

W465_Saul_that_is_called_Paul_1.mp3

[00:00:01] This is the recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book. It is number one of a series entitled Saul, who also is called Paul. And the first quotation I want to make is from the minor prophet Haggai. Don't turn to it because it's just introducing, thus saith the Lord's messenger. In the Lord's message. And I think I've told you that that was the first text that I used when I had an opportunity to speak in about the year 1910 for a big meeting that was convened by readers of Things to come in London. The Lord's Messenger and the Lord's message go together. Our subject is one of these messages. The Apostle Paul. There are those. Who perhaps think lightly of him. What did he think about himself? This is what he said about himself. True. Who then is Paul? What? Who is he? But a messenger. By whom you believed? He says. Was Paul crucified for you? He wasn't. On the other hand, there are those who rather think that vessels are not necessary earthen vessels. Well, you've only got to be stranded in some desolate spot to know how very, very useful the vessel might be. Imagine a person saying the Sahara. Suddenly crippled. About a quarter of a mile away is a stream or a well of water. But he cannot get there. Would he despise even a broken tin that brought him that life giving water? The vessel doesn't matter.

[00:02:06] It's what is contained in it that matters to us so much. But after we've said that, we cannot come back again without thinking. The Apostle Paul was someone that you couldn't pass by without some regard. And so I feel that we should be profited if we can look at this earthen vessel. See something of his character. Begin to realize something of the place he occupies in the scheme of things. Could you imagine what the New Testament would be like if it had the four Gospels where we have the earthly ministry of our savior leading right on to his crucifixion? His resurrection is ascension. And then we had not a single one of Paul's epistles. It would possibly be that God could use those gospels to bring us to a knowledge of salvation. The great glorious teaching of justification by faith. But how much we should miss if there wasn't before us. The great Epistle to the Romans with that marvelous teaching embedded in it. Or again, would you think of the companion teaching of sanctification without holiness? No man shall see God. How much we should value the epistle of Holiness, the Epistle to the Hebrews. And so I'm sure that I'm wasting time to plead that we give the vessel some consideration because of the treasure. That was in it. And that's a passage, of course,

which I'm quoting. We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the Excellency may be of God and not of ourselves.

[00:03:51] The Apostle Paul was an earthen vessel, but he was more than an earthen vessel. We read in the Acts of the Apostles. That after he been stricken down on that road to Damascus and there he was suffering blindness. A mennonite and an ice was sent by the Lord. To him. And the Lord said he is a chosen vessel unto thee. To bear my name. About the Gentiles, among others. So this earthen vessel had a name inscribed on him and it wasn't Paul. It was the name of the Lord. He was a chosen vessel. And we are thankful. I'm sure the more we peruse these wonderful epistles, the more we are thankful that God chose that vessel and poured into him that treasure which he poured out for our benefit. There are two words which we read concerning the apostle Paul in relation to his attitude and conditions by which he worked. He says in one epistle he was a pattern. He says in another epistle have a form of sound words. Well, strictly speaking, it's the same Greek word which is translated both pattern and form. There's no formalism about it. It's the pattern. The word is made up of a word which includes our word type. At the word type involves the idea of pouring molten metal or else striking with a great blow to get a conformity like type. We use the word type today of lead or metal that's run into a mold that we may print from it.

[00:05:56] And the apostle says. The. He was a pattern. Unto those that believed. So you see, we can't quite bypass the vessel because we are so concerned about the glory that was entrusted to him, for he himself is a part of the message that vessel himself is there to give us some idea of what it is to be saved by grace. You see what sort of man he was, how he could boast in himself, what a position he had. Then suddenly all crumbled and vanished, and he felt a need of a savior. And so he was a pattern unto those who should believe on Christ unto everlasting life. A pattern. But then he uses the word pattern again in our version translated form. He said. We have had entrusted to us or committed to us. A line of PG and he said you should have or hold or possess a form of sound words, which you have heard of me. That word form is the same word as the word pattern. So we have now in this earthen vessel himself and the way in which the Lord dealt with him and the truth that was entrusted to him, the form and the pattern. And did we go a stage further and we find that he uses this. Sort of idea about himself in more passages than one.

[00:07:34] Let's turn to one, Timothy. Oh, I've just given you those the pattern. One Timothy 116 and two. Timothy 310. That's the pattern and the form. But one other passage that expands it rather, is Philippians, chapter four, Philippians Chapter four. I don't know whether you have any intimate friends. Those of you who are listening to me, but I wonder how many of your most intimate friends would be able to say anything comparable to Philippians four, verse nine. Prefaced by verse eight. Philippians four, verse eight and nine. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true whatsoever. Things are honest. Adorable. You listen to the radio, but they've been discussing the question of honesty. How many people use the firm's envelopes and stationery and telephones and stamps and never think about it and all that sort of thing. Honesty is a word that's used here. Whatever things are. Just. Whatsoever. Things are pure whatsoever. Things are lovely. Whatever things are. Good report. If there be any virtue and if there be any praise, not merely think on these things, but impute and reckon them. That is to say, don't have an eye always for the evil. But haven't I also for that which may be pure and honest and good report, don't always be finding the fault and never giving a word of praise. That's the idea. But what I'm feeling is this. Look at this preparation for what comes next.

[00:09:23] Let me say the words again quickly. True, honest. Just pure, lovely. Good report. Then he says those things which he had both learned. And received. And heard and seen. Why that man? Had to walk. With great care, didn't he, to adorn the doctrine of God, his saviour. Look at the way he says that he's been inspected. Bye, folks. Those things which ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in me. To. Do. To be able to say that, not merely listen to the truth that I preach, but he says, do the things that I do. And as a consequence. The peace of God. She'll be with you. Well, that's the earthen vessel. So we cannot despise the earthen vessel. We cannot set him aside. He himself would agree that the treasure that was entrusted to him was the most important, and the vessel didn't matter much. But all the Lord picked out this man and he chose it. And he made him so that his very life itself should adorn the doctrine of God, his Savior, as well as be the channel through which it flowed. So we have that emphasis. Now the next is this that he had one title. Which was not given to every preacher or every servant or every one that was a vessel. And that is the word apostle. You know, there are the 12 apostles of the lamb and their names are to be seen as you read the book of the Revelation on the 12 Foundations of the New Jerusalem.

[00:11:35] But the Apostle Paul's name will not be there. The gates of the city of the New Jerusalem are one pearl, and they have the name of Israel upon them. The apostle Paul would not be there, but he. I said. That he was an apostle. Peculiarly sent not by Christ who walked the earth. I do I remind you that the Matthew the Savior himself called unto himself these 12 men. And then use a given. One of them turned out to be Judas who betrayed him. But when you come to the epistle, to the Ephesians Chapter four. You're told that when he ascended. He gave gifts to men and tells you what the gifts were. He gave some apostles. What are the Ascended? Christ had already given 12 apostles while he was on Earth. So the apostles that he gave after he ascended must be a new order. And Paul was the first of them. And he was the most important one. Here we have then the apostle. Now we use the word apostle, or we more or less know what it means. But it's good for us to remember that it's composed of two parts. Apo means away from and Stello means to send. It means someone who is sent to represent somebody else. And so he says in the epistle later on.

[00:13:15] He was an ambassador. In bonds or in a child and ambassador, one who was sent on a perhaps a very important mission to represent a government or whatnot. That's an apostle. Now, I remember years ago once saying about the greatest of the apostles, and somebody said, Oh, I know who you're going to say. I see who the Apostle Paul said No. Oh, he said, You surprise me. I thought you would have immediately said Paul was the greatest of the apostles. I said, Well, as far as I know, the apostle has said otherwise when you turn to Hebrews Chapter three. I'm just making sure that we see this fact. Hebrews Chapter three Wherefore Holy brethren Partakers of the heavenly calling. Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession. Christ Jesus. So he is the the apostle. Now, you remember he said to them when he chose them in Matthew's gospel that he sent is it has the father has sent me. So I send you. He that receiveth you receiveth me and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. So that is a direct connection between the apostle who was sent, whether on earth or from heaven, with the one that sent him. And if you look as I think perhaps you might like to glimpse at that great chapter, John 17, you'll find that it's practically punctuated by this word send. So important it is in the estimate of our Lord.

[00:15:02] If ever there was a time when our savior was in earnest, of course I'm only speaking after the manner of men. It was in this passage, he says. It says he lifted up his eyes and said, Father, the hour is come. The average outcome. Now, would he say

over and over and over again, I've got these verses just to jog my memory. Verse three, verse nine, verse 18, verse 23 to 25. His hour had come. The cross was very near. And yet running through this chapter is this one word that gives us the word apostle saint. Let's look at it then verse three. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Do you remember a man was told to go and wash in the pool of Siloam and receive his sight. And John goes out of his way to tell you that that word means sent. Doesn't tell you why, but it looks as though he was conscious that he was a word that was of importance. And if God had never set his son free. There will be no Chapel of the Open book. There will be no redeemed of the Lord. There will be no possibility of a tape recording the Bible message, for there wouldn't be one. Christ is the key. And the Father sent the Son to be the savior of the world is the way which John puts it in his epistle, the Saint one.

[00:16:42] And so we have in this John 17 I'll read the other verses. I've got the passage out in verse nine. I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them that thou has given me, for they are thine. Oh, I missed the verse there somewhere. What is it? Verse eight. Oh, yes. At the end of verse eight. That's right. And they have believed that thou didst send me. So it looks as though it was a real part of their faith. Thou they have believed that thou hast sent me. And in verse 18, Am I right there? I hope I am as thou hast sent me into the world. Now here comes the point. Even so, have I also sent them into the world? So these apostles cannot be treated lightly. They are representing him even as he, in the fullness of the word, represented the one that sent him. And verses 23 onwards I in them and thou in me that they may be made perfect in one that the world may know that thou hast sent me. That the world may know that thou hast sent me and you will find it is repeated again further down. So here we have the idea. It wasn't that the Apostle Paul made up his mind that he'd go in, as I've heard people say, for the ministry.

[00:18:05] Odo. He was saint. And when the Lord sends a person, it's rather awkward for you if you stand in his way. Friends. He by being himself poor and weak. But the one that's behind him gives him a power that you cannot withstand. So he is the apostle. Look at the list that he gives you. One epistle. Pretty well drowned. Starved. Died in the day, in the deep. He kills you. Robbers. False brethren. Beaten with rods. Beaten with stripes in prisons oft. Look at this. And yet, in spite of it all, they couldn't crush. They couldn't stop their earthen vessel. So there was a power beyond the idea of name

upholding it. The power of the risen Christ who will be represented. Now, this man is called, among other things, as he takes to himself. The word a preacher. And the first word that comes to our minds is the word an evangelizer. That's one of the words for preaching. To be a bearer of good news and of scripture speaks about how blessed are the feet of they that publish the gospel of peace. They are the same ones. So the apostle Paul is one of those blessed ones in a very marked way. But then there's another word translated preach, which we do well to give hearing. And the one that I want you to notice is in first Timothy and two Timothy. First Timothy two seven.

[00:19:52] First Timothy two seven. Speaking of himself. He in verse five, for there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time. Whereunto. I am ordained a preacher. Now, that is not the word evangelizer. It's the word that means a herald. He makes a proclamation, and when the Herald makes a proclamation, he doesn't ask you whether you will very kindly believe it or not. You'll have to look out if you don't. This is not merely coming down and pleading with somebody to believe what you're saying. You make a proclamation that's been given you from heaven and woe unto the man who hears it and turns it aside. You might like to look up the word rooks in the key upper The Herald and the Herald, which is used of this Apostle and his ministry. In two Timothy Chapter 111. While we've got them in front of us, we have the same word repeated. He says in verse eight of Chapter one Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Nor of me, his prisoner. You see the two together? He is the vessel. How do we know the testimony of our Lord? We know it through the earthen vessel. Nor only his prisoner. But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

[00:21:53] Whereunto, I am appointed a preacher. I couldn't help but read that preface. That's what he was a preacher to make known. Look at the magnificence of it. The one mediator. The grace. The purpose. The gift of immortality. Whereunto. I am appointed a preacher. An apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles. Oh, you got a very hard job there, Paul. For which? Cause I also suffer these things You need not envy, Paul, except envy

his faithfulness. For if ever a man was tested to the utmost, it was this man of God. And if ever the grace of God was manifested to the utmost, it was the support of this man of God. One of the verses I think that's surprising is to read the list of his sufferings. He Corinthians, they're almost unbelievable. But the bit that's so marvelous is when he comes to the conclusion and says, Be ye. Therefore followers of me picture men saying you've been half drowned and half starved and beaten with rods and I don't know what. Be ye followers of me for he meant to say that in spite of all that this world could do, there's nothing in comparison with the glory that you've revealed in us.

[00:23:27] When that day comes, that was his attitude. That should be or could be ours. So we have him, the preacher, the Herald, the ambassador, the apostle and the evangelizer who bears good news. We get certain features in the scriptures, especially the epistles, which most of us would be very, very sad. To miss. What should we do without the epistle to the Romans and the epistle to the Galatians as we felt and try to discover our standing before God? Think of the emphasis upon justification by faith without works spoken by a man who could boast that touching the righteous requirements of the law, he was blameless. You see the character of the man. Instead of saying all we can understand, you don't have very much hope for glory. You know what an awful wretch you've lived. But he said I was blameless. Touching the righteous requirements of the law. I was blameless. And yet when his eyes were opened, he said I counted so much refuse that I might be found in him not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is the righteousness of God through faith in Christ. Aren't we glad that this earthen vessel contained such a treasure? And it will be. Think of other aspects of our calling. How many times have we said, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, spiritual blessings, heavenly places? Far above all, principality and power.

[00:25:28] Well, where do we get that? We get it through this earthen vessel. The Apostle Paul. There's nowhere else in the whole range of scripture to which you can turn to find that calling. He says to me, has been entrusted this revelation of the mystery which has been hidden in God and now may now. So did you see? It's not possible for us to say we could do without the Apostle Paul. We're setting aside the very glory of the New Testament by so doing. I'm not saying you do, but let's. Let's realize it as we should. Or again. As he says, thinking of the way in which he has brought marvelous

revelations before us. We have this treasure. Treasure? It is a treasure, isn't it? You remember there's one hymn. I'm not going to say who wrote it? But it says this word of God. Oh, what a treasure. In the written word we find. Do we not, friends? And where shall we go for this treasure that belongs to the Gentile believer, The poor outsider. We go to this man who was a bigoted Pharisee. And yet, through that man brought down as he was by grace, and then lifted up by the Saint Grace to be an earthen vessel, to bring the knowledge of salvation and all its accompaniments to us.

[00:26:58] What I want to deal a little bit more with other phases is the card that you have in front of you speaks about Tarsus are no mean city and we mustn't forget that God who chooses a man is not, as it were, unconscious of where the man lived. You could believe that he knew and was sure that he was going to be born in Tarsus. You remember we had read at the beginning of this meeting Galatians chapter one, and he said that he was chosen from his mother's womb. He didn't know about it. He was separated at his very birth. And so we'll look at 1 or 2 of the accompaniments of this man to see how he was fitted not merely by grace and not merely in the spirit, but fitted in other ways for the task that God had laid upon him. First of all. He was. He speaks about Tarsus in Cilicia. Now we spell the word Cilicia with a with a letter C. But Cilicia was spelt with the letter K. We spell Cappadocia with a C, but it was spelt with K, and we spell one other word with a K just the same. I just want to make sure I don't misquote. Crete with a K. Now, they were written about by the writers of their day who were not Christians at all, but were heathen philosophers.

[00:28:32] They spoke about these unspeakable, infamous caves, Cappadocia, Cilicia and Crete. And Saul of Tarsus was born in Cilicia. One of the infamous in the eyes of the Idolatrous. Romans infamous places on Earth. In that city, there was a statue raised to the memory of Sardanapalus. I'm not so much concerned in discovering who Sardanapalus was and what he did as to remind myself and you of an inscription that was written at the base of that statue. Now, Paul, as a boy, would have read that, and Paul as a young man would have read that it was like going into Trafalgar Square and there's Nelson and you would have a reminder of Trafalgar. Now I'm going to read you the inscription that was written around this statute. And I'm sure a passage will come into your mind in a moment. I'll read it and you'll say, that's what the Apostle Paul thought. This is what was written around that statute. Drink. Enjoy thyself. The rest is nothings. Now, that's what was in that city, that castles, that city of Laodicea, where that

earthen vessel was brought up as a boy and a young man there in the middle of that city, was that hopeless message. Eat. Drink and be merry For tomorrow we die. So do who you say. That sounds a bit like what he wrote. Yes. Let's turn to one Corinthians 15 and see how that has been resolved by him.

[00:30:26] That was in the back of his mind when he wrote these words. One Corinthians 15, The Great Resurrection Chapter. Let's start looking at verse. Or shall we say 20, 29, 30, a bit bit earlier, he says. Oh, about the that God shall be all in all else. What shall I do which are baptized for the dead if the dead rise? Not at all. Why are they baptized? For the dead. All this has become a basis for a very easy line of teaching. Those who are connected with the Mormons, whose great center is Utah? You can. If you believe this idea, you could pay a certain fee and you could be baptized for one of your ancestors. You could be baptized for the dead. And they have the greatest, biggest library of genealogies that anywhere in the world there. Because for all over the world, people who believe this idea have paid their money and baptized for one of their ancestors. Now you say, well, the apostle Paul says they're baptized for the dead. Well, they haven't quite read it properly. Let's try it again. Else what shall they do which are baptized? You say, Well, what's that mean? Well, friends, nobody is violently persecuted and thrown into prison or put to death because they happen to be baptized today. But in the beginning of the gospel, it marked them out immediately and some of them faced the lions in the arena.

[00:32:19] He said, What should I do? Which are baptized for the dead if the dead rise not. Why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy? You see, he's explaining what he means. Why stand we in jeopardy every hour? If the dead rise. Not so, he says. You might as well. And as it says in verse 30, if after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it me if the dead rise not let us eat and drink for tomorrow? We die. And there was a reminiscence of what that man had seen in his own native city. Sardanapalus. I'll read the words again. Drink. Enjoy thyself. The rest is nothing. Now, a good many folks would stand you out that it says in this passage. Eat, drink and be merry. Have you got your Bibles open? Well, you can't find the word Mary there, can you? It isn't there. It's borrowed from another passage altogether. So the poor wretches you see there can't even be merry in their little life. Here, let's eat and drink. For tomorrow. We die. Although he knew on that statue, it said, Enjoy yourself. He knew full well there was no joy apart from Christ. In

this world. So we have the stress of the resurrection. Then let's look again at this reference to Tarsus. Should we look at Acts 16 just to see how this fits into the story? Acts 16 and verse 21.

[00:34:30] It says he brought these men. They teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe being Romans. You know, there's a great emphasis on the extreme value in those early days of being a Roman citizen. It didn't mean to say you were Italian in your birth. You could be Greek. You could be any nationality and you could be a Roman citizen. And it was a prize to be valued. And in 22 of the same acts of the apostles, 22 verses 25, you'll find a reference again. And as they bound him with thongs, Paul is now a prisoner. Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned? That is a Roman. The moment he said those words the centurion heard and then went off quickly, you can feel and said to the captain, Take heed. What a twist. This man is a Roman. Then the chief captain came and said to him, Tell me, Art thou a Roman? He said, Yes. Did you see when the Lord shows the Apostle Paul, he knew what he was doing, didn't he? He shows a man who was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but he chose a man who was a Roman citizen at the same time. How are you seeking the work that God was giving you to do? Wasn't it? So we have here and the chief captain answered with great sun obtained I this freedom it could be bought.

[00:36:16] What was the apostle's answer? Paul said I was born free. He was a Roman citizen. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was a trusted member of the Sanhedrin. As we are told, he received orders from the high priest and carried them out or sought to carry them out. That was the man that the Lord chose. So you see, it's a little bit of a counter to the idea that only those who followed Christ and became his apostles were just fishermen and tax gatherers and all that sort of thing. This was a man of a class. This was a man of standing. And we have to discover a bit more presently as to his fitness for the work. But let that pass. We are told again in another part of scripture that. What does it say to him? Could you speak Greek? Oh, he said yes. The very next chapter says he goes out and speaks. When they heard him speak in the Hebrew tongue, they gave him audience so he could speak Greek. He could speak Hebrew, But he was a Roman citizen and he was a Pharisee and one who knew all the ins and outs of government in connection with Israel. And the Lord could have done without it all, of course.

[00:37:37] But he doesn't do those things. There's a thickness about the person and all. What a wonderful way in which you lay it at the feet of His Lord that all those abilities that he had, whether it be in language or in upbringing or in his training or in everything else, temperament was laid at his feet that he may be an earthen vessel. Meat for the master's use. The special fitness for this man is stressed by one word that we had in our reading. Separated. I think we've just got time to give that a little place because it has a bearing. You remember the passage. It says that God had separated him from his birth, but there came a time when it was made known in the church. If you look at Acts 13, Acts 13, they were meeting together in the church and you're told verse one now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers. As Barnabas and Simeon that was called Niger and Lucius of Cyrene and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch. And so he comes in as a bit thrown in at the end. Just and so it's very much like the first chapter. There were two men before put before the Lord as to who should take the place of the apostle that had fallen out. And you could almost feel they were going to be sure that the one that was put first was the one they thought.

[00:39:16] But the lot fell upon the other man entirely. So he is again. And so like that, that's the way in which he is introduced here. And as they minister to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me, Barnabas and Saul for the work Whereunto I've called them. And in this 13th chapter you have the beginnings of his great different ministry from that which had been up to that moment in the acts of the Apostles. Just a word in verse 26 Men and Brethren. While Peter stood up in the days of the Pentecost and said men and brethren. But he didn't include a Gentile when he said that men and brethren. And the apostle says children of the stock of Abraham. So he does include Jews here. But he goes on to say, and whosoever among you fearest God to you is the word of this salvation sent. And so we find that they were gentiles because later on they they when the Jews had gone out of the synagogue, verse 42, the Gentiles besought, that these words might be preached to them the next and next Sabbath. So we have this man separated. And the next point of with which I think our time is practically up. The next point will be found in Romans, the first chapter where he puts this right at the beginning.

[00:40:40] Let's just look. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God. Now, on the card that you have in front of you, you will see that there is a reference to being zealous for the traditions, Jewish religion. And we shall have to give the second half of this card consideration next time, because I want to deal particularly with what it meant to be a Pharisee, because sometimes we got peculiar ideas about these things and we want to get them straightened. So here we have a man who was separated, and I should have to say this again. I just finish that. This man, I can I can sense as I read some of his writings, he had that little idea of just playing with a word because of its sound. And the word Pharisee is an Aramaic word, not Greek, just Aramaic. And it means a separated one. And the word for separated is aphorism in this chapter. Don't you hear it? You could almost think the Apostle Paul says yes. Once of a Pharisee said unto the law of works. And now I'm Pharisee, said unto the gospel of grace. So we leave it there and pick up our story next time we meet together and continue our analysis of the earthen vessel rejoicing all the time for the treasure that been conveyed to US Gentiles through his ministry.