

W472_Saul_that_is_called_Paul_8.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book and is a continuation of the series Saul, who is called Paul. I just remind you that this is the Sunday morning service at the chapel, and I felt that it was not quite fitting to go into some of the intimate details that I'd planned with regard to Saul Roman governors or all the other features. But we could still complete that series and get the benefit by the the introductions we've had by asking the question, who then is Paul? We ask him the question, but he asks the question himself. He says, Who then is Paul? Who then is Paul? But a minister? By whom you believed. So you see, we value the earthen vessel. Not because of itself particularly, but because of what it contains. So we could keep on continually speaking about Saul of Tarsus or Paul the apostle and get very little further. I don't know whether you've ever had the misfortune of visiting folks. And something like this may be an exaggeration. They're just beaming with a thought that they got a real Crown Derby set of things and you were looking at them and examining them and congratulating them and gasping for a cup of tea, which they never gave you. You see, it's one thing to see that Paul was an earthen vessel, but an earthen vessel is very little use unless it is filled and provides. And then, of course, again, you take, say, the analogy of a person who is stricken, crippled or something in a desert place a mile away is fresh water and he's dying for water.

[00:02:06] Would he object to any sort of vessel, earthen vessel, whatever it may be, an old tin mug. It wouldn't matter as long as it could bring that water of life to him. And so we pass this morning from soul, the earthen vessel to some of the. Wonders that God has put in that vessel for our benefit. So the transition this morning is to look at the Apostle Paul as a vessel and then to change the title. We are going to consider a continuation of this study. Where we we read that the certain company in the Acts of the Apostles were not more noble than another company in this, that they searched the scriptures daily to see if those things were so. We are going to use the Apostle Paul so that we may search his writings and discover those basic doctrines without which we cannot possibly hope to preach a gospel that will be a blessing or understand the wonder of our high calling so that you will understand the reason why we are making this transition. And I hope it will be blessed not only to the little company here on the Sunday mornings, but those who have so far been with us in this tape recording in

connection with the apostle Paul himself. You notice in the passage we had read in Isaiah six.

[00:03:43] He heard the voice saying, Whom shall I send? And he didn't say, I'll go. Is it here? Am I? Send me one of the emphases that is in the story of the apostle Paul that he was sent. So should we now give our consideration to this transition this morning from the earthen vessels himself to the glorious truth that was conveyed in him? As I said, he is already anticipated our question Who then is Paul? But a minister. Now, sometimes the word minister is magnified. Some years ago. I remember taking a subject when a young lady with a lace cap. Was a servant in a true sense of the word, that we do not use so much today. And there came to the door a gentleman with a collar, a clerical collar and a black flat hat. And there were two ministers talking to one another, for he was a minister and she was a servant. But they mean the same. And Paul says he was a minister. He wasn't putting himself on a pedestal. He was taking a lowly position. I am. But a means to an end. And the end is Christ and all his wondrous work and all the consequences that flow out from that work to you and to me. So you remember, he says, almost as though he would give them some snub, he said. Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? Don't you see there is the possibility of magnifying the minister so that he eclipses the wonderful ministry entrusted to him.

[00:05:44] And that was a thing which the Apostle Paul naturally Abominated. So after this morning, when we meet together on these same occasions, we are going to turn to the writings of this earthen vessel to discover some of the basic truths without which neither salvation or hope of glory can be really fully, completely appreciated, believed and understood. Will you now turn with me to a series of passages just to help us in this direction? One Corinthians Chapter three, verse five. One Corinthians. Chapter three, verse five. He's raising this very question are partly quoted. Who then is Paul? And who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man. I have planted. Oh, he doesn't say his work was valueless. I have planted. And Apollos watered. But the miracle of life is still waiting. You may plant and you may water. Unless God gives the increase, it's all in vain. But he says we had our place to fill, but we don't magnify it beyond its due. So then. Neither is he. That plant is anything. Neither he that watereth but God that giveth the increase. And then he turns on that figure. Timothy Good of a building. Verse ten. He says at the end of verse nine, Ye are God's building.

According to the grace of God, which is given unto me as a wise master builder, an architect, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon.

[00:07:53] But let every man take heed how he built it thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. So he says, You see, my work was a foundation ministry. Now a foundation. Is very, very essential for good building. But if a foundation is laid by a builder, then something goes wrong with the deeds or with and there is this space in this street with great concrete slabs at the bottom and no building goes up on it. It's a nuisance. So you see, Paul said, I had a foundation ministry. But it must be used. One of us may plant and another water, but it must be blessed. And so we are saying, while we thank God for the ministry of a man like Paul. We thank God that he had a ministry that was worth all the suffering that he endured to pass it on to us. And it's that one that filled his vision. Who art thou, Lord? I am Jesus. And so that is our theme for I don't know how long now. With this subject under this new title, a continuation of the series, Saul also called Paul. When you look at two Corinthians Chapter four. Two Corinthians Chapter four, verse five. We preach, not ourselves. That's another thing that we want to remember. We want. So to preach the word that it doesn't seem to anybody that we are preaching, Paul.

[00:09:53] We are not. Paul Lights. We belong to Christ. But we thank God that he sent this man to make clear the glory there is in Christ for us. And so he says, We preach, not ourselves. But Christ Jesus, the Lord. And where do you come in, then? And ourselves. Your servants. Your servants. For Jesus Christ. Again. Would you look at chapter four, verse seven? But we have this treasure. He's got a treasure. France. In earthen vessels. And as the two sides of the story. Saul of Tarsus, an earthen vessel. But why is he valuable to us? Because the treasure that was put in him, for our sakes. And then we come. To why we are still dealing with Corinthians one, Corinthians, chapter nine, 16 and 17. Just turn back again, if you don't mind. 16 and 17. For. Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of. For necessity is laid upon me. Yay, woe is me if I preach, not the gospel. Verse 19. For though I be free for all men, Yet have I made myself servant unto all that I might gain them all Jew and gentile and so on. Here is this man now facing his ministry. He says, What? What is my reward? Then in verse 18. Verily, that when I preach the gospel, I made the Gospel of Christ without charge. That I abuse not my power in the gospel. He was very sensitive to the idea that he was

making anything out of it from the lower angle in which those words are sometimes used.

[00:12:03] We read we had our readings or our brother, Mr. Hill, of the way in which the apostle was stricken down on that road to Damascus and the words of Christ. You may remember in Acts nine. He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name. To that gentile and Jew and kings and so on. So whether we appreciate Paul or whether we do not. The apostle was a chosen vessel and we cannot set aside the Lord's choice without in some measure. Turning away from the fount of blessing to ourselves. So that, as I said, we don't worship Paul. He is but a minister by whom we believe. But what? A minister. Friends. And he doesn't hesitate to see you serve the Lord as I've served him. Because he realized that Grace was sufficient for him and the same grace for us. There's an emphasis, do you remember on the fact that he was separated? While they were at the meeting place at Antioch. The Spirit of God broke the silence of the meeting and said, Separate me, Barnabas and Saul, unto the work which I have called. Notice that Barnabas came first and Saul was called Paul. But there soon came a change when Barnabas was not first and Saul had his name changed to Paul and his name is changed to Paul when he came into contact, as you remember, with a Gentile ruler who was being badgered by a Jewish misbeliever and Saul, who also is called Paul, is there, linked with a Gentile who needed salvation and found it.

[00:14:01] And then you remember when he was writing the Epistle to the Romans, the very first verse, Paul. Separated unto the Gospel of God. That's what he felt. He was separated not to gather his cloak about him and have no contact with anybody else. He was made all things to all men that he might save some, but he was conscious that from that moment he was a man of a one track mind separated unto the gospel of God. I was once very highly honoured by someone who didn't mean to honour me. He said, You're a man of one track mind. Am I ever be? So if the one track is to follow in the steps of this faithful servant of the Lord whose great desire was to preach not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and bring not only salvation and forgiveness, but a consciousness of a glory that's beyond dreams. If it were not entrusted to him and then not only separated. He himself woke up to a consciousness. Galatians Chapter one says although he knew not, he was separated from his mother's womb. There is something that is beyond our ability to test except to believe. There he was born and there he grew up and he became a Pharisee of the Pharisees, a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

[00:15:37] And all the time he had been marked out by God from his birth. And the moment came when God had ordained that his eyes should be opened. Strangely enough, when Saul's eyes were opened, he became blind for a season, for it wasn't the eye of the flesh that saw Christ. It was the eye of faith. So all these things are written for our learning and guidance and emulation. He was called. It says in Romans one, you might just glimpse of that because this is where he's introducing himself in that mighty epistle. Romans Chapter one. This is the way he introduces himself. Paul A servant. I think you'll discover that the word servant is a deeper word. It's Dallas. It means a slave. Now, as far as we gather from some of the hints, the apostle Paul was from a fairly well-to-do family. He was a Roman citizen. And you remember once when he was in custody, the soldier with him said with great some purchased I my freedom and sold a prisoner. Looked at him and said I was born free. He was born free. And here he voluntarily signs himself a slave. Not a cringing slave, but an utter servant of this one who had bought him. Ye are not your own, he said. You are bought with a price. And he was one of the number, including himself. Paul, a bond slave of Jesus Christ called. You notice in Isaiah six, he heard a voice saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for us? And Isaiah didn't say, I'll go.

[00:17:41] Isaiah said. Here am I? Send me. Paul said. I didn't take this up because it was an attractive ministry. I didn't take it up at all. I was taken up. I had no option. I discovered I've been chosen and I cannot possibly turn my back on such a call. So he says, I'm a slave. Not in a cringing sense, but in a voluntary sense and cold. Our version says call to be an apostle. Well, that's right enough. But the words to be are in italics. And so they're not there. And it's possible that it meant something a bit richer. He says, I am a called apostle. That's my calling. And the word stello means away from Stello is the ordinary word that means to send. That's what it means. Sent away from somebody else as his representative. It's used to this very day, but we don't use the word apostle. When somebody goes out as an emissary from the queen or this government to India or somewhere else with full power to speak in the name of the one that sent him. That's the apostle. And we shall discover as we go on. As you know, already, there were 12 Apostles of the Lamb. But Paul's name will not be found on the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem. He's not one of the 12. He contrasts himself with the 12.

[00:19:15] He was a special apostle, separated for the Gentiles. And if you don't feel like breaking this meeting up and shouting, Alleluia, well, we'll be forgiven because you're very polite. But that's what it was. 12 Apostles for the Chosen Nation. One apostle. But what an apostle for us. Poor, far off gentiles. And so I felt that we would now make a transition from Saul, who is also called Paul, to look inside that vessel, that chosen vessel, and discover what riches were there waiting for us in the form of the great doctrines. Which I am glad to believe we all know already. But you are not going to stay away from this meeting on Sunday mornings because I may be taking the subject of justification by faith. Or sanctification. Or the gift of eternal life. Or the forgiveness of sins. Or the hope of glory. You say, Well, let's hear it again and again. And most likely, some little aspect of it will come with a fresh light as we turn the sacred pictures as pages and see those things which we have dwelt upon and thought upon and believed and loved so many times. He says in one Corinthians again, I won't turn you back to Jesus. Woe is me. If I preach, not the gospel, he said. I haven't taken this up as a sort of a side issue. I rather shrink when I hear a certain person say he thinks, he says he'll go in for the ministry.

[00:20:59] I'll begin to wonder what sort of ministry it is you should go in for. The apostle Paul says, I didn't go in for it. I couldn't help myself. Woe is me if I preach, not the gospel. That was the way in which this man undertook the ministry entrusted to him. And he says, and I think we might perhaps look at this one Corinthians. Know the acts of the apostles. 916. The Acts of the Apostles. 916 Just for another word to help us. He says, verse 15. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name. Is not the name of Paul that was on the outside of that vessel for Angel. Notice. The vessel was bearing his name, the name of his Lord. Before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer. For my name's sake. And that's one of the extraordinary tests. The suffering that this man endured is almost beyond belief. And some of us may have no way of explaining why it should be, but we face the fact that there's not a list in the Scriptures of any suffering comparable to that which the Apostle Paul gives, except that which we can think of, of our Savior himself. So shall we have a look and see? A. I think it is in that you'll have to help me over this two Corinthians somewhere.

[00:22:50] He gives a list of his sufferings. Six Thank you. Two, two Corinthians. Oh, yes, he is a part of it. He says. I think we'll start with verse one. We then as workers

together with him. Now, that was an aspect of his ministry. He was a fellow worker with his lord not taking the precedence, but he was working with him. We beseech you. He didn't order people about friends. It pieces are beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. And then he goes on further down, he says. Verse three, giving no offense in anything that the ministry be not blamed. And continuing. But in all things are proving ourselves as the ministers of God. In what way? In scholarship. In the night we lived. Oh, no. In much patience. Very first thing in much patience. In afflictions, in necessities. In labors. In Watchings. In Fastings. By pureness. By knowledge. By longsuffering. By kindness. By the Holy Ghost. By love. Unfeigned. By the Word of truth. By the power of God. By the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. By honor and dishonor. By evil report and good report. As deceivers and yet true. As unknown and yet well known as dying. And behold, we live as chastened and not killed as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing as poor, yet making many rich as having nothing. And yet possessing all things all ye Corinthians our mouth is opened unto you.

[00:25:12] Our heart is enlarged. And you remember in another passage where he speaks about the time in which he was shipwrecked. And I don't know what. What is that? Chapter 11. Thank you. Thank you. Now. What number? Chapter 24. Yes. Oh, that's. That's. That's the one I was wanting. You see, I've got it all tight friends. Have I? That's very good for you to help me. He says, verse 23. Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool. I am more. He had to put that little bit in first because he was going to say, I'll beat them all. I am more if you want a minister of Christ who is a super ministry. He is the man. He is his qualifications. Qualifications. Parchments. Oh, no. Oh, no, he says in labors more abundant. In stripes. More. Was it in stripes above measure? You think of the indignity of a man of his caliber being stripped and flogged? Why people make a to do about a prisoner today in prison who may have been an outrageous person being given the cat. But what about this man? Float. He says in stripes, more abundant measure in prisons, more frequent in deaths oft of the Jews five times received 140 stripes save one. You know the 40 stripes save one. Was a little safeguard because the law of Moses said that a man must not be given more than 40 stripes because it would be inhuman. So they always gave him 39 to be on the safe side, but 39 stripes five times over.

[00:27:32] You think of it. I once heard somebody who joined up the Army who said he was going in for stripes. He didn't mean these, though, friends. These were stripes that

were far more than any could be given to a soldier in any any time. In deaths in prisons, more frequent in deaths, sort of. The Jews five times received I 40 stripes save one. Thrice was beaten with rods. Now that's the Roman punishment and they didn't seem to have any references to how many were given beaten with rods. Once. Was I stoned? And that's a terrific thing to. Once was I stoned thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day. I have been in the deep. In Journeyings often. In perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils, in the wilderness, in perils in the sea. In perils among false brethren. He has enough perils to get on with. Indifference. This man who had been chosen by the Lord to be a vessel to contain this glorious truth which we rejoice in, even today, in this chapel, in weariness and painfulness in watchings, often in hunger and thirst, in fastings, often in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without that which cometh on me daily the care of all the churches. You think of it. They all have a struggle to get the boots on trains to come to this meeting.

[00:29:36] And I'm puffing and blowing while the dear wife is also struggling to get them on for me. But what's that? What is that? When you think of this list. This man endured all these things and willingly, for your sake and mine. For the Gentiles. And he was a Hebrew. Let's finish. Besides these things that are without that which cometh on me daily the care of all the churches who is weak and I am not weak, who is offended and I burn. Not if I must needs glory. I will glory of those things which concern mine in the infirmities. And then he speaks about that one little bit that I suppose did make him feel a little bit ashamed in a sense. He was let down the wall at Damascus and escaped. He is this man friends. And he has the temerity to say after a long list of sufferings like this. Be ye followers of me. Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ. Well, I don't see that I've got or you've got any possibility of following him very far in these things. But all friends. What a vessel. What a vessel. Shall we not expect that such a vessel will contain some glory, some grace that will make it as it were worthwhile? And so I've said to you that I hope to go on. With this series. From the other point of view, not so much speaking about Saul, who also is called Paul, but to see what he has taught.

[00:31:28] Consider some of the doctrines which are unfortunate enabled. Pauline doctrines. There were only Pauline because he had them and Peter and James and John didn't. But they were the gift of Christ and entrusted to him and so passed on to us to hold as a sacred trust also. You notice, as far as I can gather, that he never

recovered from the blinding that he received in that glorious light and that his conversion. The the epistle to the Galatians. He says, You see with what large letters, not merely an epistle with what large characters I have written unto you with mine own hand. And he says, in the bulk of the epistle to the Galatians, when I was with you, if you could have done it, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. So this man never go through the remainder of his ministry with very poor eyesight. A crippled body beaten. Shipwrecked. Suffering, all sorts of you might say, inhuman sufferings. And yet you couldn't take away from him the rejoicing that he had. In such an honor. So when we come together. Friends our. Text will be a continuation of this subject, but under the new heading. Search the scriptures to see if these things are so. And the scriptures that we will search particularly will be those marvelous epistles that were written to the church and have come down to us, the epistles of Paul.

[00:33:21] We shall discover that they are. Divided into two classes, those that were written by Paul while he was a free man and those that were written by Paul when he became a prisoner. Now the basic doctrines will be discovered in those epistles that he wrote when he was a free man and then when he was put in prison. The added glory is given of that marvelous revelation of truth, which we call the dispensation of the mystery. And in that most of us see our calling. Members of the Body of Christ, the sphere of our blessing, not the New Jerusalem, but far above all principality and power. That is an anticipation and hope that when this series is through, we shall feel beneath our feet. Indeed the rock of Ages and have in front of us a hope that cannot be denied and a joy that the world cannot give or take away. So I ask you to remember these meetings in your prayers, if you will, so that we may be able to fulfill this ministry, which I feel sure the Lord has laid upon us. I'm going to read two Corinthians chapter 12 just to finish. That is to say verses 16 onwards two Corinthians, Chapter 12. He says, but be it. So I did not burden you. I'm reading. Yes, right. At 16. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.

[00:35:11] Isn't it awful to think that he should have to repudiate such things? So if sometimes you and I have to bear these sort of innuendoes. We're in good company friends. Did I make gain of you by any of whom I sent unto you? I desired Titus. And with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? Walked me? Not in the same spirit. Walked me, not in the same steps again. Thinking that we excuse ourselves unto you. We speak before God in Christ, but we do all things dearly beloved for your

edifying. For I fear. Lest when I come, I shall not find you such as I would be, and that I shall be found unto you, such as ye would not, lest there be debates. Avions. Ross Strifes. Backbiting. Whisperings. Swellings. Two months and so on. That was the sort of thing that the man was troubled about. He sought to emphasize the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace and a walk that was worthy. And may God help us in our little ministry and the way in which we conduct ourselves, in the way in which we live our daily, every day life, as well as the few hours we spend in chapel so that we may at least receive the Lord's well done in the day, which matters most. The day when he will give an estimate of our witness. And so we come in this series once more to your prayers.