

If you have your Bibles, go ahead and grab them. Galatians, chapter 3. That's where we're going to hang out today. Nine verses is the goal. It's a pretty complex nine verses, and so it's going to take us a bit.

While you're turning there, I have just kind of one very large announcement to make. We have been actively praying over the last couple of years really about how to maximize what God has done here in The Village in regard to multiplication. So we started a sending track and even right now have over 100 people in training to either go overseas to do missions or to plant churches in and around the United States. So we'll begin to roll those guys out as they finish up their training.

Then another thing we seriously wanted to consider is regardless of how aggressive I get up here, people continue to come here from all over the Metroplex. So we've planted churches kind of all over in the hopes of saying, "Hey, here is a like-minded church. Here is a situation we think you might fit in that's closer to your house." Every once in a while God does some things, and instead of doing church plants we do campuses.

So this week we have agreed in principle with Trinity Christian Church in Fort Worth, so right on the Fort Worth/Arlington line, to purchase their building for \$1.85 million. No campaign needed for that. We can just actually buy that building. It's going to take another \$1.5 to \$1.7 million to renovate or retrofit that. As Dallas and Denton know, actually when you purchase a campus or you receive a campus, most of the time it's falling apart. I was going to use a big word and just decided to pull the flaps on that. It's falling apart. So we're going to need to put some money into it to get it ready for us.

Usually what happens when we launch into a campus is the first Sunday we had better be ready to roll because we don't start with 150; we tend to start with around 1,000. So there is a work we're going to need to do there to get us ready to roll that out. Here is what I need to let you know if you're a covenant member of The Village. We don't need to vote in order to purchase the campus, but what we want to do is get feedback from you, hear your heart, and make sure you understand why we're doing this and what this is all about.

So in the weeks to come we're going to roll out more and more information, primarily through The City but in other venues, to enable you to ask questions and answer your questions. Then the other piece I need to mention is the retrofit will be between \$1.5 and \$1.7 million. So we're going to ask our members for

permission to borrow up to \$2 million, but more than likely we won't need \$2 million, in order to do the retrofit.

Now to remind you of some history here, the Flower Mound campus, which I'm standing in right now, asked for permission from our members to borrow \$7 million. We only borrowed \$5 million and then paid off that \$5 million in two years. We're hoping this works a lot like that in that we don't need to borrow anywhere near that \$2 million and we can get it paid off extremely fast so we can operate in a way that is debt-free. So we're really excited.

We've been praying a long time about what was next for us and where God would lead us to next. The elder room has been very excited the last few weeks as God has allowed these things to just kind of come together. He needed to kind of make a way and make a path for some of this, and he just absolutely did at every turn. So we're excited about the possibility of a Village Church, Fort Worth. So you're going to get more information. Then the weekend after Easter, April 14 and 15, the covenant members of The Village Church will vote on whether or not we can assume the \$2 million in debt. So let me pray for us, and then we're going to get into what I think is a spectacular text. I kind of have to say that, don't I? Let's pray.

Holy Spirit, I just thank you for your work. I thank you for how you save, how you draw, and how you've blessed this community of faith. I pray as we begin to dig into this text that you would weigh heavy on our hearts, that you would encourage us, that you would, where need be, rebuke us, that we might grow further in our understanding, and that even maybe some today for the first time would come to know you and love you in a new way. It's for your beautiful name, amen.

The word *love* in our culture is almost a bankrupt word. I try to bring your attention to this. It means everything so it means nothing. You can love anything. Really when we use the word *love*, nine times out of 10 we're saying, "I like this a lot." So you can love weird things. You loving tacos, historically, and if we look at the root of the word, is crazy. That you love fajitas wouldn't historically even make sense, but yet the word has been in our culture really emptied out of its meaning. There is no weight that remains in that word. It is a fluffy, happy word that carries none of the strength and the stamina the actual word possesses.

So let me try to unpack it like this. When you love someone, there are certain things you are drawn to do. You tend to encourage their strengths. When you see something in them that is of value or virtue, you tend to praise it. You tend to go, "Man, you're so good at that. It's like a natural ability. You work so hard. You're so good at that." People love that kind of love. To be loved like that is of supreme value. We love that in our culture. If your love for me is all about me, I love that love. I'd do that love all day long. If love is you encouraging my strengths and pointing out where I excel, I love the way you love me. I believe I just quoted a country song there. That's growth for me.

In that not only does it point out strengths and celebrate strengths, but love will also say, "Oh, you like this? Well if you like this let me help you get this. Oh, you don't like this? Let me do what I can to make you not have to experience that." Again our culture would say, "Yes and amen, that's love. That's what I want." Some of you single ladies are like, "Preach it! I want someone who says, 'You're good at this. You're great at this. Here is what's awesome about you. Oh, you don't like that? Well let me stop that. Oh, you want this done? Well let me do that for you.'"

The reality is, though, although all of those things are easily a part of love, actual love is denser than that. It's thicker than that. So yes, love encourages. Yes, love edifies. Yes, love protects. Yes, love serves. But love will also move from edification. It will move from encouragement. Because it loves, it will move to entreating or pleading with and ultimately engaging and rebuking when the ones we love are on a trajectory that ends up in their destruction. Are you with me?

So I have three children. They're all very different. I love them all, although I love all of them differently. We celebrate the strengths of all three of our children. I have a couple of artists and I have a non-artist. I have a couple who love to draw and love to play piano, and I have one who just really despises those things. Despite where they're drawn and what their natural gifting is, we tend to celebrate them all. We tend to point out big deals. We point out their natural strength. We celebrate when they do things well. We applaud their efforts when they try and it's not really where it needs to be.

I told you I think it was last week or the week before that really one of the rules, one of the governing laws of the Chandler house is we're going to have fun. If you ask my children, "What are your family rules? What are the family laws?" rule or law number one is *Have fun*. Rule number two is *Be safe*. *Show respect*. So these are kind of our laws. This is how the Chandler house works.

Here is the thing. In that environment, where they are encouraged, they are edified, we point out where they excel, and we go, "Oh, you like this? Well let's make this... Oh, you don't like this? Well let's try to protect you from that," they have the audacity to question our love for them when it comes time to say, "That's not happening."

Love in our culture is all about what's good in us, but we don't want anyone to engage what's wrong with us. For someone to engage what's wrong with us is viewed in our culture as unloving. Look at me. The opposite of love is not hate; the opposite of love is *indifference*. It's when you're indifferent toward that you're unloving. So to see someone you love get off the rails and be on a crash course, a collision course with their own destruction and to do nothing or to just hope it works out is a supremely unloving act.

So what we've seen in the book of Galatians for the last five weeks is Paul seeing a group of men and women he loved dearly being off the tracks of the gospel, believing things that are not the gospel, and heading toward, at a quick rate, their own destruction. He has encouraged. He started out, "Brothers..." He has edified. "Here are what the facts are." He has pointed out, and he is going to entreat and plead. Now we're going to downshift into outright rebuke. All of that is under the banner of love, and all of that is under the heading of being in step with the gospel.

So although today's text reads in an extremely harsh way, his harshness is birthed out of a love and concern that would move you to snatch your child out of the street. Are you with me? So when you snatch your kid out of the street, you don't go, "Man, you're so fast. I couldn't believe you got away from me and ran into the traffic like that." What do you say? "Have you lost your mind? Come look at this dead squirrel. Look at that. Do you know how easily that could be you? Don't run into the street. Come on, buddy." Right? Isn't that what you do? Some of you who don't have children are like, "No, not really." You will.

Now let's read then. So this isn't going to be encouraging as much as it's going to be an extremely firm rebuke. **"O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified."** So do you see we moved away from the brotherly language? Earlier they were brothers, and now they're... *what?* Fools. **"O foolish Galatians!"** Then look at the next line. **"Who has bewitched you?"** This means, "Who has cast a spell on you? Who has you spellbound?"

It's this idea that they have their eyes locked on what is erroneous. So no matter what Paul says, no matter he yells into their ears, they're like a tractor beam locked on and can't look away. They are bewitched. They are tricked. In their being tricked, they have become fools. The reason he is saying they have been fooled, they have been tricked, and they have become foolish is because before their eyes Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Now historically no one in Galatia saw Jesus Christ crucified. No one. No one living in Galatia, modern-day Turkey, saw Jesus Christ crucified.

So when Paul uses the language, **"It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified,"** he is not saying they saw Jesus crucified, but rather when they heard and responded to the gospel, the gospel they responded to was, at every angle, historically, philosophically, and with the sacred literature, presented in such a way that the apex, the thing that made it all hold together, was Christ crucified. Their salvation was not going to be built on anything they did or didn't do, but by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ alone.

That is how they heard it. That's how they understood it. That's how they came to be believers. So Paul says, "That's what you heard. That's what you saw. That's what you accepted. But now you're bewitched, and you believe there is another way for you to be saved. Because you believe that, you have become

fools." Now from there he is going to just not get away from this "foolish" thing. So let's look at verse 2.

"Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"

Okay, so he is now recalling to their minds where they were when they were converted. Did you see his question? "I need to learn just one thing from you. I need you to remember something here. Did you receive the Spirit by doing something, or did you receive the Spirit simply because you heard and believed and received the Spirit?" So the question that is really on the table for all of today is... *Where were you when Christ found you?*

So for me I was kind of over here. If you can imagine me unregenerate or if you can imagine my energy not focused on the gospel... It was, "Hey, give Chandler a beer and invite him." So my pre-conversion story was one of partying and the pursuit of women. I was quick-witted and felt myself intellectually superior to other believers in Christ. So I would openly mock them at times. They would invite me to church, and that just gave me actually more ammunition to mock. I was a God-belittling, self-aggrandizing, foul-mouthed, womanizing partier. What was God's response to this? "Okay, follow me." He saved me.

Now this is how he did it. He didn't come and say, "All right, here is the deal. Chandler, I kind of want to put you on my team, but I cannot put you on my team right now, bro. You are a train wreck. So here is a list. One, you have to get rid of the F-word, bro. That just has to die. You have to put that away. No more drinking. No more partying. Leave the girls alone. When you have this list done, come back. I'm going to make you my boy." That's not what he did. He just saved me, just in a moment saved me.

Now I'd been digging around. I'd been asking questions. I'd been kind of coming to church trying to figure things out, but I was the worst kind of church attender. I would come with my friends, kind of hear, make fun of it with the friend who brought me, and then I would go party, and a lot of times go party with people who were actually in church with me. None of that got cleaned up before the Lord rescued me. Now some of you cannot relate to that story at all. That doesn't show up anywhere on your radar because for you, God came and saved you at church.

So for me, I was saying, "I don't need you, Jesus. I'll find my own joy in life. I'll find my own joy in partying. I'll find my own joy. I'll make the meaning of my life these things. I don't need you." Some of you actually were rescued by Jesus Christ at church as you said, "I don't need you. I have Sunday school. I have church attendance. I'm better than the other people I know. I'll tell you what, that Matt Chandler kid is here on Sunday. Then he goes out and parties. I don't do that. I don't need you, Jesus. I have my stuff right here that will save me because I'm doing what's right."

Paul is saying, "Hey, where were you when Christ found you? Did you receive the Spirit? Were you converted? Did God reveal his delight in you because you did something, or did he just save you?" It's a question you can't answer, "Well I was doing stuff, and the Lord saved me." No. He saved you. He is the author and perfecter of your faith. So Paul's reasoning is if you were saved when you were at your worst, what makes you think God's affections for you now have waned, that you would leave the gospel and go try to earn what was freely given to you in his delight in saving you?

Then look at that second line again because this is a part of it also. This is verse 3. **"Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"** Let's just take a moment of honesty here. Growing in maturity in Christ is painfully slow, isn't it? I just want it to be so much faster than it is. In fact, if we're straight with one another, most of us don't even know we're growing when we're growing. Almost all of us feel for the most part kind of static, and then we have these moments where we're aware God just grew us.

It's kind of like watching your kid grow up. You can stare at your kid all day long. You're never going to see them grow. They're just going to come downstairs one day and be two inches taller, or you're going to have to set stuff up higher because they can just reach higher. So Christian development, maturity in Christ, is similar to that. It's uphill. It's slow. It's never as fast as we want it to be. It works itself out in all of a sudden we respond to a situation differently than we used to, and we become aware God has been growing us.

Probably the most common way it works out is someone will ask us a spiritual question. We'll start to answer them, and we're surprising ourselves. It's like, "This is good! I am brilliant." So what ends up happening is people go, "I think the Holy Spirit just dumped that right into me." I don't want to take that off the table as an impossibility, but what I bet has happened is you've been absorbing, you have been thinking, and you have been mulling over in your heart. When you had the opportunity, what came out of you was the maturity God had been building in you.

So again here is Paul's point. If you were saved and if you have been sanctified by the Spirit by no work of the law, then why would you go back to the law that has neither saved you nor sanctified you? Look at the next line. Verse 4: **"Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?"** Now when Paul planted the churches in and around Galatia, we read about that in Acts, chapter 13. What you see is Paul is persecuted because of his preaching of the gospel in this region of the world, modern-day Turkey.

Now it's not a stretch of the imagination to believe that if Paul were persecuted for preaching the gospel in this part of the world, those who led the churches he planted would also be persecuted. Now with a gospel lens, if you're on track, if you're on the tracks of the gospel, then suffering and persecution have meaning; outside of the tracks of the gospel suffering has no meaning. So let me kind of coach it to you this way.

Jesus is going to teach about persecution in a way you don't hear us teach about persecution. Persecution and suffering for us are things that need to be solved, but Jesus teaches it a whole different way.

In Matthew 5, verses 11 and 12 he says, "**Blessed are you when others...persecute you.**" He actually goes on to say, "**Rejoice and be glad...**" Now think about that because so much of our concern today is how to make the message cool and how to not be persecuted for what we believe. We don't want to be viewed as hyper-spiritual people. We don't want to be viewed as weirdos. We want to kind of try to make it cool. We want to give Jesus an Extreme Home Makeover.

Jesus is going, "No, no, no. Blessed are you when you're persecuted." "**Rejoice and be glad...**" Why? "**...for your reward is great in heaven.**" Then Paul, on that same thought, is going to tell us in Romans 8, "**...that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.**" Both men, Jesus and Paul, teaching by the power of the Holy Spirit, are saying something very simple: "In the gospel all suffering, all persecution is redeemed so much that on that day in glory looking back on persecution, looking back on suffering, we'll say, 'It was worth it. To get this, to get here... That was worth it.' I don't live in a bubble to not be aware of what I'm saying over here."

So Paul's point is, "You've suffered for the sake of the gospel. If you abandoned the gospel, all of your suffering is in vain. If you believe and stay on the tracks of the gospel, if you remember suffering has merit, if you remember how you were saved, if you remember how you were sanctified, then you won't go to the law for salvation, but you'll trust in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit inside of you." Look where he goes next.

Verse 5: "**Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith...**" Now not only has the Holy Spirit saved people, not because of the law and not only has the Holy Spirit grown people, not because of the law, but now the Spirit has not only been given to the churches in Galatia, but the Spirit that is on top of saving and transforming lives has also now been working miracles. Now when the Bible uses the word *miracle*, it's referring to one of three things:

1. *A physical healing outside of common grace.* Do you understand what I mean by *common grace*? Common grace is gifts given to mankind by God for all. Whether you love him or don't, it's available to you. So some people are healed via common grace. So medicine, MRIs, CAT scans... All of that is common grace. It's a gift from God on all mankind simply because he is good and gracious to mankind.

When the Bible uses the term *miracle*, it's saying someone was physically healed outside of common grace, by supernatural grace, which means they were healed without medicinal help. They had something or were sick with something medicine could not cure, and so God supernaturally cured them. Now Paul's

argument here is that kind of supernatural healing doesn't take place because you obey the law. So the Holy Spirit is not only saving and sanctifying people, but he is also doing miracles.

2. *A supernatural provision.* So in supernatural provision, think of Jesus taking the boy's lunch, five loaves of bread and two fishes, and feeding 5,000 men, more than likely 15,000 to 20,000 people. At the end, after everyone had eaten their fill, he takes up 12 basketfuls of food. So there was actually more leftover after everyone had eaten than when they first had the lunch and began to hand it out. That is supernatural provision.

3. *God's supernatural control over the elements and over the universe.* If you remember when Jesus rebukes the storm and it stops... That's a crazy power, just to get up and go, "No!" and the storm stops. I've asked for that a couple of times; it's never really happened for me.

So when the Bible talks miracles, this is what it's talking about. Now I think the thing I want to really kind of side bar here (but I think it's important for us to notice here) is for the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit to take place among a people, it's not formulaic. Are you with me? It's not, "Do these things and the Holy Spirit will do this for you." That's not how it works. That's Paul's point. Let me say I believe the Holy Spirit still does this. If you get sick, you go to the hospital, let me tell you how I'm going to pray for you. I'm not going to come lay my hands on you and go, "God, if it be your will, will you heal this person?"

I'm not going to pray that way. I think I'm going to find out the will of God regardless. So what I'm going to do is with faith believe God can and God is going to supernaturally heal you. I'm going to ask him to do it. I'm going to expect him to do it. I'm going to wait to watch to see what he would do. Where I find my faith lacking I'm going to ask him to increase my faith. If we can be honest with one another, sometimes you hear somebody got sick, and doesn't your mind just naturally go, *Oh man, they're toast.*

Some of you thought that about me. Come on. Are you just going to leave me on an island up here? No, that's our, "Oh, it's bad. Oh, they're not going to make it," but really the Bible says God can do it. History tells us he can do it. Even here in this place we've seen some of this, but I'm just hungry for more. I just want to see God do more of that. I want to ask and I want to expect him to do it. I want to pester him and pester him and pester him. Why? Because he has commanded me to. He has not asked me to go, "Well, if you want to do this..." He has asked me to ask him to do it and to believe he is going to.

Well aren't there a lot of times he doesn't? Yeah, but when that happens I praise his sovereign will. He knows more than I'll ever know, but that's a part of this thing that's not my business. Really what I've been commanded to do is to ask and to expect. There are a lot of times like this I have to say, "Help my unbelief," but this is the way I'm going to pray for you if I have to come to the hospital to see you. I'm going

to ask that all the applause and glory that would go to your doc doesn't get to go to him at all. I'm going to pray it all gets heaped upon the Lord, and the doctor gets baffled.

So the tag line that's been my experience here when this kind of thing happens or when God heals in this way is most doctors will just go, "Well, the body does... We don't really understand how the body works. There are things that will work..." That's true. I don't think they're dodging it. In fact, they might get in a lot of trouble if they go, "I think Jesus healed you." I think that'd probably get them into some trouble. Don't hear me taking shots at the medical community. I'm standing here because of them because God in his common grace used many of them to put my boots on this stage.

You have to know the Spirit doesn't heal and move because of some process of, "Let's do this and do this and do this, and then God owes us this healing." No. No. Let's move to a problematic verse. Verse 6: **"...just as..."** Who is that? **"...Abraham 'believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness'?"** Now that's kind of a brain-stretching verse, because here is what just happened. Paul just told us Abraham was a Christian. Now just so you know, that's *book of Genesis* Abraham. That's *back here* Abraham. That's not *up here, New Testament* Abraham. That's not some dude in Galatia. That's Genesis 12 Abraham. We just found out thousands of years before Christ was born there are Christians, right?

So how is that possible? Well look at what he says. **"...just as Abraham 'believed God, and it..."** We need to answer what that "it" is. **"...was counted to him as righteousness'?"** Now if we had time to go look at Abraham's life, he walks in obedience in ways that are spectacular. God comes to Abram when he is with his people, with his father's house and says, "Get your wife. Get your stuff. We're going to go to a new place."

"Where are we headed?"

"I'll tell you when we get there." Abraham's response? To go. So think if the Holy Spirit impressed on your heart and God were to say to you, "Hey, pack up your family and move."

"Where are we going?"

"I'll tell you when we get there." But that's what happened to Abraham, and he went.

God came to him when he was in his 90s and said, "You're going to have a son." God came to him years later and said, "Take Isaac, lay him on the altar, and sacrifice him to me." What did he do? He tied his son to the altar. Now if you're new to church, he doesn't kill him. God provides a ram. I saw just panic in some

of your eyes. You're about to go get your kid. No, he doesn't kill him. God provides a ram, and they sacrifice the ram.

What the Bible just told us...it's pretty spectacular to see...is Abraham was not saved by obedience and works but rather by faith. He had faith in one who was to come, and in his faith, in the promise that was given to him, he was given salvation by God. Even Jesus himself is going to tell us this in John, chapter 8, verse 56. I'll just quote Christ to you for those of you who this is a new idea to: **"Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."**

In Romans, chapter 5 the Bible tells us Jesus died as a propitiation for our sins and the sins of those in the past, those who were before us. So in the same way our future sins were covered by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross and his imputed righteousness to us, so Abraham, Noah, David, Moses, and others who believed in the promise of what was to come in the Messiah were saved by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now this is where you really have to tune in, all right? Abraham is saved 430 years before the law is even given. There wasn't even a law that could save him. There wasn't even a set group of rules that might deliver him. God saved him through his faith alone in what was to come before there was a law to even obey. Do you see Paul's point? The solution was given before the problem was even shown to man. God saved Abraham not by the law but by faith alone in a grace that was to come alone in Christ Jesus.

Now look at this next line. **"Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham."** I need to take something off the table here. One of the arguments of the Jews in the first century was they believed they would just naturally be saved because they were ethnically Jews, and the Jews were ethnically God's chosen people. So I think one of the ways that works itself out here that I want to try to take off the table for you right now is you are not a Christian because your parents were. Your parents' faith has zero bearing on your faith. You are not a Christian because of any type of ethnicity, any type of socio-economic status, any type of background, or any type of church attendance or non-church attendance.

These things do not make you a believer in Christ. The thing that defines us as believers in Christ is we have put our faith in him alone and what he has done alone, which is why I've been pleading with you, entreating with you, for six weeks now to get your eyes off of you and to get your eyes on Christ. Quit looking at how you measure up and don't measure up, and rather turn your eyes on Christ who measures up fully, because that's where your freedom and joy are. As long as you keep looking at you, keep checking out you, and keep hoping you're here and not here, the more defeated you'll be and really the more vitality you'll be robbed from. The more you have your eyes on Jesus, the more that has a chance to grow.

He is saying, "The sons of Abraham, the children of God are those who live by faith," which is why if you grew up in church when you were a kid you sang,

Father Abraham had many sons
Many sons had father Abraham
I am one of them and so are you
So let's just praise the Lord
Right arm...

I'm not doing the motions. We're not going there, all right? So you sang that song because... Who are the children of Abraham? Who are the children of God? Those who have put their faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now look where he goes next. We're almost there. **"And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying..."** This is the gospel to Abraham. **"In you..."** This is Genesis 12. **"...shall all the nations be blessed.'** **So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."**

Now I just want to make Paul's point really quickly, and then I want to get our hearts attached to what we need to remember so we don't fall off the rails of the gospel, okay? Paul is pointing out that the gospel that was preached to Abraham was all nations would be blessed. Well we covered it a couple of weeks ago. The law is a diagnostic; it is not a blessing. It tells you you're sick. So the gift to mankind was not the law; the gift to mankind was faith in Christ who would save you from the condemnation of the law.

So 430 years before the law existed, the gift that was going out to you and me was the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, his imputed righteousness, his wrath-absorbing death, and his victorious resurrection that would show us we have been bought with a price and fully paid for. All our sins, past, present, and future, absorbed in Jesus Christ. Now if we're honest, we have a tendency like the Galatians to forget and then as we forget to become foolish.

So I don't know what your personality is like. I tend to need to feel like I'm accomplishing something, or I get agitated. So I need to, at the end of the day, feel like I accomplished something, or I get frustrated. Maybe you're not "Type A" like me. You're like, "A task bar? What is that?" Maybe that's you. Maybe you're an artist or something like that, but for me when I'm done, I shut my computer down, and I head to my house, I need to feel like I made progress. I don't need to be completed; I just need to feel like I made progress. If I don't feel like I made progress, I get antsy. I get agitated. I get frustrated. I feel like I wasted a day, even if I didn't.

So what happens is because I'm bent like that, that same foolishness will at times attach itself to my relationship with the Lord. It is much easier for me to *do* than to *be*. Are you with me? If I'm not careful, I will feel like God really, really loves me when I'm nailing it. When I'm leading well, preaching well, engaging well, and sharing the gospel well and I'm doing all I know I'm supposed to do, I know better, but in my heart I just start feeling like God is just more pleased with me then. Then by nature of that belief, when I'm not doing as well, I'm not as disciplined, and I'm not as on it, I have a tendency to think he is not as pleased with me as he is over here.

Anyone else? Okay, so there are nine of you and liars. So the problem with the Galatians is this is what they're doing. They're not confident in God's delight in them because they have forgotten some things Paul keeps calling them back to. What we just admitted is we all tend to have the same issue. We all have a tendency to get off the rails and to believe the law and to get off the rails of God's delight in us in Jesus Christ and to try to earn what we've been freely given. So what I want to do is I want to use the text again to draw your attention to and to draw your heart to what we need to do to keep remembering the gospel well so we don't drift from it, so we don't get on a trajectory that will ultimately be harmful.

1. *Constantly think about and be reminded of where we were when he found us.* What was that day your heart was awakened to Jesus Christ? Where were you? I can tell you where I was. When God opened up my heart, sex before marriage, drugs and drinking, and foul language... If I could quit doing those three things, then I was completely obedient. That was it. Just those three things. *I just have to do that.* That's where I was when God found me.

Can I be straight with you? None of those things show up on my radar anymore. None of them. I don't ever go, "I can't get smashed tonight. The Lord would not be pleased with that." That doesn't even show up on my radar. It never shows up on my radar, "I should not sleep with that woman. That's not my wife. No. No." That doesn't happen to me. "No sir, I do not want your heroin." That doesn't happen to me. But there are all sorts of other things that happen to me.

Here is why we have to remember that. What ends up happening is I can, if I'm not careful, look at my shortcomings today and begin to believe God doesn't delight in me in Christ because of these shortcomings today when God revealed his delight in me back here when those *were* issues, when those *were* battles, when those *were* fights. So Paul is saying, "You better remember this day, and you better receive how God has grown you so you don't get weighed down by where you are today."

In fact, let me encourage you with this bit of beautiful news. I'm just going to love you enough to do this. That picture in your head of maturity... You're not going to get there. Selah. You're not going to get there.

You're going to etch a step at a time forward. You will at times go two steps forward, one step back. That's still a step forward. You will stumble into eternity in the safe hands of Jesus Christ.

I have gotten to sit down with some of the stalwarts of the Christian faith, and even in their 80s they're crying out to know God more. Even Paul, the guy who wrote this, in Philippians 3, starting in verse 10, says, "Oh, that I might know Christ!" I feel like arguing. "You saw him face to face! You've been to the third heaven. Stuff you touched heals people. What are you talking about?" Do you hear him? **"...that I may know him...and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."**

Paul knew him, and yet he still has this yearning. He still has this longing. He still has this desire. Remember where he found you. Remember how he has worked in you. Here is what I have to point out. For some of you, today's message is somewhat of a wash because you don't have that day at all. You can't remember back to this day because your heart has never been awakened to grace. You're still trying to find your own joy, trying to find your fullness of life, and trying to make life work.

Others of you are going, "I don't need you, Jesus. I'm just doing all this stuff you tell me to do." Neither of you are walking in the delight of a creator who can line you up with how he designed the universe to work. Without that day to remember, you're already off the rails. Having that day, having that, "This is where he found me," is imperative to stay on the rails because it's what put you on the rails to begin with.

2. *Keep getting up.* I'm not naïve. There are legitimate addictions and legitimate problems in this room. There is alcohol. There are drugs. There is promiscuity. There is marital infidelity. On and on I could go. There are some train-wrecked lives in this joint. Hear me. *Self-pity will destroy you.* It will suck the life right out of you. So what I need you to hear me say from the gospel is there is no error, no addiction with more power than the cross of Christ. Get up. Keep getting up.

Don't say, "It doesn't work for me," if you've never actually tried it. So you need to confess your sins and get help. "Well I think I can beat it." Well I think you have several years of history that say you can't. If you could just let go, trust God, and trust the covenant community of faith to walk with you, freedom might be had. To drag secrets kicking and screaming into the light through the means of confession that you might be healed is the most terrifying yet freeing thing you could ever do. Some of you need to just keep getting up because you're not listening to the gospel because you believe you can't be forgiven and you're stuck in these things. You're not stuck. You can get up and move. Get up and move.

3. *When you read the Bible, pay attention.* Now here is why. This thing is a mess. The people in here are a mess. There is this thing that happens where we kind of look at them as varsity and us as junior varsity. We

kind of look at these guys as the guys who really have it all together, and we don't have it all together. If you actually read the Bible, you're going to be blown away. Abraham, this guy who had faith and it was counted to him as righteousness... There was a time where a king thought his wife was fine, and so he was afraid the king would have him killed.

So here is the conversation he has with his wife, Sarah: "It's obvious the king loves you. I think he is going to kill me so he can have you. So here is the deal. We don't want that. Why don't you spend the night with him? You're just my sister. I'll live." I just can't fathom that conversation. I just have a feeling that even if that worked out, I would be hearing about that for the rest of my life. So can we agree that our boy Abraham had some issues? It was counted to him as... *what?* Righteousness. God called him righteous, a man who whored out his wife to save his own skin.

When you read David, you read, "Oh, a man after God's own heart," you read those psalms, and "Oh, he is such a godly dude, a man after God's own heart who slept with another man's wife and then had him murdered," pay attention. Pay attention to the dysfunctional family dynamics. Pay attention to the sexual perversity. Pay attention to murder, strife, cunning, and all sorts of debaucheries and depravities that are in the Scriptures. Three weeks ago we watched an apostle forget the gospel. Pay attention because God works in the mess. If you're paying attention when you read the Bible, when it's your turn to walk through the mess you'll be confident God is working in the mess.

4. *Gospel-centered community is a must.* Walking with others. Let me try to explain what that is because there is a good reason and then there is a difficult reason why walking with other people deeply helps us stay in tune with the gospel. In the good way, the way we all like, we're encouraged by people. So we're around people we enjoy. They enjoy us. We like to go to dinner, maybe even do a vacation together. We really enjoy them. They parent their kids well. Their kids behave. You're all in. They like the same foods. You like the same activities. You guys are in it, man.

But then some people are more difficult than that, aren't they? Don't judge me. Aren't they? Aren't some people just difficult? Yeah. So as we do life with one another, there are some people who edify and encourage, and then there are some people who are going to reveal the selfishness of our hearts and reveal we need the gospel. So what happens when rugged edges rub against rugged edges is there is friction, but that friction will smooth out those edges. My wife and I had a woman tell us a couple of months ago that she loved The Village Church, but she could never attend here because of some of the people who attended here.

My mind is way too quick for that kind of nonsense. I'm like, *Breathe in. Breathe out.* Here is what's in my head. What's in my head is, *It sounds like we're the perfect place for you.* Are you saying there are people

at The Village who don't quite understand grace? Are you saying there are people at The Village who it's all about them? Are you saying there are people at The Village who are immature and still stumble about? Because if that's what you're saying, from my knowledge of you per this conversation, I ought to put you all in a group together. We need the smoothness of edification and we need the friction of difficult people to shape us into people who know, love, and walk deeply with Jesus Christ.

5. *Walk in obedience to the commands of God.* Here is why. You will see the goodness of God in profound ways as you walk in obedience to the commands of God. That's why the commands of God turn into delight for those who follow him. So I'll give you just a couple of examples, and then I'll close us out. I have seen certain men come into The Village and they were not quite understanding of their faith. They were here probably because Mama dragged them or the wife dragged them. So they came and they sat in. They just kind of put up with it. They liked it when I was aggressive. Not toward them, but if I was aggressive toward something else they really liked that. *Oh, this kid is loud. I think he is funny.*

Then God got a hold of their hearts. When God got a hold of their hearts, they with much trepidation began to talk to other men they had known about Jesus Christ, about the difference Jesus had made in their hearts, and how, "Hey, I'm going to get baptized. Come check this out." Instead of being belittled and mocked, they found some of their friends were actually interested in this Jesus, came and watched them get baptized, and then came to home group with them. Then they got to share the gospel with them. Then they watched their friends come to know and love Jesus Christ. What kind of boldness do you think, what kind of joy do you think was created in the heart of man who trusted God and walked out in it?

Now just so you understand what I'm saying, I think sometimes you can share the gospel with people and be persecuted. They think you're a fool. They think you're mocked. They don't want to hang out with you. That's absolutely a possibility, so don't hear me over-romanticizing this thing. But the confidence that can be birthed in heart as you watch God move is incredible. As I've seen men and women who have saved money up for something be obedient to God and give that to someone else or some other thing, I have seen it go one of two ways. I need to be really honest.

Sometimes it comes back and God blesses you financially for your openhandedness financially. So I've seen people give away \$1,000 and then randomly get back \$5,000 or \$6,000. Just hear me. If you think I'm instituting some, "Give \$1,000, get \$10,000," you're in the wrong church. I've also seen, and more often seen, someone open up their hands and give generously and freely to sow into the kingdom and get the joy of knowing they're not owned by their stuff.

When we take steps of obedience, we watch God come through with what he said he would come through on. Our confidence in him grows, and our confidence in his delight in us grows. Whether that goes well or

goes badly, whether we see people come to know the Lord or we are rejected by a set of friends because we love the Lord, we see the goodness of God, and that emboldens the heart. That grows our heart toward his affection for us. So I think a way you stay tied to the gospel is by walking in obedience, because remember as we covered last week and the week before, where you fail to walk in obedience you're revealing you don't understand fully the gospel. So I want to pray for us and then move us into a time to respond to these things. Let's pray.

Jesus, I thank you for these men and women. I pray, Holy Spirit, if we've fallen, if we are stuck in patterns of secret sin, or we don't have that day to point to where you've opened up our hearts to the reality of your grace, goodness, and forgiveness, I pray today would be the day. I pray we would be quick to grab the hand of a man or a woman we know or maybe one of the ministers at the church and just say, "Here is where I am. Here is where I'm stuck. I need help. This isn't working. My marriage is in trouble. I'm addicted to this. I'm struggling with this."

I pray we would just be an honest place and we wouldn't feel the need to hide, because you already know. I pray, Father, we would remember how you found us. You delighted in us then, you began this good work, and you've said you'll be faithful to complete it. I pray we might rest in that, feel confident in that, and you might correct us today, correct our foolishness today by having us remember that from the beginning this was going to be by faith alone, in grace alone. So help us, Holy Spirit. Do what only you can. It's for your beautiful name, amen.

Love you guys.