

The Difference

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Galatians 2:21

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I was going somewhere the other night and I came in quite late and Doris told me she had watched Billy Graham in Russia on television. I said, "Well, what was it like?"

She said, "Well, quite impressive." She said he was surrounded with national leaders and Orthodox church men and also among Baptist leaders and people and a huge crowd of people. He traveled over much of that country and he talked about Christ Jesus. He talked about his death. He talked about the blood of Christ. He talked about salvation by faith and he talked about heaven and all of these things. He said it was quit impressive.

And then she and I began a discussion on the subject: Wherein do we differ? Where do we differ from men like Mr. Graham? There is much religion in our land. Our land is full of religion. And we are exposed daily, especially by television. If it weren't for television most of us would never have even heard Mr. Graham. We would never have heard Mr. Fallwell we would have never heard Mr. Swaggart or Mr. Copeland or any of these other men. But because of television their voices are being heard all over the world.

And some of these men are powerful men. They are powerful, educated, successful, impressive preachers and evangelists. And they seem to say some good things, some very good things. They use Bible language some of the time and they talk about many of the things that we talk about in general terms. And a few nights ago I was watching the local station here, the one for which they are trying to raise enough money to make it a 24 hour 365 day religious station and here were Church of Christ preachers and Baptist preachers and Church of God preachers and Assembly of God preachers and Pentecostal preachers and Methodist preachers all around together holding hands, praying together.

I cannot support Mr. Graham if he came to Ashland, not that it would make any difference, you know, if I didn't support him. That is neither here nor there. But I could not support this type of program, this type of preaching or message. I could not in any way join that circle of men I saw the other night on television, put my hands with theirs because we are different. We are different. And that is what I want to talk about in this message tonight. I want to talk to myself and to you. Wherein do we differ? Wherein do we differ?

Is it really important enough to differ? Some of you here tonight, some of you here in this congregation have left denominations of which you have been a vital part for most of

your life. Some of you have left churches or buildings or organizations where your mother and father attended and where your brothers and sisters attend where maybe now some of your children may attend. You have left and come here. Some of you have had family divisions. Some of you have suffered some persecution and some difficult times and some severe trials and some harsh words because of where you go to church.

Someone recently said that they were delivered an ultimatum. "If you go to 13th Street Baptist Church I will never forgive you, never, as long as I live."

Well, I am aware of those things and I keep asking myself this question: Wherein do we differ? Is it important enough to divide? Is it important enough to split? Is it important enough not to cooperate? Is it crucial? Well, I believe it is and I am going to make several statements tonight and these things I thought about...I have thought about for some time and I have given them much prayer and care and concern and asked God to give me some liberty to deal with them tonight and give you some understanding.

The first question that comes to my mind is this. How can men who oppose a party...now here stands Mr. Graham and with him a Russian Orthodox in his head gear, in his uniform with his huge heavy cross hanging here and all that that denotes, all of the ceremony, the priesthood, the works and all that these things represent. These...You see these costumes are not just costumes. They represent something, Tom, don't they? They have a message. Everything about these uniforms, here he stands.

Over here is a Roman Catholic with its priesthood and with its idolatry and superstition and its worship of Mary and worship of the saints. And here stands a Baptist, a fundamental Baptist. Over here stands a liberal Baptist. Over here are conservative Baptists. Over here are some other types of Baptists. Over here a Presbyterian, a liberal or a conservative and all these different men and they are poles apart on so many things in so many areas.

How can they all come together? How can they all come together for a meeting or for a crusade? How can they all come together and conscientiously, sincerely support and promote the same man and that man's message?

It is like Mr. Graham said in the Huntington paper a few months ago that the pope in Rome, John Paul, is one of the greatest spiritual leaders of our generation. Those were his exact words. How could a man like Mr. Graham who is a fundamentalist and a conservative and a man who says he believes in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures and the mediatorial office of Jesus Christ, how could he walk in a down town New York parade in the funeral procession of bishop Fulton Sheen? But they do it. And they are doing it all the time.

And I ask myself this question: How can they do it?

Well, I have the answer. Would you like to know the answer? The answer is this. It is because, basically, basically, they every one believe the same thing about salvation. That

is exactly how they can do it. They every one when it comes down to it...they may differ. They may differ on one point here and one point there. One of them may believe in total depravity, another partial depravity, another no depravity. One may believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Another may believe he is the son of Mary. One may believe in the priesthood of the church, another the priesthood of the individual. One may believe in security, perseverance, preservation, another in total insecurity. One may believe in faith alone, another may believe in a faith plus anything and everything. One may believe in baptismal regeneration and another may deny it. But it doesn't matter. Basically, they believe the same thing about salvation. They believe that salvation is by the work and the will of the sinner. That is exactly what they believe.

Jimmy Swaggart said the other day on television these exact words. He had a three point outline. He said, "Free will is your passport to salvation." He said, secondly, "Free will is the foundation of salvation." He said, thirdly, that salvation is of the will of man and not of God. That is what they all believe.

It does not matter—now, listen. Watch this carefully. It does not matter that they disagree on the person and work of Jesus Christ. When it comes down to it salvation is not in the person and work of Jesus Christ. One may say that Jesus Christ is born of a virgin, another may say he is not. One may say he is a great prophet, another may say he is a great healer. One may say he is this, that or the other. But what difference does it make? When it comes down to it Christ is not salvation. Salvation is by the work and will of men. Whatever contribution Jesus Christ makes to salvation it is not complete in him or by him or through him. It is the sinner that makes it complete. So what difference does it make what part he plays? It is only a part.

Do you see what I am saying?

What difference does it make what part he plays in salvation, it is only a part. Salvation, ultimately, is in your lap.

Turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 11.

But you say, "These men claim to be the servants of Christ. These men claim to be preachers of Christ. They claim to be called of God and sent of God and ordained of God. They come preaching Christ and righteousness and morality."

Listen to 2 Corinthians 11:13, 2 Corinthians 11:13. And I know how serious this is to charge anyone with being a false apostle and a deceitful worker. But I want you to listen to a description of false apostles and deceitful workers. It says in 2 Corinthians 11:13, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ."

That is who they claim to be, apostles of Christ. And that is no wonder. That is no marvel. For Satan himself, carrying on his diabolical work, carrying on his deceptive ministry, carrying on his subtle, crafty, deceiving ways himself is transformed into an angel of

light. Satan himself turns himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness. Whose righteousness? Certainly not Christ's righteousness, not an imputed righteousness. But the morality and works and righteousness of the flesh. So they preach a Christ. They preach a Christ.

But, Bill, the Christ they preach is not a sufficient Christ. They preach...they preach a blood. But the blood they preach is not effectual blood. They preach a salvation, but it is not a complete salvation which is of the Lord and the gift of God. It is a salvation that is performed partly by men and partly by God and that is the error of the Galatians, what you read about a moment ago.

Turn to Galatians chapter one. It is the very error... The Galatians did not deny that Jesus Christ was born of the virgin. The Galatians did not deny that Jesus Christ was born in a manger. The Galatians did not deny that Jesus Christ walked this earth. The Galatians did not deny that he died on a cross. They did not deny that he was buried and rose again. They did not deny that he ascended back to heaven. They did not deny that he is seated at the right hand of God. What did they deny? They denied the effectual sufficient, substitutionary work of the Son of God alone. They said it takes Christ and circumcision. They said it takes Christ and the holy days. They said it takes Christ and the tithe. They said it takes Christ and your work. That is exactly what they said.

And Paul said in verse six of Galatians one, "I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace, the free grace, the sovereign grace, the full grace of Christ unto what? Another gospel.

And, brethren, I tell you this, it is either the gospel of God or another gospel. It is either the gospel of Christ or it is another gospel. It is either the gospel of his glory or it is another gospel. There is no mixture. There is no mixture.

Turn to Galatians chapter three. Listen to this. Paul said it right above that in verse 21, chapter two. He said, "I do not frustrate, I do not confuse, distort the grace of God. I do not distort the grace of God and confuse it, frustrate it. If righteousness... And that righteousness is acceptance, justification, holiness, sanctification, acceptance by God, if that righteousness which God required which exceeds that of the Pharisees of which Jeremiah wrote when he said the Lord is my righteousness, if that righteousness comes in any way by works," listen to what he says, "Christ died in vain." If it comes in any way, Christ died in vain. But he goes further than that.

He says in verse one of chapter three, "Oh you foolish, foolish Galatians. Who hath bewitched you?"

And, you see, this is what it is. This type of preaching is not straightforward honest...it is bewitching. It is deceptive. It is camouflaged. It is not something that can stand out for full examination. They have got to twist the Scriptures and wrest the Scriptures and explain away the Scriptures and say, "This doesn't mean..." It is a bewitching scheme. It is a deceitful thing.

Who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ in his glorious person and work hath been evidently set forth crucified among you. This only would I learn of you: Did you receive the Spirit? And that is the Spirit of regeneration. That is the Spirit of quickening. That is the Spirit of revelation. That is the Spirit of understanding, enlightenment. Did you receive that by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith, hearing the gospel? Did you? Which?

Now, are you so foolish? Are you so ignorant that having begun by grace alone having begun by the mercy of God alone having begun by an act of God alone having begun by a regenerating work of the Spirit alone having begun that way, are you perfected by your own doings? Oh, no. Christ is God's alphabet, alpha to omega. He is the author and finisher of our faith. He is our surety and he is our everlasting pattern.

But wait, one other Scripture. Here. This will shake you clear down to your boots. In chapter five of Galatians, you see, this is the same error of the Galatians. "Oh, I know Christ died. We will all agree with that. But in order to be saved the sinner has to do this, that and the other."

No. It is not Christ plus anything or minus anything. It is Christ. And Paul said in Galatians 5:1, "You stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." That is free from ceremony, free from sabbath days, free from holy days, free from laws, free from rules, free from all these things that entangle and bring us into bondage. Circumcision and all of these things. Don't become entangled again with that. Behold, I Paul say unto you that if you be circumcised Christ will profit you nothing.

Now, what does this man mean here?

A lot of you have children born into your homes, little boys and you tell the doctor to circumcise the lad. That's all right. That's fine. But now if you get this idea that what he is using is the term circumcision because that was token of the covenant, that is what every Jewish male member of the tribe was circumcised to denote that he was a Jew, that he was an Israelite, but he said...and they would...the Galatians thought this. "Well, you trust Christ, but you must be circumcised, too."

And somebody says, "Well, I know Christ saves, but just in case I am going to have this done."

He said, "If you do, if you do any act of religion, I mean even if it is a prayer, if it is walking down an aisle, if it is joining a church, if it is being baptized, if it is taking communion, if it is giving your money, if it is attending service, if you do any religious work or act thinking that it is required or necessary to make effectual the full saving power of the blood of Christ, then Christ profits you nothing."

Do you see what I am saying? It profits you nothing. You are without Christ, without hope and without help and without God. If you think any thing needs to be added to the

person and work of Christ I am saying—and this is what Paul is saying—he says it verse three, “I will testify again to every man that is circumcised, that you are a debtor to do the whole law.”

You know, if you start this law business you have got a long way to go. If you start this...now I know a lot of people are playing around with the sabbath day. They say I know Christ died and his blood saves, but we believe in keeping the sabbath day. We believe in keeping Saturday. We close our businesses. We go to our church. We keep the seventh day because to be accepted of God we must do that, to be holy we must do that. Christ profits them nothing.

And I am telling them this. They had better keep the whole law of Moses, the entire moral and Levitical law of the whole books of Genesis through Deuteronomy because that is what God is going to require of them.

Somebody says, “Well, I believe Christ saves, but I better give my tithe.”

If you tithe in order to win God’s favor and add in any way to the person and work of Christ you have got a whole lot more to do than tithe. If you have got a rebellious son in your home you are supposed to stone him. That is what it says over here. It says, “Stone him.”

You see, there is a law to keep. You don’t get to keep the part you want. You don’t get to keep the part that is appealing. You don’t get to keep the part that you like best. You have got to keep it all. So it is either Christ or works. It cannot be both. There is no way to mix it.

Verse four, watch this. Christ is become of no effect to you. He has become of no effect and I will say this to the baptismal regenerationists. I will say this to the people keeping the sacrament. I will say this to people who are wearing those uniforms and counting those beads. You say what you want to, to me. I tell you what I am going to say to them. I will say this to people keeping sabbath days. I will say this to people who are walking aisles and kneeling and mourner’s benches and shaking preachers’ hands and doing all of these different things in order to be accepted of God. Christ has become of no effect to you, none whatsoever, none whatsoever.

You are justified by law and you have departed from grace. Now, that is the reason these men can get together. That is the reason they can get together. Basically where this man Jesus Christ and I am talking about in beginning. You go back to the most remote point that you can even imagine and still further back than that, in the beginning was the Word. And he is the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. He is our eternal surety. His blood is the blood of the everlasting covenant. And God secured a people in him and gave them to him and made him responsible for them and he assumed that full responsibility and in the fulness of time he came into this world, the God man, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and tabernacled in this human flesh and walked on this earth in perfect obedience to that Levitical, moral, civil, family and all the other laws.

And he never thought an evil thought or said an evil word or did an evil deed. He always pleased God and he perfectly performed, he perfectly obeyed and perfectly put away as a way of acceptance or a covenant or a curse that law and imputed to us by his full complete obedience a righteousness that is perfect in the day that he attained it. He went to that cross and laid on him was every sin of every believer of every tribe of every nation of every tongue of every kindred of every generation, every believer, all the elect, was laid on him and he put them away, fully, finally, completely. They are put away. And in him there is no sin. And he was buried and rose again and victoriously entered glory and sat down having finished the work God gave him to do, sat down. And there is nothing to be added. There is nothing to be done. There is nothing to be contributed by any human being, just look to him, just believe him, just receive him because he is salvation in all of its fullness, completeness, totality, efficacy, sufficiency. Christ is our life. Christ is our hope.

And, Bill Parker, that is where I differ with them. They don't believe that. They believe he makes a contribution, but in order for him to do anything, in order for his work to count for anything, in order for his blood to amount to anything I got to do something with it or about it. And there ain't a word of truth in that. In fact, his blood wasn't even poured before me. It was offered before the Lord. And it has already been accepted. It has already been applied. It has already secured all that it was given to secure. He gave us an atonement. And God doesn't require me to produce a righteousness. He said, "Receive one."

And that's right. And these fellows can get together. They can get together around the Bible as long as each man can hold to his own interpretation of it. They can get together around Jesus as long as each man can have his own thoughts about Jesus. They can get together around the cross as long as each man can determine for himself the work of that cross.

What do you think it is worth? What do you think it is worth?

I would love to ask them. What is that cross worth? What is that cross worth? What did that blood do? Who is that man? Who is that man?

They can get together around an altar of prayer. They can get together around an altar of dedication as long as every one of us can come to that altar bringing something of ourselves.

I heard a preacher say that the other day. When you come to prayer you bring something of yourself to God.

Oh, my, in my hand no price I bring, simply to the cross of Christ I cling. In my flesh dwelleth no good thing. In the flesh no man can please God. That is what Cain did. He brought something of himself.

And God said, "No. No."

Abel brought a slain, innocent lamb and stood back and God accepted it.

And I will tell you this. I come in the name of Christ. I come looking to the beauty of Christ. I come standing off over here and saying, "Father, don't look at me. Look at him. Don't deal with m. Deal with him. I have nothing. He is everything." I just want to find myself in him.

These men can get together around morality. They can get together around good works as long as they count for something with God, you know, some kind of reward. They can talk about the fall of man, but they must determine how far he fell. The extent of the fall, the extent of the fall. They talk about God's power and sovereignty, but they determine the areas in which he can exercise it. They say, "God can make a world, but he can't save a sinner. God can conquer Satan, but he can't conquer you. God can bind Satan and chain him and cast him into a bottomless pit, but he wants to save you and can't do it. You won't let him. Won't let him."

You see we...a man says, "I believe in the sovereignty of God, but not in salvation."

Then you don't have a sovereign God. If he is not sovereign in that area which is dearest to him and nearest to him, if he is not sovereign in that area, that area that deals with that which is most precious to him, the blood of his Son, if he is not sovereign in that area, the only area that shall abide forever, eternal life.

The stars are going to pass away. The sun, the moon, the world is going to melt with a fervent heat. Every time will be no more.

You say, "God is sovereign over time, sovereign over the stars, sovereign over the moon, sovereign over the sun, sovereign over the earth, sovereign over winds, sovereign over snow." Those are all going pass away. The only thing that shall abide is redemption in Christ, that kingdom, that spiritual kingdom of life in Christ. "But he is not sovereign in that."

Then he is not God.

They talk about the blood of Christ, but none believe that blood to be effectual in itself to redeem, atone, cleanse, justify without the cooperation of men.

You say, "Are these critical issues?"

They are as critical as this. Without the effectual, sufficient work of Christ your salvation is like a clock without hands. It ain't worth a thing. Can you imagine having a clock without hands?

That's it. Without Christ...he tells the time. It is like a compass without a needle. Up there in the mountains of [?] Milton has a compass on the truck and you need a compass

sometimes just to know which direction you are going. But suppose that compass was floating around and there was needle. It is a worthless thing, like an automobile without a motor. It is like a stove without wood. Useless.

I am going to quit in a minute, but here is the second major observation that I wish to present to you. The second major observation I declare wherein we differ is not only in what these men do say, it is what these men dare not say. That is where we differ. I dare to say it. They dare not say it. And it has to do with these critical areas right here.

Roland Hill called them the most critical areas of all. Roland Hill seemed to think they were so important that no sermon ought to be preached without them: Ruin, redemption and regeneration.

“What do you mean by ruin, preacher?”

I mean what happened in the garden. I want us to declare to our generation in plain, understandable words so that no one can misunderstand what happened in that garden. In Adam all died. In Adam judgment and condemnation passed upon all men. That is what the Scripture's say. By one man sin entered the world and death and death by sin so death passed upon all men. Man's ruin was a total ruin spiritually and physically. That is what I am saying. I am saying that left to himself he will not come to Christ. Left to himself, all the preaching in the world...

Let me show you something I am going to bring out in a message tomorrow night. Turn to John one. I want you to look at this, John chapter one. Now, I want you to look at this just a moment. I am talking about what happened in the garden. I am talking about ruined by the fall. I am talking about the total, absolute, complete ruin of all the human race, spiritually dead, blind, deaf, hopeless, helpless before God with no interest and no concern, no understanding.

Listen to this in John chapter one, verse six. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The preacher is a man. Secondly, God sent him. His mission, the same came for a witness. He is a witness. The witness knows what he says and says what he knows. A witness is a man who is a witness to something. He has seen it. John said on 1 John, “I have seen him. I have heard him. I have touched him.” He is a witness.

All right. He came for a witness to bear witness of the light. This man, this puny peanut born of a woman, this little old frail man whose head they cut off, this man standing out there in the wilderness in his camel haired coat with his beard eating locusts off the locust tree and wild honey. This man is sent to bear witness of the light? The light greater than the sun? The infinite, eternal light of God? The light was in the world and this little puny man had to tell people the light was shining? Why?

They were all blind.

Tomorrow morning you go out and the sun is beaming brilliant in the heaven don't run up and down the street hollering, "The sun is shining. The sun is shining." They will put you away. The will.

But now wait a minute. Now if everybody out there is blind so they can't see that sun and it is unaware of that sun they won't put you away.

"The sun shines."

"What sun?"

There is a clear revelation of man's condition, that God had to send a puny, frail, human being to tell a dumb, blind, dead, deaf object that the sun was out. We didn't know it. In fact, he said...he said here in verse...in verse...sent to bear witness of that light...and whether...oh, in verse five. And the light shineth in the darkness and the darkness didn't comprehend it. And that is what I am talking about. I am talking about...here is what I am saying that these men are not saved.

People without God, without Christ, unregenerate, unawakened, unquickened, unattended by the Holy Ghost in special mercy that are...they get their life from Adam, are dead in trespasses and sins.

You can preach the gospel until you are blue in the face and they are worn out and they are not going to hear it. And you can holler, "The light, the light, the light."

And they will say, "What light? What light?"

They are blind. God has got to give them eyes.

Our Lord said, "They have eyes, but they don't see. They have ears, but they don't hear. They have got hearts, but they don't understand. Blessed are your eyes. They see. And blessed are your ears. They hear. My heavenly Father is [?]."

Brethren, let me tell you something. When I say man is fallen the Bible means he is fallen. When the Bible say man is dead, he is dead. He is not partly dead, he is not real sick. Cecil, he is dead. He is dead. When the Word of God says, "Man is blinded by sin and blinded by the God of this world, I am not talking about he is without religion. All men have religion. I am not talking about he is with out morality. All men have a form of morality. I am not saying that he is without any interest in spiritual...in God and in eternal life. All men are interested in those things. But he is without spiritual understanding.

Redemption, we are not saying this. What happened on the cross...what happened on the cross is not an offer. It is a gift. What happened on the cross is not an effort, it is an effectual work.

The angel said to Joseph, "Call his name Jesus. He shall save his people from their sins." He shall save them, not half save them, not partly save them, not make a great contribution towards their salvation, but 100% save them from their sin.

Who is Jesus Christ? He is very God of very God. Make no apologies about it. And where they won't let you preach it don't preach anymore. Wipe the dust off your feet and go home. Where men will not receive and believe and embrace deity, the eternality, the omniscience, the omnipresence, the omnipotence of Jesus Christ the Son of God, they know not God. He is there.

What did he do in life and death? He performed and perfected a perfect righteousness and a perfect justification. Why did he do it? That God may be just and justifier. That is why he did it. Jesus Christ didn't come down here to get God in a notion of saving you. He came because God decreed to save you. He didn't come down here to get God in a notion of loving you. He came because God did love you. He didn't come down here and make an offer toward you so you would feel sorry for him and try to walk in his steps. He came down here to meet this law on God's behalf. He came down here to bear our sins that the justice of God might be fully satisfied and God could save sinners like us and still be God.

And he got the job done. Where is he now? At the right hand of God.

And I am telling you this. All that the Father gave him is going to come to him. The Holy Spirit will bring it. They are coming.

Somebody says, "I will never come."

If you are one of his sheep you will. You will come. You will come willingly. You will come one of these days weeping your way to Christ. You will come one of these days on your knees to Christ. You will come one of these days in the dust to Christ. You will come one of these days owning Christ to be your very life, giving up everything into his hands. You will come. You will come stripped and broken and slain and wounded. And you will come to stay. Because whom the Holy Spirit saves he well saves.

I can't do much saving or keeping, but I guarantee you when the Holy Spirit sets out on the trail of a sheep he will bring him home. And he will bring him willingly. He sure will. He surely will. My sheep hear my voice. I know them. They follow me. I give them eternal life. They will never perish.

If you be the Christ tell us plainly.

I told you, but you are not of my sheep. That is why you don't believe.

Regeneration. What happens in here when God saves a sinner? Well, the new birth is of God. Turn to John one again. The new birth is of God. It is of God. You don't run out to

church and get born again. You don't go listen to preaching and get born again. Being born again is a work of God. It is a miracle of his grace.

It says in John chapter one, verse 12, "As many as received Christ to them gave he the right, privilege, power, to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name." Receiving him, embracing him, believing him is believing as he is revealed in the gospel. And these people who embraced him and believed him were born not of blood. It wasn't a thing of heritage. Regeneration doesn't run in the vein. It is not transmitted from father to son. The only thing I give my son is sin. God gives to his sons sanctification.

You see, it is not of blood. It is not of the will of the flesh, not your flesh. It is not of the will of any other man. But this new birth is of God. I know that about the new birth. I know God miraculously, supernaturally, on purpose regenerates a sinner. And he does it with the seed of the Word and he does it through the agency of the Holy Ghost, through the agency of the Holy Ghost. And they shall all be saved.

Now, then, in closing our Lord sent us to preach the gospel to every creature and we are trying to fulfill that commission.

I hear people say, "Well, if you believe in election you won't be missionary minded."

There is not a more missionary minded church in this state than this church is.

"You won't be evangelistic."

There is not a preacher in this city that preaches as often as I do or to as many people or travels as many miles, not one. The very ones that criticize us don't go anywhere. They preach twice on...their churches won't let them. They tell their pastor, "You can have two weeks off for vacation and one week off to hold a meeting. You be here 49 other weeks." That is a June bug preacher. Did you ever put a June bug on a string? And you let him go just where you let him go. Oh, they visit the hospital and they go to here and there.

We are missionary minded and evangelistic, evangelistic. We want to preach the gospel to everybody we can. But I am going to tell you this. In this heart and in this mind, knowing what I know about this God and that Redeemer and this salvation, I am on the trail of his sheep. That is exactly...I don't know who they are. But I do know he has got a people. I want to be one of them.

Mike, I want you to be one of them. I want everybody here to be one of his sheep.

See, he knows who they are. He said, "I know my sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Them I must bring and they shall hear my voice. And they shall be one fold."

But they are going to hear the Word and we have got to preach it to them. But he is going to call out his sheep. I am going up to Dingus tomorrow night and do you know what? I am looking for some sheep.

That is what he said to Paul over here in Acts 18. Listen. Acts 18. He said to the apostle Paul. In Acts 18 Paul was about to leave Corinth. And the Lord said to him, he said, "Now, don't leave there." Verse 10, Acts 18, "Don't you leave there." They were about to kill him. He was going to leave town. He said in verse 10, "I am with you and no man shall set on thee to hurt you. I have got much people in this city."

"Lord, how do you know? They may not come? You never know. They may not come. The preacher may not give an invitation. He may preach and then not give an invitation and nobody would come."

He said, "I have got much people."

And Paul stayed there 18 months. And everyone of God's people was saved, every one of them. I know that.

Turn to 2 Timothy chapter two, 2 Timothy chapter two. Somebody told Spurgeon made that statement one time and somebody says, "Well, why don't you just preach to the elect?"

He said, "Well, if you go around and put a mark on them I will, but there is nobody who knows who they are. I don't."

Do you know how you can tell them, though? I'll show you in a minute. Turn it here at 2 Timothy two, verse nine. Now listen to Paul. Wherein I suffer trouble as an evildoer even unto bonds. I am in jail. I got bonds on my hands and feet, fetters, chain. But you can't bind the Word of God. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake. That is why I am doing this, Paul said. That is why I am sitting rotting in this jail for the elect's sake. That is the reason I am swimming the deep for the elect's sake. That is the reason I am getting shipwrecked for the elect's sake. That is the reason I am taking these stones and rods on my back, for the elect's sake. That is why I am doing it. That is the reason I am preaching."

Why?

"That they might obtain the salvation which is in Jesus Christ with eternal glory."

How shall they hear without a preacher? That is what he says. How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard and how shall they hear without a preacher?

You say, "That is not consistent."

With whom? It is consistent with the word. It is not consistent with you because you are not God. It is not consistent with your way of thinking because you are a natural man. It is not consistent with your understanding because your understanding is darkened. It is not consistent with your religion because there is a way that seems right unto men and the end is destruction. It is not consistent with your thoughts because your thoughts aren't God's thoughts. But it is consistent with his Word that God elected a people and Christ died for them and we have to preach the gospel to them and they will believe it. God will enable them to believe.

“Well, how are we going to recognize them, preacher?”

Turn to 1 Thessalonians. I will tell you how we are going to recognize them. I will tell you exactly how we are going to recognize them. Go everywhere preaching the gospel to every creature and if one of God's elect is there I will tell you how you are going to recognize him. Verse four of 1 Thessalonians one. Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For...for...because, it's number one. Our gospel came not unto you in word only. That is the way most people hear it. But it came to you in power, regeneration, the Holy Ghost and in much assurance.

Number two, verse six. And you became or you came to be followers of us in the Lord. Yes, sir. God's elect will follow him; follow his Word, follow his preacher. They will follow his gospel. And they will receive the Word in much affliction with the joy of the Holy Ghost.

Verse seven. And you were examples. You were examples in your attitude, in your conduct, in your generosity, in your forgiving spirit, in your godliness. You were examples to all the people around you. God's people will walk in holiness.

Verse eight. And for from you sounded out the Word of the Lord not only where you live in Achaia, but in every place. God's people are missionary minded. They are witnesses. They are evangelists.

And verse nine says, the last line, and you turned from your idols to serve the living God. And, verse 10 says you are waiting for his Son to come back. And that is how you can tell the elect.

It is a marvelous work of God's grace.

So in summing up this message wherein do we differ? We differ in the critical, crucial areas of the gospel. Who is Jesus Christ? What did Jesus Christ do? Why did he do it and where is he now?

Let's bow in prayer.

Our merciful, eternal Lord. Who is sufficient for these things? What weighty, mysterious, profound truths? And we are so feeble and so frail and men of the flesh and yet in this earthen vessel, in these brains of ours, in these hearts of ours, in these souls of ours, you have put that knowledge. And not only the knowledge of your glory and grace, not only the knowledge of the mystery of godliness, but a love for it, a love for it, a love for Christ, a love for his glory, a satisfaction with and approval of his meritorious sacrifice. We not only believe it, but by your grace we love it. We not only trust him and believe that he is very God of very God and will do what he has come to do, but we wouldn't have it any other way. To him be the glory, the dominion and the power both now and forever in heaven, earth and hell over all things, over every creature that moves, to him be that dominion and power and glory. He is the very beat of our hearts and the desires of our souls. And this amazes us and astounds us that you should be pleased to bring us to, in some measure, think as you think and to love things as you love them and to desire that which you desire.

And, Lord, we pray that you would enable this preacher and these other men here and others who will hear this message on tape in other places, give us the courage and the boldness, but first of all the understanding of this gospel. We can't preach this gospel until it becomes our gospel, our gospel. Make it our gospel and then we can preach it when it becomes our gospel. We dare not preach any other gospel than that gospel which glorifies our blessed Lord.

And, our Father, give us...give us a spirit of compassion and pity. Were it not for your grace we would still be blind. Were it not for your love and mercy we would still be in the pit. And let us remember to have some compassion and pity and to pray for those who do not see, who cannot hear. But will you, by your grace, give them ears to hear and eyes to see and hearts to understand for the glory of our dear Lord?

Impress upon us our responsibilities who have committed to our trust such a sacred treasure as the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. In his precious name we pray. Amen.