

# Guest Preacher - Rev Iain T Campbell (Retired)

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Preacher: Rev Iain T Campbell

[0:00] Now, turning back to the chapter that we read, chapter 5 in the epistle of Paul to the Galatians, and we look this evening at the words that we have in verse 11 of that chapter.

Chapter 5, verse 11.

And secondly, dividing lines, and thirdly, for a seism and pleasure-seeking.

For a seism and pleasure-seeking. And first, coming to an ever-present offence. Now, when Paul says in this verse, But if I, brother, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted?

In that case, the offence of the cross has been removed. And we've got to remember that Paul was once a preacher of circumcision.

[1:35] He was a Pharisee, a persecutor of the Church of Christ. And while he was preaching circumcision and the law, he was never persecuted.

But now he finds himself preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. And he, who's the great persecutor, has now been persecuted himself.

And he is making, he is making a logical argument based on his own experience. Based on his own experience.

He is essentially saying that the gospel, that the gospel he preaches, is so offensive to the self-reliant human heart.

To the self-reliant human heart. But if he were to add works of the law, the works of the law, like circumcision to it, then the offence would be removed.

[2:48] The offence would be removed. The cross of Jesus Christ demands the complete abandonment, demands complete abandonment of self-sufficiency.

The complete abandonment of self-sufficiency. The sinful heart, the sinful heart wants to contribute something to its own salvation.

Wants to contribute something to its own salvation. Circumcision, after all, is the work of human hands.

It is a marker, a visible marker of human effort. Of human effort. And the cross of Jesus Christ tells us all that human effort is not acceptable in the sight of God.

It is not acceptable to God. The cross of Christ reveals to the religious passion that whose are her rituals.

[4:25] And to the unconverted passion, that whose are her goodness. The cross of Christ equally are incapable of saving them.

Are incapable of saving them. And Paul's opponents, Paul's opponents wanted to merge the cross with legalism.

In order that they would remove the offence. Or make the cross of Christ more palatable to the world.

More palatable to the world. Israel had prayed. Israel had prayed. Earnestly.

For the messianic age to come. And for their messiah to come in power as the great conqueror.

[5:26] Instead of the all conquering Christ, what do we find? We find a crucified Christ. We find a crucified Christ.

And we look upon this all conquering Christ. This all conquering messiah. That was meant to trample Roman rule under his feet.

And what do we find? We find this all conquering messiah. Fastened to a cross. With Roman nails. With Roman nails. Whenever we try. Whenever we try to make the gospel less offensive.

By stripping away the necessity of repentance. The exclusivity of Christ.

[6:31] And the call to die to self. We risk removing the very thing. That is.

The power. That has the power to save. That has the power to save. Which brings us to the second heading that we have here. Dividing lines. And Paul here is warning us.

That when persecution ceases. It means that the message of the cross has been diluted.

Now persecution of itself does not necessarily mean violence. It can mean weaponizing words.

It can mean oppression. Your goods being confiscated. You being denied entrance into the worship places.

[7:41] A denial of entrance into the worship places. It can mean even. It can mean even. The denial of holding family worship in the home. And when we look back.

When we look back to the book of. When we look to the book of Revelation. And look back to that time. Domitian was the Roman emperor.

At that particular moment. When the book of Revelation was written. And he. Passed a decree.

That every employer in the empire.

In the empire. Was not allowed. To employ. Anyone. Who went by the name Christian. So that the community.

The Christian community. Was suddenly plunged into poverty. And that is the way persecution can work. Using subtle means.

[8:45] Like we see in our own nation. And in other nations. In our day and generation. And these subtle means are used. To push the church.

To the periphery of society. In such a way. That the church's witness. Will no longer. Be of any value.

Whatsoever. Be of any value. Whatsoever. And if the gospel. Is not challenging. The world. The world system.

Then the question is. Is it the message. Of the cross. At all. Is it the message. Of the cross. At all. And the cross. Acts. As a boundary line. Between. Between the values of God. And the values of the world. The values of the world.

[9:45] Are status. Achievement. And power. And as the cross. Of Christ. Reveals to us. The values of God.

Are humility. Sacrifice. And surrender. Humility. Sacrifice. And surrender. The cross.

Also. Sets. A dividing line. Between. The saved. And the lost. Between the saved. And the lost. The cross.

Of Jesus Christ. Exposes. The futility. Of human pride. And for anybody. Still clinging.

To their own. Good works. Then. This. Is. Offensive. This. Is. Offensive. While those.

[10:48] Who are believed. While those. Who believe. See the cross. Of Christ. As the power. Of God. Circumcision.

Is no longer. A problem. In our day. It is no longer. An issue. In our day. And age. But the accommodation. Of cultural.

Trends. Such as well-being. And self-help. Psychologies. Are. And of course. There is much.

Research. Into well-being. In our own.

Day and age. But what's wrong. With that research. Is. That it doesn't. Take in. The spiritual. Side. Of the human being.

And therefore. It's. A research. That we cannot. Rely on. But well-being. And self-help.

[11:42] Psychologies. Are all about. The same thing. It's all about. Being happy. And finding happiness. Whatever.

Your situation. Is. Self-help. Psychologies. Tell you. Not to give place. To any negative thought. God. And that is very difficult. In a world.

Such as we are living. Not to give any place. And well-being. Of course. Is all about happiness. We see them. We see. It coming up.

In statistics. From time to time. About. Cities. And towns. Where the well-being. Of the inhabitants. Of these places.

Are far. Better off. Than in other. Cities. And towns. And so. The accommodation. Of cultural trends. They are still.

[12:36] Operative. Within our midst. Like well-being. And self-help. Psychologies. And these. Can function. These. Can function.

Like the pressure. To be circumcised. In the first century. Wars. For believers. Wars. For believers. They can.

Place. Tremendous. Pressure. Upon us. To abandon. Our Christian. Ways. Or abandon. Any desire.

To seek. After God. And find. Happiness. In. These. Cultural. Trends. In these. Cultural. Trends. We will make.

The sad. Part. The sad. Part. Of it is. That some. Within the church. Some. Within the church. Will make. Every. Effort.

[13:30] Every. Effort. To make. Christianity. More. Respectable. To the world. By covering. Over. By covering.

Over. The offense. Of the cross. By covering. Over. The offense. Of the cross. And there was a preacher. A. Quite a well-known preacher.

In London. And I can't remember. His name. At this present time. But he. He. He was. In charge. Over. Several churches. In London. And he had a team. Of ministers. And what they did. Every week.

What they used to do. Every week. Was. To. Discuss. How. They could take. The offense. The offense.

[14:25] Away. From the cross. Of Jesus Christ. By now. I suppose. They have run out of ideas. Of how. They could listen. The offense.

Of the cross. Of Jesus Christ. But that. Is happening. In our own. Day and age. And. Some. Very well-known. Preachers. Are behind. Lessening. The offense. Of the cross. To make the gospel. What they call. More respectable.

To the world. And the question. For us today. Is. Has the offense. Been. Removed. Has the offense. Been. Removed. That is. The question. That is. The question. The offense. Of Calvary. As far as. The Jews. Were concerned.

[15:21] The offense. Of Calvary. Was. That it. That it. Abrooted. Much. Of what. They were. Proud of. It tore.

Asunder. At the roots. Of much. Of what they were. Proud of. And all. All of what they were. Proud of. Was taking in. Takes in.

The garments. Of the priests. The altar. Their sacrifices. The temple. Itself. And the cross. Of Christ. Did away. With all of that.

With all of that. And there is much. Well the thing is. Let's put it this way. They were proud. Of worthy things.

They were proud. Of worthy things. Because to be proud. Of the temple. And the law. Is better than. To be proud. Of celebrity. And.

[16:22] Of celebrities. And billionaires. Is it not? They were proud. Of worthy things. And. The gospel.

The gospel. In our own day and age. Teish asunder. The roots. Of much. Of what we are proud of. Teish asunder. The roots.

Of much. Of what we are proud of. Some of us. Are quite comfortable. In the world. Some of us. Can be quite comfortable. With a lifestyle. That is lived outside. Of the kingdom of God. And some of us.

Believe very much. In the fact that. Our goodness. Will eventually save us. There are things. That we are loath. To give up.

[17:19] And yet. The cross of Christ. The demands. Of each and every one of us. To turn our back. To turn our backs.

Upon these things. And. Give them up. Completely. Jesus Christ. Says. Nobody. Can come unto the father.

Except by me. And that is the offense. Of the ages. What. What. What Jesus is saying there. Is telling me and you. Is that we have to come. With hands. That are empty. And with an awareness. Of our deep need.

Of the pardoning measures. Of our creator God. We like to labor. And to plan. We measure.

[18:17] The value. Of everything. By what it costs us. To receive. These things. Salvation.

Costs us nothing. But it costs God. Everything. And the love. And the life. It offers to me. And you. Is offered. To us freely. And for a money loving age. For a money loving age.

There is something suspicious. About all of that. And something. Offensive. And something offensive. Which takes us. To the final thing.

That we have here. Phariseism. And pleasure seeking. And. There are two opponents. There are two opponents.

[19:14] Of the gospel. Today. There might be more than two. But I'm picking up. I'm picking up. On these two. There are. There are two opponents.

Of the gospel. That are very prominent. One of them. The first of them is. The pharisaic spirit. It is still alive. And kicking. Within our midst. Today. Still alive. And kicking. Within our midst. Today. And these.

Are people. Who have a false confidence. In their own. Moral. Viewpoint. The second. The second is. The pleasure seeker. And pleasure seeking. Simply means. The idolization.

[20:06] Of self gratification. The idolization. Of self gratification. And if you mention. If you mention.

If you mention at all. To the pleasure seeker. That he has. To die to self. That he or she has to die to self. Then that is.

An offense. To such. And we could call that. The liberal spirit. The liberal spirit. Now the modern pharisee.

The modern pharisee. Does not talk about circumcision. Does not talk about circumcision. But he boasts. He or she boasts.

About. Their own. Goodness. If I believe. In my fundamental. Goodness.

[21:04] That it gives me a standing. Before. A holy God. And that I need. Nothing else. But that.

Then the cross. Of Christ. Is simply. A travesty. Rather. Than a necessity. It is simply. A travesty. Rather.

Than a necessity. Thank you. If I am a good person.

If I am a good person. Then the death of Jesus Christ. Is unnecessary. And to be told.

By anybody. That I am unable. To save myself. That is an offense. That is offensive.

[22:03] Offensive. Offensive. And the cross. Of Jesus Christ. Declares. That my goodness. Is simply.

An insult. To the holiness. Of God. It says. That I am not. Just a passion. Who makes mistakes. But that I am a sinner. In need of a savior. That is a blow. To human pride. That is a blow.

To human pride. And that is why. The cross. Tears asunder. The roots. Of much. That we are proud of.

And want to. Hold on to. And want to hold on to. It's a blow. To our pride. And the Pharisee says.

[23:01] I have earned my place. And the pleasure seeker says. I have a right. To my comfort. And we live.

In a day. And generation. That looks upon happiness. As being the highest. Moral good. As being the highest.

Moral good. The message. Of the cross. The message of the cross. Take up. Your cross daily. And follow me. As looked upon. By many. In our day. And generation. As being an attack. Upon their personal freedom. And upon their happiness.

And upon. Their happiness. The cross. Demands. A death. To self. it demands that I give up being at the centre of my own universe being at the centre of my own universe and to a generation that has made an idol out of our desires to a generation that has made an idol out of our desires to surrender these desires to a crucified saviour is not only foolish not only foolish but it's an attack on our rights that's the way the pressure seeker looks at it it's an attack on our rights and all of this the offence of the cross in our day and generation boils down to this there is a lack of sin consciousness within our generation and that might be one reason why the gospel has lost its flavour the cross of Jesus Christ has little or no meaning to me or to you unless we feel the weight of our own sin but the thing today is that there is this lack of sin consciousness and that is why violence is so common common many many within our day and generation are no longer ashamed of sin many within our day and generation are no longer ashamed of sin you will never appreciate the cross of Jesus Christ until you feel the weight of your own sin and without a clear realisation of the deadliness of the disease of sin after all the wages of sin is death and without a clear realisation of the deadliness of the disease of sin and without a diagnosis or the need for a diagnosis then the cure which is the cross of Jesus Christ is an unnecessary imposition upon the world of humanity upon the world of humanity if we are offended if you and I are offended by the cross of Jesus Christ and if you are here tonight and you are still offended by the cross of Jesus Christ what it means is

that you are still in love with self and with independence in love with self and with independence the moment we confess

[27:50] we are sinners the moment we confess we are sinners are not just people who need an improvement here and there but sinners who are in desperate need of being liberated from the slavery of sin from the slavery of this disease then once liberated we breathe for the first time the fresh air of freedom for the first time the fresh air of freedom but if we are here tonight and if our version of Christianity makes us feel good about ourselves makes us feel good about ourselves and it no longer challenges our need to be saved the first time the first time of Christianity makes us feel comfortable with ourselves and comfortable with the world then the question remains have I ever encountered have I ever encountered the risen Christ or am I simply covering over the offence of the cross to make way for my pride and the question for you is where do you stand where do you stand and what is your answer to these questions are you still in love with are you still in love with self and with independence or are you covering over the offence of the cross to make way for your pride only you can answer that question let us pray oh gracious and ever blessed

Lord that you would help us to rejoice in the Christ that came willingly to stand in a room and in a place and to take upon himself the punishment the punishment that we were deserving and to bear our sins in his own body on the tree removing for once and for all the enmity that existed between ourselves and our creator God for God for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself and not imputing unto them their trespasses Lord that we would truly make a choice of that good portion as Mary of old did that shall never be taken away from us and that we would come to rejoice with the people of God in the blessedness of the provision that he has made for us in his son bless your world to our hearts accept of us graciously in Christ and that the glory would be used forever in him Amen Let us conclude by singing to God's praise from Psalm 138 Psalm 138 and reading at verse 4 reading at verse 4 to the end of the psalm or sorry sorry at verse 8 to the end of the psalm verse 4 verse 4 sorry the glasses I am using are not very good because I lost my good glasses on the ferry coming over so I am prone to make the odd mistake now and again so

Psalm 138 in the sing Psalms at page 179 and reading at verse 4 O Lord let all the earth's kings give place when from your mouth they hear your word let them extol the ways of God for great the glory of the Lord although the Lord God dwells on high the lowly person he protects whereas the proud and haughty one he knows afar of and respects from verse 4 to the end of the psalm O Lord let all the earth kings give praise praise O Lord let all earth's kings give praise when of the Lord they hear hear your word let them extol the ways of God for grace and glory of the Lord heart although the Lord not dwells on high the lonely person he protects where else the proud and haughty one he knows the heart of the angry death although

I walk a troubled far you tender him research my life you raise your hand against my foes your right has saved me from their strife the Lord will certainly go fair for me the world was in land your love and your forever on we serve the world of your own hands may the of

[35:53] Jesus Christ love the and fellowship Holy Spirit be with us and more amen amen