

W479_Saul_that_is_called_Paul_15.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book. Under the covering title of Sol, who also is called Paul and want just to preface our study this morning by just a word of explanation to those who will be listening. I shall be obliged to take some subjects at this morning's service, which will be telling the folks here who are gathered what they know already. But if I missed those out because you happen to know it, then those are going to have this tape recording for the first time will be without that information. So I'm sure you will agree with me. You would rather have it mentioned twice than it should be omitted on your account. I had planned and possibly you gathered from the readings that we've had, there's a strong emphasis on the word peace, Isaiah 53 and the other passage in Ephesians. Because I was going to dip into the writings of this earthen vessel. This apostle. That the Lord chose to send to the Gentiles and take some outstanding doctrinal passages that will be of help to all of us. But before we do that, I feel now it will be necessary to make sure about the place that the earthen vessel occupies in the scheme of things. And so this morning, we will not dip into the epistles of Paul to discover his wonderful doctrine. We'll have a look at the earthen vessel temporarily just to see the way in which God has used him and emphasized his place in the scheme of things.

[00:01:57] There is a passage in the Prophet Haggai. You did not turn to it, but you can find it in the Prophet. He said this, thus saith the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message. As a strong emphasis there that the messenger and the message go together and they should. And so we are considering for a moment not so much the treasure in the earthen vessel, but the fitness by the mercy of God, of that earthen vessel to do his job. We remember. That the apostle. The word apostle, which he uses of himself, is used of Christ. So let's be sure for the moment, shall we? That we don't just pass it by as an official title that has no essential meaning. It's made up of two parts. Epo means awayfrom. It can be away from it a good sense or a bad sense like apostasy and stello is a part of the verb to send. So the word is made up of two parts. It means one. Are we sent from another as a messenger? Now, the messenger doesn't necessarily always understand the message, but I'm positive that the Apostle Paul was not used in that dumb sense. He rejoiced in the truth that was entrusted to him, and he paid the price in suffering because of it. So we have a double emphasis upon the need to be sure that we understand the character of the man that God chose and the way in which he

responded to the truth entrusted to him so that it would be passed on to us, not merely as something printed on a page, but something written sometimes in letters of blood by the apostle himself who brought it.

[00:04:01] I don't know whether you have ever done so. I guess you have. You've ripped open an envelope. You've taken the letter out and you said, Oh, dear. And you look on the envelope. It was written to somebody else in the household. Well, that may not be very serious, but it might be. But so far as the scriptures are concerned, we do want to be careful. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. You cannot start reading Genesis one or the last chapter of the book of the Revelation or any passage in between. But what you're reading inspired truth and has a profitable effect upon those who believe it. But at the same time, you're very conscious that this wonderful book is addressed to different classes and companies of people. There are different callings. The meek shall inherit the earth. And yet there are those who are going to inherit heaven. They places where Christ sits at the right hand of God. There is a chosen nation who ought to be a kingdom of priests in the earth with Jerusalem as their center. But there's also going to be a new Jerusalem, a heavenly city of the same name. So that you see, it's very, very essential that while we believe and want to make it very clear to those of you who have never been to this chapel and may never come to this chapel, that we do believe that all scripture without distinction is given by inspiration of God.

[00:05:42] But we also believe that it is not all about us or sent to us. But it has been picked out by God with different messengers at different times to suit the different circumstances. And so we ask ourselves, who is this messenger that was sent to us? This apostle, he calls himself the apostle of the Gentiles. And you may remember that when he was speaking or writing to the Corinthians about the witnesses of the resurrection of Christ, he says he was seen of the 12. How then he received of me afterwards. Well, now, if a man was one of the 12 apostles, he could hardly say he was seed of the 12 and then of thee, because he would have been in the 12, wouldn't he? So that if statement he shows you that he and they recognized that he had a distinctive apostleship which was not included among the 12. And it also settles the question whether the apostles were right when they said we must make up the number 12 and they cast lots and the lot fell upon Matthias and he was numbered with the 12. I've met people who say that they were very wrong, that the Apostle Paul was number 12, but if

they say he was very wrong, what are they going to do with the next chapter of the Acts of the Apostles? Because in chapter two of the acts on the day of Pentecost, Matthias was there with the other 11 and they all had the tongue of flame upon their heads to show that they were included in the number.

[00:07:30] Matthias as well. So you see, what I'm trying to show is that each one of these apostles, they had their, as it were, people to whom they were sent. The message was, was connected with some phase of God's purpose. And we being Gentiles, look particularly for our instruction, our doctrine, the definition of our calling. And what is our hope to the Apostle Paul? Not that we are poor lights, not that we worshiping the man. We are accepting the fact that God has the right to choose his servants and He chose this man. We discover that this man was. A learned band, a man in high authority, a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He describes himself and he could say, touching the righteousness of the law. He was blameless. But he didn't come to men. He didn't come to you and to me and say, Now you follow me and you be blameless, too. He said, I laid it all on one side. I realize that all our righteousnesses are but as filthy rags in comparison with that which is given us through faith in Christ.

[00:08:53] So when we are dipping into this great epistle to the Romans, which is going to be the basis of these talks for some time, I want to use that epistle as a sort of reservoir and we shall be obliged almost at the beginning to take the great question of justification and the way in which it is used by this man of God. But before that, we want just to go a little further with regard to this question of him and his apostleship. Supposing you look at Galatians chapter one. Now, it would take us too far afield this morning and perhaps not necessarily to show you the evidences that there are to believe that the epistle to the Galatians was the first epistle that Paul wrote. We'll leave it. It doesn't matter so far as our present purpose is concerned. But do notice this. Galatians Chapter one. Paul, an apostle. Well, you can understand that he would put that practically in any epistle. But notice immediately he says that. He's on the defensive immediately. Look. Paul, an apostle, not of men. Neither by man. But by Jesus Christ. Well, nobody would write like that unless there had already been opposition and misunderstanding, which he was obliged to clear away and the spirit of God. As so guided him in writing this that three times in this chapter we have those words. Not neither, but so will you look at them just to make sure that we see that this is no mere outburst of the apostle, but is overruled by the Spirit of God.

[00:10:55] Paul an apostle, not of men, not of a man, but by Jesus Christ. Well, there are presently he comes down and says. About the gospel that he received. He said in verse 11, But I certify you, brethren. I certify you. Now, would you read certified a letter? It's getting rather pointed, isn't it? I'm asking you to take notice, he says. That the gospel which was preached of me is not. Neither that it. He got it. He says it again. The gospel that was preached to me is not after men. For I neither received it of man. Neither was I taught it. But how did you get it then, Paul? He said I sat at. No. Oh dear. Gamaliel's feet for this. I received it by revelation. And when he received it by revelation, he had it from God himself. So, you see, he felt it very, very necessary, as he said in it. Like I've always said, forgive me for this boasting, but I can't help myself. I must because of the truth at stake. So he says, I neither received it of men. Neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. And yet, once more, in this chapter, we get not neither. And. But. And that was his own reaction and his own attitude after he had been saved and called. So would you just let me read a little bit further for we have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God and wasted it and profited in the Jews religion above many my equals in mine own nation being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

[00:13:07] What a revolution took place in this man's heart. A bigoted champion of all this. Which he now realizes was utterly impossible and a failure to become the mouthpiece. Mouthpiece of the Gospel of the grace of God to the poor outside Gentile. We go on. But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace to reveal his son, he is another poet. He doesn't say to reveal his gospel. He did. He didn't say to reveal the marvelous doctrines. They were there. But he sums it all up in one person. And one of the distinctive things of the Apostle's ministry is the emphasis upon his son, the great, the great epistle to the Romans. Paul, a Bond slave of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated the Gospel of God concerning your salvation. Oh, yes, but he doesn't say so concerning his son, for unless you know his son. The word gospel is an empty word. Now, what happened to this man when he was thus separated and chose? He said, I conferred not with flesh and blood. Well, he could understand that. But what about Peter? What about James? What about the 12? Didn't he go up to them and say, Well, now you know what sort of man I was? But I've been converted and I've been given a commission.

[00:14:49] So I hope you would approve and not stand in my way. You never bothered about them? Strangely enough, this man who was a gentleman in his upbringing, he wasn't uncouth. He turned his back on the whole lot. And this is what he said he did. He said immediately. I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before thee. But where did you go then, Paul? I went into Arabia. We did to Arabia. There is a funny place to go after you were converted and commissioned. Well, he said, I'll wait there because I wanted to be alone with God. I had to be absolutely independent of the opinions of men. And so we have this inspired apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, sent to us Gentiles. And we must be very, very thankful that that is so stressed in the scriptures, because you know that the bulk of the Bible has the people of Israel in view. But we not not nearly get crumbs that fall from Israel's table as they might have might have done in the days when Christ was here. That's what a gentile was told. Crumbs that fall from the table was all that they got out for. While we got blessings beyond dreams because of the choice that God made and the Commission given to this man.

[00:16:25] We could easily be accused of magnifying Paul. We're not doing that. But he did say this. I magnify mine office. And we do no credit to truth to belittle the wonder of this office that this earthen vessel should be turned inside out and upside down, whatever figures you like, and to preach the truth that once he destroyed. So he is a man that God chose to be the earthen vessel, to take the gospel of the grace of God to the poor outside Gentile. And you will notice that it takes it a stage further in chapter two. 40 years after you think of it. 14 years after I went up to Jerusalem. Again, to Jerusalem. Why did he go? With Barnabas and took Titus with me. Also took Titus with me. What do you take Titus for? Well, are you. Wait. I'll tell you. And I went up by revelation. So he didn't go up merely because he thought he'd like to meet them. He was told by the Lord to go up each time you went now and he took Titus with him. And you'll see he comes into the story and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles. You see, he didn't really say, Oh, I went up there and said, It's all right, friends. We're all preaching the same thing. No, he said, we believe the same savior.

[00:18:12] We believe the same basis. Jesus Christ and him crucified. Die, buried, risen again. But there are some things associated with the gospel that was preached to the

people of Israel which will never be enjoyed by you and me. But there are some things in the Gospel of the Grace of God preached to the Gentile which the people of Israel will never enjoy. We're not going to lose anything by following the witness of God concerning his choice. And we bow in his presence and believe it is wonderfully true. So is it. I communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles. What if they knew all about it? If it was all one of the same gospel, that was a silly thing to do, wasn't it? To go up to a company like the Apostles and communicate unto them that gospel which he preached among the Gentiles, and they all turned round and he would say, Well, so what? We do the same. But do you remember the comment of Peter in his epistle in the last chapter? He said in Paul's writings, there are some things hard to be understood. So there were some things in Paul's witness. It was very, very difficult, even for inspired apostles to grasp. And the more we say that, I think the more we begin to realize that we must rightly divide the word of truth with regard to the messenger that God sends, as well as the message that he brings.

[00:19:45] We are not concerned about the political opinions of the postman who brings our letters. It doesn't matter. But we are concerned about this earthen vessel because he himself and his witness go and walk together and God has so arranged it. He communicated unto them that gospel, He said, which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately privately to them, which were of reputation. So he knew that he would have those who would be antagonistic to him, lest by any means I should run or had run in vain. And what about Titus? Why was he brought in? He says, I'll tell you. But neither Titus. Who was with me being a Greek was compelled to be circumcised. Now this word compelled comes out again presently. Why Comparis thou? He says, Don't you remember? He's writing to them. He says, Don't you remember? He was a Greek in your midst. And you took him as he was and you let him go as he was. Until this band had a visible evidence that he had a message that had nothing to do with what we call the circumcision, that it was a clear cut calling and he stood for it at Jerusalem. And may we be thankful that God gave him the grace to stand for it. Because you will be speaking all that we know of salvation in its purest sense. All that we know about the great doctrine of justification by faith all the widow about the peace of God that passeth all understanding the breaking down of the middle wall of partition we owe to the ministry of this earthen vessel by saying that we're not worshiping Paul, by saying that we are thanking God that he chose that man and that he was given grace enough to stand fast and hold fast to the witness to this truth.

[00:21:45] Unpopular though it was in his own day. And so he says. But neither Titus, who was with me being a Greek. Was compelled to be circumcised. And that because of false brethren unawares brought in who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. It seems almost impossible, doesn't it, that a person who is a Christian who believes in Christ should be so sectarian in their attitude that they were antagonistic to this great liberty that was being given and they were working as far as possible as the Apostle Paul to bring them back into bondage. What was his attitude? Did he not go down to it? Thank God he didn't. To whom? We gave place by subjection? No, not for an hour. Not that he might save his own face. But this is the reason. That the truth of the gospel might continue with you and the word continue as the thought of continue right through. The fact that I could stand in this pulpit in the city of London and be unashamed and not intimidated because of the teaching we have, goes right back to the stand that this earthen vessel took against all the subsidies and the somewhat whatever they were at the beginning.

[00:23:27] And friends. We still have to make a stand. We can't take upon ourselves. Apostleship. But each one of us have a responsibility to the truth which has been entrusted that we do not falter with it. We do not make concessions. We say it's not ours to do that with. We stand for what God has told us and we ask you to accept it as from Him and not because it happens to be a part of our title deeds. But once more. We haven't quite finished this Chapter two of Galatians. To whom we gave place by subjection? No, not for an hour. I stopped for that again. Oh. How many times an issue has hung on that? Not for an hour. Friends like a concession for the first hour and I might as well give up. I speak a little bit strongly on this, friends, because you know that in the year 1909, I had to make no concessions. Not for an hour. Otherwise there'd be no meeting in the Chapel of the Open book now. I'm not boasting. I'm only saying that I borrowed from the example of this man suddenly to give me grace, to put up with all the objections and all the opposition and all the withdrawal of support that you must expect.

[00:24:53] But it's worth it all French, isn't it, to meet one believer in the glory when that day comes and be conscious that he owes. Humanly speaking, I say, humanly speaking, the opening up of the truth to him of his glorious calling, or more than compensate all that anyone's ever said about you or tried to do to you. So back again to Galatians to forgive that little side issue. But those who seem to be somewhat

whatsoever, they were make it tho matter to me. God accepted no man's person. For they who seem to be somewhat in conference, added nothing to thee. But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the Uncircumcision was committed unto thee as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter. So here we have a public recognition by the 12 Apostles that just as surely as Peter, their leader, had one aspect of the Gospel committed to him. So surely Paul had another aspect. It wasn't a different gospel in the sense that it had a different savior. It was the same cross of Christ. But they had different destinies, different callings, different ways in which they were expressed. And we are on right lines when we say, Well, Peter and James and John, they were all commissioned and they did their work. But the man that was sent to us was this apostle to the Gentiles. And here his witness was recognized and we must do the same. The contrary wise when they saw that the gospel of the Uncircumcision was committed unto thee as the gospel of the circumcision was that of Peter, for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision.

[00:26:51] The same was mighty in thee. We don't have miracles now to confirm the truth. If I laid my hands on anybody, it wouldn't make a scrap of difference. But in the early days, a handkerchief sent from the body of Paul healed a person's disease. So God bore witness with signs not only to the 12 and the day of Pentecost, but to this man. That he was approved of God. So we've got it here set out so clearly that this epistle needs to be brought into prominence, as I'm trying to do just now. And verse nine, when James Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars that sort of slipped in, well, they were. Keith S, of course, is the title name of Peter. With James, Keith and John, who seemed to be pillars perceived the grace that was given unto me. They gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship. So here was an agreement. In the very center of the witness. That we should go unto the heathen. Oh, yes, I did. I even I didn't know they had missions to China and Africa. No Fringe. We are the heathen in the Bible. The word heathen has taken upon itself a little extra meaning because of changing circumstances. But we are the heathen of the Bible.

[00:28:24] You are either in the Old Testament or the New Testament, either the people of Israel or a heathen. So this means the Gentile. This means the people who live in England or wherever, there may be those of the same character. That we should go to the heathen a day unto the circumcision. Only they would now. If you lay any sort of obligation on a person and say, Well, we're giving you this, but we do ask you to do that,

you may say, Well, then it upsets the whole thing because they wouldn't let him go free. But look what they asked him to do. It's an anti-climax fancy. After this business with the 12 dealing with the question of the Gospel, they preach whether Paul should be allowed to go and travelled. They said, Remember the poor. But you see, it shows you that I could never got nothing else to say. Remember the poor, he says, which we were for, were to do. And then he says, I had to withstand Peter. I must tell you this. I'm not glad that I have to tell you, but I must tell you. But when Peter was come to Antioch. I withheld him to the face because he was to be blamed on Glad Paul withheld into the face. It's one thing to write letters about people. It's another thing to stand in front of the person and speak to him. That's what Paul did. So we must do to our withheld him to the face because he was to be blamed.

[00:30:04] For before that certain came from James. Now, James also was a great champion for the circumcision side of the teaching. He did eat with the Gentiles. We don't live in those days fancy bothering about whether you eat with this person or that person. But here, Peter, James and the 12 they could not even a good conscience sit down at a table with you and me. Is it extraordinary that folks who can read their Bible and go to their churches and chapels and read all that should go so many times to say the gospel, according to Matthew? We say why not go to that? Well, in Matthew, he says, go not into the way of the Gentiles. So the gospel that says go not into the way of the Gentiles is the one that most Christians know most about. It's all backhanded friends. Here is the gospel that we should know about first, and then we can read Matthew and understand its message there and the different ones in John and so on. And the epistles of Peter and James and the Book of the Revelation. They've all got their audience, they've all got their word, but they speak according to their calling. He did eat with the Gentiles, but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself or friends. In this epistle, there's a word separated and the Apostle Paul was separated unto the gospel of God.

[00:31:37] And here he separated himself because he was afraid that Peter's attitude, fearing then which were of the circumcision. Well, we could go on and on and on. I didn't intend to take this subject at all this morning. I have got copious notes in front of me. You see them here and I haven't used half of them. The only thought was when I stood up here is I'm speaking to not you in this chapel. Only you know all about this. And you've been very patiently listening to what you know already. But I felt it's no good

me going to this gospel, this epistle to the Romans and lifting out what is the justification by faith being what is peace and all the reconciliation and whatnot. I want to take those gems of truth out. I thought, Oh, no, I'll have to make sure that those who are listening to me, wherever they may be on this tape recording afterwards, shall have no uncertainty as to the earthen vessel that contains this treasure. Now, after that, friends, we shan't speak of Paul, but will be like the Apostle pointing away to Christ himself. And I trust that not only those in the chapel will rejoice to have the marvellous truth that's revealed in this epistle to the Romans and elsewhere, but that we shall make a contribution by the fact that we are having it, that others who may be living alone will also rejoice in the treasures that God has entrusted to this man of God.