, just to throw an extra verse and then verse twenty one pause that I did not set aside, the grace of God for righteousness could be gained through the law. Christ died for nothing. Cole knew that he had taken something which is really good. The law ran seven, 12 months and one, Timothy Leary says the law is good and he had used it for completely the wrong purpose. He used to try and attain righteousness and he knew you couldn't do it.

And you know the evidence for Paul that it didn't work. Isn't trying to do righteousness, he actually persecuted the church. He'd been deceived. That's his, not his. The reason he knew that he couldn't be righteous to the law is if anyone ever had a goal that he had and externally he was forcing it, except. He was completely wrong. He persecuted the church, put the disciples to death, trying to put him in prison. You know, he was so right.

He was wrong. And so he knows he just knows it's the first. I think of this as we just reflect on our own lives. You know, but thank God by spirit, convicts of sin, we're never going to seek forgiveness. We're never going to seek salvation. We never are going to ask God to in in to save us through the blood of Christ. Without the law, we're never going to be aware of our need for salvation.

But if we don't let it go the moment we get saved. We no longer walk in grass, no longer walk in faith, we start walking and legalistic life, as I say, I want to unpack this whole issue because it it's so important. But is this incredible that something which is fundamentally good can become a curse? And Paul knew it, and if you think about the number of people today. Who think that they're getting to heaven because they keep the golden rule, because they, quote, live a good life.

And Paul knows, you know, if you're trying to get to heaven that way, only breaking one commandment, you're guilty of the whole lot. It's this. It's this. It's a different kind of legalisms now, but it's legalism nonetheless. It's it's you you can see it in Orthodox Judaism, where there are six hundred and thirty odd ways in which you must observe the Sabbath commandment not to walk or work on the you know, they've got it down so they can tell exactly what you're allowed to do in order lot of you to observe the Sabbath.

And we kind of look at it, just shake our heads and think, oh, what an extraordinary way to try and observe the law. But what's more sad is those who who actually think that by doing good, they're

going to have. Of course, there's a sense in which the law is not doing its work in them, because if the law was really doing its work, they would understand that actually they're failing, that they've got sinful hearts, they've got their selfish self focus.

And a number of people remember everything over the years. A number of people have said to me, you know, I'm sure she'll go. She was a good woman. He had a few scratch at all behind the surface. You're fine. She may have been nice, but she wasn't good. You know, there are lots of areas where there was just a breaking of the commandments. Now, call or say in Galatians five and six, which is the section we'll deal with in the long run, we deal with Ephesians four and five and Coalescent three, he will say it's interesting.

He says, you know, the whole law can be summed up in love. And and if you love your fulfilling the little. And he says in Galatians five, you know, neither circumcision or circumcision, which are legal issues. Of any importance. And so he would ultimately say as well, James, that the measure of whether you really have faith is whether you love. There and it's kind of Jesus's new commandment I give to you that you love one another because I love you, you know, it's a transformation to shifting from observing the law in legalistic way to a.

An expression of the love of God to others, and we'll see how this unfolds, but in so many and people will say and John will say they all understand this if we've been loved to love. In two Corinthians, five people will say, you know, the love of Christ controls me, being persuaded that he died for me, that I should no longer live for myself, but for him, he gave himself for me. But it's it's now a life lived in response to what I did in Christ, rather a life lived in response to the Lord.

That's the transformation in our church culture in some ways. Could we fall into the trap of observing all sorts of people you deal with in this situation? Would it be that you have to be at every meeting we've been trying to perform? You could be in tithing the way that you people for tithing legalistically, you could be going to prayer meetings every Friday night or, you know, the Colossians to which I think I mentioned as one of my favorite pastors, the New Testament.

He did not handle, did not taste, do not touch. Last Sunday morning, I said out of Carlingford. And and for some reason, I just without thinking of it, I mentioned the fact that I had a kind of serious health scare when I was in Russia. And I haven't I haven't been saying very much about it because I didn't know whether I had a serious problem or whatever problem. And I have to go through a whole barrage of tests, which I actually went through last Friday.

And I either had a minor problem which could be easily treatable with medication, or I had an aneurysm in the brain. And there's a pretty big difference between these two. And because I had the symptoms, which could be either of those two. And so we got the as a result of the brain scans and everything last Friday and the brain scans were clear and everything was fine. And so the other thing is what it is. And it'll be right in a couple of weeks.

But but the the end of it, after we got the news, Genie said, you know, we need to celebrate this afternoon. And I said, yeah, I'm going to have a beer. And he said, I'll have a shandy. And and so Jenny had sat in on a beer and we went clink cheers. And we said, The Lord, thank you, you know, and and I was sharing this Sunday morning what had happened.

And and for some reason, apparently in this message three times I mentioned the alcohol issue wasn't in my notes. And that was just I wasn't making a point, which is using this illustration for some reason or other. But obviously, God was doing something because when it was over, you know, someone came in and he said in front of us, this was Andrew, I want to show someone. And he said, and I was there with Judith.

So I a heavy. Well, this is a guy who's just been coming, is an elder in a Batten Baptist Church, became Assemblies of God church, and he said, because I couldn't believe you are talking about drinking in this kind of way. He says it's just an absolute taboo in the church. You come from and I said, well, I wasn't particularly making a point. He said, you spoke loud and clear, you know, that kind that kind of



issue.

We got people that probably wouldn't allow it on a television, would be another form. You know, all sorts of even smoking, you know, obviously is bad for your health. And if you live in Australia, you take it seriously. And if you live in Holland, you probably the pastor of a Pentecostal church and probably smoke a cigar in this huge cultural differences from culture to culture to country to country, what we might become legalistic about. So it's it's very strong.

You know, the thing the thing which concerns me is not so much the expression of legalism, but the spirit of it. That's that's to me is it's you know, whether you have to wear a suit and tie or whatever the particular expression of this might be, it says in Galatians five, if you live under the law, you've actually fallen from grace. You've moved out of the sphere of actually knowing what it is to live in the grace of God.

That's that's the curse of it. And the tragedy that we could have Christians who are not enjoying Christian freedom because they're still living under the law is what concerns me. As I say, I'm going to unpack this whole because it's a real concern for Paul. We're going to unpack this as a whole session in the year, but over how far you push it. But I've actually thought one night when I've had this dream one day that I would sit down in church on my little stool, which I no longer used to preach from.

I sit there and day and I say, today, I want to talk to you about the law and open up a cigar light and see how many people walk out, you know, what's going on. But I've never had the courage to do it. But I think Romans 14, it suggests to me it's not a wise thing to do that because they really get off that subject. OK, let's move on the nature of saving faith. Now, the issue is you cannot understand the nature of saving faith unless you understand the condition of man and the limited role of the Lord.

You got no way of understanding what faith is unless you fully embrace Paul's view of the nature and condition of man and the fact that the law can't save you because what you've got is you've got a need on the one hand and you've got what can't do it on the other. Right now, you remove this from the same people as basically nice. And you've got no need for grace. All right, you think you can attain it by doing good?

You have no need for grass. So you can only come to really understand Paul's standing, a celebration of grace, if you're fully willing to embrace his view of the condition of man before Christ comes and the inadequacy of the law, then you're in a position to fully understand what he means by grace. It's called Face Saving Faith in the Bible, and various references are giving you a list of them which talks about the obedience of faith, you know, and the obedience.

The word is obedience is because we're asked to believe what if we believe what we're told to believe we're obedient. If we don't believe what we're told to believe, we're disobedient. Now, I want to clear up if we go back to Ephesians, too, I want to clear up something as you read in, you're reading the Bible. So we just clear something out of the way, Hans. Ten, first, six oversee. The Texas for his by grace, that you've been saved through faith and this is not from you.

So it's a gift of God, I want to ask you the question. When Paul says it's a gift of God, I want to ask you, what is the gift of God? Releases by grace, through faith, and this is not of yourself. It's the gift of God when a statement is made, the gift of God. What is it referring to? Right, A.J.. Now, it would appear on the face of it that it refers to faith, but it doesn't.

Some of you in your Bibles will have probably a marginal note or even a footnote which says, i.e., salvation. Why is the gift is salvation. Not five. Faith is actually an act of obedience, which we can't be given other than a supernatural gift of faith to do works and miracles and so on, you can't be given. It requires our obedience. This is a little tricky, and I don't want to waste time compressing timelines, but you're going to have to take it from me in faith.

But the key to this is the word this it says through says by Ratib inside through faith and that word this. Is it in the Greek language matter, you understand the math, the concept of masculine, feminine

neuter? Well, you don't have language just to understand that. And the words this is a pronoun and any pronoun must have the same gender as the noun it relates to. Faith is a noun. Now, the this in the Greek text is nater.

Faith is feminine. Linguistically, that this cannot be a matter and refer to a phenomenon that if you kind of you go, then the word which won't be matter is the noun for celebration, sectarian. And as it turns out, the verb form of it's there. But are you saved? But that's what most bombers we actually have a little more to say, i.e. salvation. And I mention this because faith, as Paul understands, that is something we do.

It's not something which is given to us. I've heard sermons preached on this text completely misunderstanding what Paul's trying to say, Grace is the gift. The sending of Christ was the gift of salvation through the death of Christ is the gift. But what we need to do is balance the gospel, and that's something we do. Because it's Grace, it's not a works, it's it's a gift, salvation is a gift, Christ is a gift. But we have to receive it.

And our act of receiving is called the obedience of faith. So we now go to Romans one. And first, to throw him in for his namesake, we've received grace and a partnership to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience. Of the big names, that comes from faith. What is it that that we are to do and that is where to believe the gospel. And this is kind of linking the point for one point five courses, I must preach, because faith comes from hearing.

So I preach, they hear, they hear, they believe, they believe they're safe and without taking Romans ten out of its context, because unfortunately, he goes on to say, well, I did preach to the Jews and they didn't believe and they refused to believe, but that's how it comes. And so faith comes through through this way and says that that it's saving faith is embracing the gospel and the gospel is the hip, the human condition, the conviction of my sin through the work of the law, the possibility of through the law gaining salvation.

And then finally, it's the fact that Christ died for us. That's the gospel and so on. First Corinthians 15, you've got some other verses there for it. But in first Corinthians 15, one on ones, he says, I want to remind you of the gospel, first Corinthians 15, one which I preach to you, which it's really received and on which you've taken your stand. By this gospel, you are saved. If you hold firm to the word I preach to you otherwise, otherwise you believed in vain.

And what is it he preached that I passed on to you as first importance that Christ died for your sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day, according to the scriptures. And the evidence of his resurrection is that he appeared to the list of those is quite simple. The Christ died, according to the scriptures. He was buried and he was raised that because if that's the human condition and if I can't be saved from keeping the law and if I'm under convictional or something's got to save me.

Impulse's. Yes. And the answer was Christ. He died according to the scriptures, that was God's plan and purpose that his death was to was to pay the penalty for us in that we might be reconciled to God. Now, there are all sorts of scriptures that the gospel confronts us with what we've done. It reveals what Christ has done for us. And it asks us to trust in the promise of salvation, to believe in the promise of salvation.

That's what it asks us to do. And in the presentation, of course, gospel, his absolute conviction was the human need. The powers of the law to save the absolute need, therefore, for one to die for many. Now, the death of Christ, which Paul and Galatians will say or in a Corinthians will say is foolishness. The cross is foolishness and a stumbling block, he says, but it's the only way, given the human condition.

It was necessary, it was according to the scripture, and so I've said ultimately then Paul's responsibility was to preach the gospel. This is this is this is what I must Macerich. Just open up for a chance to for a few comments or questions this morning, says Alice. Which is in the best. You it's you

heard it, but you didn't really believe the word vain means empty. You know, it's like after hearing it, you responded, but you really you didn't really hear what I was saying.

And so you're left with nothing. Now, Paul, Paul will go on to First Corinthians 15. It convinced that, in fact, that's not true of them, that they they, Paul, actually say the same thing of himself in Corinthians. He says having the president to hold on because I bring my budget into subjection, but that I myself, I preached in vain, he's he's afraid of abandoning the truth of this and slipping back into a low base righteousness.

Because it's been his life and this day will strike again powerfully in Galatians. And I think it's a personal reflection on this. How easy it is to be tempted to think I know I've been saved by grace, but God, I've really got to serve you for you to continue loving me. And, you know, to sort of slip back into a kind of a religious legalism. I find that a temptation on a reasonably regular basis. You know, I'm not praying enough, I'm not reading my Bible enough.

Maybe I don't love people enough. Maybe when I stand before the throne, God saying, well, you know, if you didn't love your church enough. The key is to say early in your day to what you were asked to do, so in this living relationship, this we need to be sensitive to what we're being asked to do. And then maybe they've got points out that you've chosen to say yes to fabricating it. And it's all coming inside.

It's all coming from me. But the answer is I've got the temptation is to use those feelings as a motivation for loving people more. But once I'm in there, enough is never enough. I've got to go back to saying no. I really believe Christ died for me. And my salvation is not on the basis of anything I do. It's not of righteousness. It's not of works. I will never be able to boast. I will never be able to stand before the throne and saying, Lord, look at all I did.

That's why he saved me. I'll never, never be happy because when I stand before the throne. God, if you were to choose to do it, I can say and I can tell you all the reasons why I'm not letting you in, even though I've devoted 40 or 50 years of my life as he can find as many reasons in my life as it can in your life. And I just have to I have to come back to say if I if I go down that road.

I've left Grace behind. It's not that God may not convict me to love people more, and, you know, I'm going to be preaching something about them on a Sunday morning and thank God, because it is his desire that we love each other more and more and more and more. You know, it's not that that isn't the will of God for my life, but it's not my salvation. It's not how I'm saying. I can't I'm not here trying to earn brownie points to get saved.

So how do you balance that responsibility with. The freeness, the price. It's a constant struggle. But the answer is, and this is why the story we're going to do early next year is so important, the answer is to learn to live by faith, not by law. And to to live a life where I really believe I've been saved by grace and to start my day believing there's nothing I can do which will make him love me more.

But I've got a relationship and the things I do really do affect their relationship with him. I can damage the relationship, I can distance the relationship, but. He shows me how much he loved me before I'd even done anything for him, the greatness of his love is something I've got to absolutely believe and be persuaded about, whether I enjoy the love experience, the that love can be very much determined, by the way, in which I live.

I can have a relationship with him. It can be a poor relationship with him. You know, I can say, yeah. So there is this there is this temptation. I would say I don't know how much you even understand. It comes through our preaching, but we're you know, I would say as a team in the church, we're absolutely committed to a view of Christian freedom where we walk in freedom in our life, not living under the law, but then say, but we don't use that sort of becomes a license, but we live a life which brings honor to him and glory to him and all those sorts of things.

But we want to do that legalistically. We got to learn to what it is to to live by faith. And that's to say that's going to be our study for us, because that's what Ephesians Chapter four and five is about. It's

about living by faith, but just being saipov. All right, let's pray. For some of us here tonight who got saved a long time ago. It's so easy to forget what we were. And yet, if we're honest, there are still things in our life from the old life and we thank you that you don't love us less because of those things.

Further, we want to thank you tonight that someone preach the gospel to us. Law that we heard it, and we believe that. And we were the recipients of Your Grace. And Father, I pray that we would be wise in how we bring law into the lives of others law, that whatever we say would bring people to you and lead them to Christ. Lord God, our hearts and minds from legalism. From spiritual pride that we must be proud of the things that we do.

And Lord, help us to to respond to this, as Paul did, by sharing the gospel with others, give us open doors of opportunity, give us boldness to speak the truth. Lord, I pray, would never be ashamed of the gospel. Because Lord has done such a work in our lives. And we thank you in Jesus name, Amen.