

W468_Saul_that_is_called_Paul_4.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book and is number two of the series entitled Saul, who also is called Paul. Those of you who have the little card that goes with this tape recording will see that six out of the seven headings all commence with the letter C, his character, his conversion, his calling, his commission, his contemporaries, his companions. And then there's one extra, his traducers. Della could, but I did not make a capital C to cover those six because you should realize that his character and his conversion and his calling the other speeches all commence with Christ. That's the grand characteristic of the Apostle Paul. We may left out many things with regard to his character. But ultimately, as the apostle of Jesus Christ, he said, For me to live is Christ. And we could realize that he wasn't using Amelia poetic term. It was really so. That the life and outliving the flesh. I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. And that is conversion. There was no meeting arranged. He didn't hear some popular preacher. He was suddenly stricken down on the road to Damascus. And he said, Lord. What would have been. To do. That was the immediate consequence of meeting the risen Christ, as it were, in that glorious vision when he was out to bring back to Damascus those who love to believe that very night.

[00:01:57] And shall we go through his character? He is calling. He maintained that he was called by Jesus Christ. Said he was an apostle chosen by him. But he didn't go up to Jerusalem. He was already commissioned and as it says, he went into Arabia. Why did he go into Arabia? Well, for one reason it was evident he wasn't going into Jerusalem. He'd already received a consciousness that his apostleship was a separate one. He was not one of the 12. If you read in the Gospel, according to Matthew, the 12 apostles were appointed by Christ while he was on Earth down here. But the Apostle Paul belonged to another group of apostles. He says when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and he gave gifts unto men and he gave some apostles. Well, if you're consistent, you can't make the apostles that are given by the Ascended Christ exactly the same as those who were chosen by him when he walked the Earth. So we have a distinct order of apostles, starting with the apostle Paul himself. Added We have. Those who were his contemporaries, those with whom he witnessed, and they also are prominent in their standing for Christ, as we shall see in a moment. I hope. Let's now give these a little bit more careful consideration, shall we? These character. Why was it necessary that his character should be introduced? Well, he particularly emphasizes

that he was not one who stood up and preached the gospel and said to his congregation, Now don't you do what I do.

[00:03:54] You just do what I tell you. I think he would have blasted anyone who had that sort of message to give. He continually sought to arrange his manner of life with the doctrine he preached. And of course, that is the ideal that should be before each one of us. Whether any one of us could stand up and say, that's me to a T is another question, but certainly it should be before us. So he says. For me to live is Christ. And then because he had that attitude of mind, he uses a particular word once it's translated pattern A once it's translated form, but is exactly the same word in both cases, he said My conversion and what subsequently followed is a pattern to those who should afterward believe. And he said, Hold fast a form or a pattern of sound words which were heard of me. So there's the man. His manner of life is conversion and he's teaching all. Wouldn't it be splendid if that were the thing that we were charged with? Whether they like our teaching or not. Or to think that anyone would have to say, But we must make this this admission. They do live up to what they supposed to believe. That's the cry need, I think, not only in one place, but in all places where there are those gathered together with the name of Christ as exalted in their midst.

[00:05:23] So we have his character and the character. Impressed is the pattern and the form. The word has a wider use in classical use this word pattern and form. It meant the initial sketch before the finished design. Now, I don't know whether you have anything to do with designing. I mean to say with a pen, a brush and a pencil. But I don't think anybody ever sat down with a drawing board and a t-square and started straight away the first line of his design to be finished. It one touched only he would make a few rough sketches. First, he would realise the balance needed to be corrected here and there. He needed some more bolder line here. And then when he got it, he did his design. So he said, You look at me, don't make me a mere copy. But inasmuch as I've sought to serve the Lord with singleness of mind and inasmuch as I have done what he called me to do, you won't go very far wrong if you begin to model yourself upon the pattern which has been set before you by his grace. And I think that is what we can be sure about in connection with this apostle Paul himself. You remember his one occasion where he gives a long list of sufferings, shipwrecked and persecuted and beaten and starving and whatnot, and he ends up by saying, Be ye, therefore, followers of me.

[00:06:54] What a statement to make as I am of Christ. That makes the difference, isn't it? So he's not saying If you'll only follow me, you'll have a very fine time. Everybody will honor you. He says the chances are they won't. But if your once if you once have the approbation of the risen Christ, it will make up for all the things that you may have to endure or go without in this present life. That's the man that is left is impressed upon the Ministry of Christ to the Gentiles. The apostle who was sent to you and to me. That's his character. His conversion. Is a very wonderful one, but it's a very human one. The people of Israel were given by the law of Moses the right to stone a person for certain crimes or wrong practices. They did it without having to go to a court and a judge and a jury. And they did it in the case with these with Stephen. He was teaching them some things which they couldn't tolerate, and they stoned him. And there was one who was rather a prominent man in the administration of affairs in Jerusalem. His name was Saul of Tarsus. He was holding the clothes of those who did it. That is to say, he was endorsing it and and practically giving his.

[00:08:25] Verdict that this was the right thing. And yet, you see, he couldn't help but realize that that Stephen had gone right through the history of the children of Israel. He hadn't departed from the book. He had pointed out some very solemn facts. A deputy saw his face like an angel, and he heard him say, Lord, Lay, not this scene to their charge. And then he heard him say, I see Jesus at the right hand of God. Lord, receive my spirit. That they couldn't get that out of his mind. That was sort of Tarsus hearing that. Well, what are the things which human nature sometimes does is to stifle a conscience by being loaded with work. That's what the apostle did immediately after the record of the stoning of Stephen, we read Now Saul was consenting unto his death and he went to the elders and leaders at Jerusalem for permission to go to Damascus and bring all those who believed the faith heresy back to Jerusalem that they may be punished and some of them put to death. That was. That was why he was troubled already. We speak about Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus. True. But it started at the stoning of Stephen. And as what? Rather one of the things that we find in life. They accused Stephen and Paul was consenting, that it was right that he changed the custom of Moses.

[00:09:57] And later on you read the almost the identical words were used against Paul himself that he was changing the custom of Moses. There was a riot against him as well as there was the opposition against even. And shall we have his? And character and we

have his conversion. The Lord spoke to him and said it is hard for these two to kick against the pricks. Now the word refers to an ox goad a very thin lance. And you read in the Old Testament of a backsliding heifer. Now, I've had very little to do with a farm, but I know that that has to do with cattle. And when they had the yoke of oxen in front of them, they didn't use a whip to make them go, but they used something to stop them from giving. And that was a thin lance that was resting on the wooden framework and there were many inches away from it if they were pulling. But if they did that, they went back onto this point and said, The Lord, that's what you're doing, Saul. You're drawing back. You you're going back and you're kicking against the goads. You know you're wrong. And the backsliding heifer would come into Paul's mind and he would realize how true that statement was. And then we have. His own testimony in the 22nd chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which I think we might give a word to.

[00:11:33] It's one thing for me to say what I think about his conversion. It's another thing to hear him say it for himself. Acts 22. Men, brethren and fathers Hear ye My defense, which I make now unto you. And when they heard that he spoke in the Hebrew tongue, Is he? Earlier, the men said to him, Canst thou speak Greek? Yes, he said. He goes out and speaks Hebrew. This was the qualification of this man. He could speak Hebrew. He could speak Greek. He could speak Latin. So he was made all things to all men in that sense. And when they heard that he spoke in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence. And he said, I am verily a man which am a Jew. Born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the Peter Camejo. Now, Gabriel is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and he has a very fine record in the writings of the Jews at that time. He was a great teacher and the apostle Paul had been brought up at his feet. So that was another claim. And taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers and was zealous toward God as ye all are this day. He said, I know how you feel. I can sympathize with it. I was exactly the same condition. And I persecuted this way unto the death binding and delivering unto prison both men and women, as also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders from who also received letters unto the Brethren and went to Damascus to bring them, which were bound unto Jerusalem for to be punished.

[00:13:24] And then he goes on to say about the light that shone upon him on the road, the words that he received, the way he was brought back and so on. And Ananias came to him. And you'll notice in verse 13, I think the word that broke the apostle's heart

nearly not in wrong sense, but in a right sense. Ananias was sent and Ananias said, Well, this this man, he says, who is a dreadful man. And I man and I said, according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there. Verse 13 came unto me, said the Apostle Paul, and stood and said unto me, brother. So are the feeling that that finish the Apostle Paul and Andrew was depicted about coming to him as he said, you know, he's a great persecutor, but he said, you go to him. He's blind. He's still suffering from that dreadful vision or the vision that was not dreadful, but so awful in its intensity. He's blind. Now you go to him and the first word that Saul ever heard after his conversion was the word brother.

[00:14:37] Isn't that fine? To think that this man had that grace. Brother Saul. The god of our fathers. Oh, it says it came to me and stood and said, I'll be brothers. All receive thy sight. And so we have a feeling that the Apostle Paul was always suffering from this question of short, bad sight. Fortunately, in this land, we don't see people walking about our streets suffering from ophthalmia in the sense that it was known in the days of Paul. I think next to a leper. They. They presented an awful sight. I do remember writing to the Galatians. He used an extraordinary expression to them. He said When I came unto you. You did not. Now I'm going to give her a literal translation. You did not spit me out. But why should he use such as an expression as that? Unless he wanted to indicate he was allowed some sort of object? But you said you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. Well, that's an ordinary, extraordinary thing for a man to say, but that's what he said. What are the suffering with this ophthalmia? Having been blinded on the road to Damascus, it left its mark upon me. You received me as an angel of God. And then at the end of Galatians, he says, You see, now I have to give the literal rendering. You see with what large letters I have written unto you, it's not as it comes in the authorized version.

[00:16:19] You see what a long epistle I've written unto you, because it's a short one. But it says, You see, with what large characters are written unto you, this bit at the end is appealing to them. And here was this man. Commissioned by the Lord to be the apostle to the Gentiles with his extraordinary limitation. The emphasized. It's not me, but the grace of God that was in me. Now, it doesn't mean to say that every one of us have got to be afflicted in that same sense. But I suppose most of us are very conscious if we don't talk about it to other folks, that we've got our limitations. And if we don't talk about it or believe it, those who have to live with us or work with us, they're very conscious of

our limitations. But isn't it wonderful also to know that with all those limitations. Known or unknown, the grace of Christ was all sufficient for this man to. Carry out the work entrusted to him. And what a debt we owe to him that he was faithful to his commission. So we have his character, his conversion, his calling. Then I've got the word, his commission, as I've already hinted. It's emphasized in Galatians chapter one. I went not up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me that are waiting to Arabia. I don't know why writers on the epistle to the Galatians haven't recognized those three little words that come there.

[00:17:53] I've never seen it in any commentary, but they're standing out waiting for you. And I mention it because some of you who are listening to this tape recording may not have had your notice drawn to it. The folks I'm speaking to in the chapel says, Oh, here it comes again. Not neither, But that comes three times in the opening chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ. The gospel, which you hear me preach, was not taught me by men neither, but by the revelation of God. And I went not up to Jerusalem, neither to those who were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia. There we have in that half chapter Paul's independent Apostleship. Paul's independent received gospel and Paul's Independent Commission. That's the man that was separated unto the Gospel of God, for you and for me, Gentiles. And he had orthodox Pharisee, Jew by nature. These companions also are an index of the lens character. I suppose that's true of all of us. The people that we gravitate to are give a good index as to what sort of people we are. Barnabas. Timothy. Cyrus. Luke. The beloved physician. And so we have these beds gathering around the apostle Paul. The very shocking thing to read in the acts of the apostles that they had such a conflict once over a relative.

[00:19:50] The word in the Greek is paroxysm. They are just a rattle that they parted. Barnabas and Paul parted because he wanted to bring his nephew back again into the ministry. And Paul says, No, we don't want a man with that who gets frightened out of his wits and runs away and leaves us. So did you see Paul had to had these experiences that most of us have had to face some time or another, a personal friendship or loyalty to Christ. But it doesn't excuse us if we have such a gigantic row that the Spirit of God has to use the word paroxysm about it. But it is most evident that it was no trifling matter with him. He felt deeply the trust that was his, and he would defend him against all odds. So if he was rather hard on somebody else, we must admit

it was very hard upon himself. And that may excuse him to a large extent. I don't think I need apologize for the Apostle Paul. Not I don't I don't know. How about you? But if we were anywhere near his standard, it would be a wonderful witness, wouldn't it, that he is so needed and so necessary. And then again, we have not only so, but we have the powers that be. Would you turn to the. I think it's Luke's gospel, just by way of illustration of what I want to say, Chapter three.

[00:21:16] Chapter three. Now in the 15th year. Of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being Tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip Tetrarch of Iulia, and of the region of Trachonitis and Lysanias, the Tetrarch of Abilene. Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests. Look at the way that is pinpointed. Is there any part of our own history in this land that is so definitely pinpointed that we can't miss it? Look at the accumulation that if he went wrong in any one particular, it would be evident. That's the way, Luke. It reduces his theme. And in other part, you find that there are references. Historic references. So that I think it's worthwhile remembering this, that it's not merely an imagination of the mind. It is recording that which actually has taken place. I think we have a great variety of those who have been brought into contact with the Apostle Paul. Roman rulers. He's had to deal with them. Greek philosophers. He's had to do with them. And, you know, they express their first opinion about him. He coming to Athens, the city of the philosophers, they said, come and hear what this babbler preaches or speak it. And the word babbler is literally the word. A seed picker and a seed picker was the way they described a sparrow. So they said covetous of this sparrow, as Shakespeare put it, this snapper up of unconsidered trifles.

[00:23:10] He's coming to teach us. And if that is the approach of the apostle Paul, he didn't go straight out. He said, you know, as I came on my way, I observed an altar to the unknown God. Now, if you could place yourself where he was in the marketplace at Athens. We are told that it was surrounded by groups of deities all the way around a god and a goddess. And those people said he said a fourth of a strange gods. He is speaking about Jesus and Anastasia. Jesus and Anastasia. Oh, that's Jesus and the resurrection. But they said, Oh, he's got another couple of gods, a god and a goddess. The actor addition to all that, he said, Look, I came along and found that although one of your own historians said it was easier to find a god than a man in the streets of Athens because there were so many of them. He said, You're still uncertain. You could an unknown God. Well, that isn't the Bible you eagerly worship. I'll explain to you. Then he

goes on and quotes a bit of their own philosophy. God doesn't dwell in temples made by hands and so on. So here was a man fitted for his job, you see. He was given grace to be able to speak to the Jew in his own language and appeal to them.

[00:24:35] He could say to them, I know just where you are. You are a Pharisee. So was I. You are under the law of Moses. So was I. I boasted that I had a righteousness which was indefectible. But it's all gone because now I belong to a redeemer who has given me a righteous standing before God. That nothing that I could ever do as a Pharisee can compare. Then he goes to these philosophers and he speaks to them, and he still speaks of the one that matters most. Jesus and the resurrection. The person and that triumphant work, without which salvation, of course, never reaches its goal. So here's the man that is before us, Saul, who was also called Paul. And he as a right, surely by the fact that he was so given grace to draw attention to himself and say, Now you follow thee as I follow Christ. There's one passage that I often turn to. I've done it in this chapel many times, but it always is a marvel to me that a man could so live as to be able to say to those like he did to the Philippians. And. Verse eight. Chapter four, verse eight. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true whatsoever. Things are honest whatsoever. Things are just whatsoever. Things are pure whatsoever. Things are lovely whatsoever. Things are of good. Report if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, not merely think on these things, but impute them, reckon them.

[00:26:31] But that's not my point for the moment. Let me go through these words again. A honest, true, honest, pure, lovely. Good report. Virtue Praiseworthy. Now, what are you going to say? The next verse. Those things which ye have both learned and received and heard in me do. What? An introduction to his own character. If the man wasn't absolutely true and right, what a boasting thing this would be. But you could say those words and then end up by saying those things which ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in me do. And the God of peace shall be with you. Earlier he spoke about the peace of God in verse seven. It's one thing for us to have the peace of God for that's given you as a gift through the sacrifice of Christ. It's another thing to have the God of peace with you on the terms that the apostles put it here. And that shows you that there is a wonderful fruit that can grow from that root that have been planted in love. And so we have this emphasis of the apostle. It says. Another thing about him, he has a stand, which was to be a very great trial. Demas has forsaken me. And then he could say, Only Luke is with me. The one man that stood by the Apostle

right the way through all the stormy times until his death was Luke the beloved physician.

[00:28:26] We don't know just how far Luke was qualified as a doctor. They had their physicians and they had their medicines. They had their treatments. And some of them are rather crude. But I was very interested to discover that 200 years before Christ, one of the Greek physicians used aspirin, but they didn't call it that. You see, the aspirin is only salicylic acid properly treated and salicylic comes from the willow plant. So what they did with the willow plant, we don't know, but they used it. And there was a primitive method of medicine. And Luke, although he must have been a godsend to the apostles, sometimes with his weakness and his breaking down and his sickness and whatnot. Look at the things the man went through. And here was Luke. Thank God for Luke. Only Luke is with me. De masse has forsaken me. So he knew what it was to have a faithful friend. He knew what it was to be deserted. He says, I know all these things. I've lived through them all so that I may be able to minister to you. There's one thing you could never say to the Apostle Paul. Well, you don't know what you're talking about. It's all very well for a person to stand up in a pulpit and tell other people how they got to live. It's another thing to be able to say with some measure of truth.

[00:29:47] And I'm telling you what I do myself. That's the thing that counts most. Don't think I'm saying that of myself. I'm only telling you that, you see? And so we have these others. And then we have one given to him in a special measure. He speaks of Timothy as his son. Now, there's a great controversy among students of scripture about Paul, but there's no controversy so far as I'm concerned. For if the apostle Paul was a stickler for the rabbinical law, then it was impossible for him not to be a married man. For it's written in their law that the man who lives after the age of 21, who is not married, is living in sin. And that was a part of the law that that Paul himself said he sought to keep. But there's a very great possibility that he was a widower and so lost his wife. But he was free then without any links to travel about all over the place. It may have been, but the one thing that he did miss possibly was made up to him by Timothy. Timothy, my son. Now, sometimes he was very anxious about Timothy. Well, that's what a son is for, to make his father wake up a bit. It wasn't all plain sailing, but he had that homely element about him. The homeless apostle. He had a son given to him.

[00:31:16] And what love there is manifested between that older man and that younger man. Timothy, his son in the faith. I think we have his emphasis upon these scriptures. I've got it written on this card. Doctrine and practice are related the scriptures with biography. Someone has said that justification walks about on the feet of Abraham in Paul's ministry. Well, you know how he appeals to Abraham, who was justified by faith. To him, Adam was a real, living person. And involved his seed. The only one that ever tells us that Christ is the second man and the last Adam is the Apostle Paul. So we get him going back to these Old Testament passages and characters and emphasizing the fact that they were living and that they were intended to teach lessons. I have here in front of me. Just a. A bit. It's it's in a book entitled Who then Is Paul written by somebody connected with his chap or what? I won't say who. It says in Acts 19 and it says it Acts 28. A little set of things that makes you see that the division that was coming at Acts 28 was beginning to take its shape before it actually came to pass. Now, at Ephesus, he went into the synagogue in Acts 28. They came unto his lodging. In Ephesus. They disputed a disputed and persuaded things concerning the Kingdom of God. In Acts 28, he expounded the Kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus.

[00:33:15] He was there for the space of three months at Ephesus, and he was there only from morning till evening at Acts 28, when divers were hardened and believed not. He departed Acts 28. Some believed. Some believed not. They agreed not. They departed. Divers were hardened in Acts 19 and their heart was waxed gross. In Acts 28. And so it says for the space of two years, he was there at Ephesus, and Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house in the record in Acts 28. All in Asia heard the Word of God at Ephesus. All that came unto him in his prison heard the Word of God again. And it was the word of the Lord Jesus at Ephesus. And it was the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ in Acts 28. And special miracles were wrought, but no miracles in Acts 28. After that, miraculous power ceased. No miracles, no laying on of hands, no opening the eyes of the blind, no healing. But right up till then, the Apostle had the power. He picked up a serpent. And they're all expecting you to drop dead and just put it to one side. He laid his hands on a man who was suffering from dysentery and he healed him. That mark 16. They shall take up serpents. I shall lay their hands. It was their right to the last chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

[00:34:46] I did cease. And the Lord was magnified at Ephesus. And the apostle. Is now preparing to write the epistle to the Ephesians as the first. First part of the scriptures belonging to this new calling. Well, now there are so many features that are claiming attention. I don't know how far I ought to go on, but I did have a piece here and I very seldom read from somebody else's writings. But I pick this bit out from Dean Farrow's life and work of Paul, where he speaks of him. As a writer, I just finish by reading what he says. And that will be my tribute to this great apostle of the Gentiles. Here was one to whom no single man has ever lived before or since can furnish a perfect parallel. If we look at him only as a writer, how immensely does he surpass in his most casual epistles? The greatest authors were the pagan or Christian of his own and succeeding epochs. The young Pliny was famous as a letter writer. Yet the younger Pliny never produced any letter so exquisite as that to fine even Seneca. As a moralist stood almost unrivalled. Yet not only is Clay largely mixed with his gold, but even his finest moral aphorisms are inferior in breadth and intensity to the most casual and polls. Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius furnish us with the purest and noblest specimens of stoic loftiness of thought.

[00:36:36] Yet some Paul's chapter on charity is worth more than all they ever wrote. If we look at the Christian world, the very greatest worker in each realm of Christian service does not present an inferior aspect of one phase only of Paul's many sided pre-eminence as a theologian, as one who formulated the doctrines of Christianity. We may compare him with Saint Augustus or Saint Thomas of Aquinas. Yet how should we be shocked to find in him the fanciful rhetoric and dogmatic bitterness of the one or the scholastic acidity of the other? If we look at him as a moral reformer, we may compare him with seven or older, but it is practical control of even the most thrilling spiritual impulses in making the spirit of the prophet subject to the prophet. How grand an exemplar might we not have furnished the impassioned Florentine that appeals to me or not? Because I've actually been on the spot where Savonarola lived and where he was burned. If we consider him as a preacher, we may compare him to some Bernard yet some Paul would have been capable of the unnatural asceticism and heresy hunting hardness of the great Abbot of Clairvaux. And so he goes on. But it's a tribute made by a man of letters. Whatever it may think of Dean Fowler from some parts of his doctrine, he was a writer that was compelling in his style.

[00:38:11] He gives a tribute to one who could teach him many things. And so I have brought before you. Again, another picture in this number two of Saul, who is called Paul. His character is conversion. Is calling. Commission is contemporaries and is companions. And as I said earlier, you could put a large letter C in front of each one of those, and Christ is the answer to them all. His gospel was Christ. His doctrine was Christ. His hope was Christ. And all the strength he needed. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me. All I trust now that those of you who have been patiently listening to me may gather from this, that we are not left. We are still in the charge of the Apostle Paul's great master. So he is gone and dead and he is waiting. Resurrection. But his epistles live on. And until that day, where we stand in the presence of the living Christ, there is nothing, not even in the Scriptures, that can compare with the testimony of Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, as a message for today. I'm not setting aside the Bible, but so many people start reading somewhere in the Old Testament and get so tangled up because they forget that first of all, they must understand what the message was sent to the Gentiles was, and then they can go back and supplement it by the references afterwards.