



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Bible, Part 236”

May 16th, 2021

Pastor Darryl R. Curtis

Family Life Baptist Church
Now Meeting at 1427 Hillcrest Street
Lansing, Michigan 48910
Phone: (517) 393-9399
Email: info@familylifebc.com
Website: <http://www.familylifebc.com>

Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



Our text for today is **2Corinthians 6:3**:

3 We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.

Thank you for listening and thinking with me as we study God's Word to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

As we begin, let me communicate to you that my preaching is based upon the fact that every episode recorded in the Bible is literally true.

We live in a culture in which fantasy and fiction dominate, but we need to resist the allure of made-up stories and intellectually concocted arguments as we develop faith in the meticulously recorded factual history of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ by the eyewitnesses who were present on the scene.

We must do whatever we need to do to develop the personal faith needed to believe that the Bible is the absolute truth, and recognize that every fiction put forth by man or by the devil to contradict or minimize the impact of Biblical accounts is a lie.

One of the main points of our last lesson in 2Corinthians was given to us in **2Corinthians 5:17**:

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

We must all consider our old personality, which considered at least some of the things that the Lord hates as profitable. **Proverbs 6:16–19** informs us:

**16 These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:
17 A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood,
18 A heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil,
19 A false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.**

If we look back over our life before we were saved, we will find that we participated, with relish, in some of these activities. Paul does not exempt himself from this assessment, as he freely confesses that he devised wicked plans, shed innocent blood and served as a false witness who spoke lies as he persecuted the church of the Living God. But Paul also confesses that the Holy Spirit spoke to his heart during those days that he was in Damascus without sight, and when Ananias came and restored Paul's sight, the Bible says that immediately, Paul preached Christ as the Son of God in the synagogues.

Paul's conversion was so drastic and so sudden that the Damascus Jews decided to kill him for changing his objective to preaching the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ rather than his original objective of capturing Christians to drag



them back to imprisonment in Jerusalem. The Christian Damascus disciples let Saul down the city wall in a basket to get him out of town, but when Paul returned to Jerusalem, Barnabas had to accompany Saul to the Jerusalem church and vouch for Saul to convince them that Saul had in fact been converted. If anyone fit the definition of a new creation, it was Saul, who even stopped using his Hebrew name and began using his Greek name, Paul. But the fact of the matter is that anyone who is converted to Christianity has some radical changes to make. Paul tells us, in **2Corinthians 6:1–2**:

1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

2 For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

The day of salvation is a day of change. The day of salvation is the day of receiving the grace of God and becoming a new creation, with old behaviors passing away and becoming new. We must put those sins that the Lord hates away from ourselves and start making it clear that a change has come over us because of our new relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fortunately, many of us are not physically blinded as was the Apostle Paul, but we have the same responsivity to change our behavior as did he. Paul tells us, in **2Corinthians 6:3**:

3 We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.

We must handle our ministry in a manner that men may have no reason to doubt our sincerity, even if they doubt our sanity. Paul continues in **2Corinthians 6:4–5**:

**4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses,
5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;**

The Lord Jesus Christ tells us that the trials and tribulations of this life will come to those that believe in Him. He says, in **Matthew 10:16–18, 22**:

16 “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.

18 You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

22 And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

The trials and tribulations are not to dissuade us from preaching the gospel, even though even the church itself may turn against those that preach



Jesus when the persecution gets tough. Paul tells Timothy, his son in the ministry, in **2Timothy 4:2–5**:

2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

It is of the utmost importance that we keep our eyes on the prize. The devil will do all he can with the things of this life to distract us, but we must keep uppermost in our minds that the evangelistic ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ has to do with His Resurrection and ours. Just remember the temptation that the Lord Jesus Christ endured, in **Matthew 4:8–10**:

8 Again, the devil took [Jesus] up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

9 And [the devil] said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”

10 Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ”

The devil is constantly looking for your price. If he can buy you at any price, he will. But we must all keep the words of the Lord Jesus Christ on our lips, **“Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ”**

For if we are seduced by the things of this world, we are hypocrites. We must develop the fortitude of Job, who said, in the “A” portion of **Job 13:15**:

15 Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.

And the Lord Jesus Christ displayed such fortitude on Calvary’s Cross, and His reward was the Resurrection on that first Easter Sunday Morning. We must learn that it is ours to emulate His example and not be swayed from the Gospel by the things of the world. In addition, Paul tells us, in **2Corinthians 6:6** that we must also exhibit:

6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,

So, while we preach the Gospel, we must also display the merciful, patient and loving workings of the Holy Spirit in our own lives. We must always remember that we ourselves are sinners saved by grace, and our preaching must be able to comfort as well as correct. Yes, we must preach righteousness, but not at the expense of repentance. Every individual, regardless of their sin, must have a way to get to the Lord Jesus Christ through that which we preach. We



cannot afford to disqualify any man from salvation, lest we be judged and disqualified ourselves. So, as we correct those who are in error, we must remember the day that we needed correction, and temper the Word of God to the spirit of the one that needs it so that they can receive it. The Apostle John tells the church, in **1John 1:9**:

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So, the objective is confession and repentance, not excommunication. And as difficult as discipline may be, it must be done in love. Paul continues, in **2Corinthians 6:7**:

7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

It is of the utmost importance that every preacher or evangelist understand that the power of salvation is not in that which we say, but in that which the Lord God has said through His Holy Spirit. I read of the great preacher Charles Spurgeon, known down through the centuries as the prince of preachers, how, as he drew many of his sermons to their conclusions, he found himself apologizing to the Lord for such a poor effort. Nonetheless, when he opened the doors of the church, men and women came, convicted by his preaching, to take on the Lord Jesus Christ. And in the privacy of Spurgeon's own praying ground, the Lord made it known to Spurgeon that it was not his words that drew the crowds, but it was the Word of God that drew the crowds. Thus, Spurgeon redoubled his efforts to say that which the Bible has to say, and it was the Word of God that made his ministry.

I accompanied my wife, as she went to drop off a quilt that she worked on for a quilter friend of hers, one that had a particularly difficult pattern. Her friend subcontracted the quilt to my wife because my wife had more experience with a particular feature of the quilting software, although my wife had never used this feature on a quilt for which a customer was paying. As my wife and her friend were discussion their trepidation on using the software in such a matter, my wife said, "Well, the Word says that the Lord has not given me a spirit of fear", quoting **2Timothy 1:7**. And it is the quoting of the Word that often gives us the ability to do that which we doubt that we ourselves can do.

Paul continues, in **2 Corinthians 6:8**:

8 by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;

And the disciples knew the honor that comes from dishonor. Gamaliel the Pharisee kept the council from killing the Apostles, in **Acts 5:34–39**:

34 Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while.



35 And he said to them: “Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men.

36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing.

37 After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed.

38 And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing;

39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.”

The council decided to take Gamaliel's advice, but they did not let the apostles go without shame and punishment. **Acts 5:40–41** records:

40 And [the council] agreed with [Gamaliel], and when [the council] had called for the apostles and beaten them, [the council] commanded that [the apostles] should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41 So [the apostles] departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for [the Lord Jesus'] name.

Peter explained that an evil report from those that persecuted the church was equivalent to a good report before the Lord. Peter wrote, in **1Peter 4:14**:
14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

So, when the world casts aspersions on the name of Christ to persecute the church, the church can glory in the persecution that comes, and can expect the numbers of the saved to increase. People will see, from the reaction of the Lord Jesus Christ's followers, that Jesus Christ is Lord, just as people responded when the Apostles preached for the first time that the Lord Jesus Christ rose from dead. But we in the church must remain steadfast in our preaching and keep it centered on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not on the things of this world. Paul continues, in **2Corinthians 6:9–10**:

9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed;

10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Paul was simply a prisoner of the Romans, a person of no note, but Festus wrote to King Agrippa, in **Acts 25:14–22**:

14 When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying: “There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix,

15 about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him.



16 To them I answered, 'It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.'

17 Therefore when they had come together, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in.

18 When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed,

19 but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

20 And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters.

21 But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar."

22 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I also would like to hear the man myself." "Tomorrow," he said, "you shall hear him."

As long as Paul's testimony was about the Lord Jesus Christ, as unknown as he was, he was a curiosity to those in power. And Paul tells us the Roman church, in **Romans 8:36–39**:

36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The greater the duress under which we live, the more love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord is exhibited in us. And the chastening under which we live is not condemnation, as Paul tells us, in **1Corinthians 11:31–32**:

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

The sorrow under which we live leads us to repentance, as Paul tells us, in **2 Corinthians 7:8–10**:

8 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while.

9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.



10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

The poverty of the church in this life leads to riches in the next life, as Paul gives the example of the crucified Lord Jesus Christ, in **2 Corinthians 8:9**:

9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

And Paul counts himself as possessing nothing in this life, because there is so much to gain in the next life, as **Philippians 3:8–11** informs us:

8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

The true Christian life requires a change in the perspective of the Christian. We ought not have the perspective of the scribes and Pharisees, who clung to the riches and the things of this world so tightly that when the Lord God sent His Son to them, they rejected and killed Him because He told them that they should change their lives and share their wealth. We, on the other hand, must listen to the Lord Jesus Christ, and always be ready to give up the things of this world for the sake of the gospel, even as He was ready to give up His very life on Calvary's Cross in order to prove to us that although the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The change of which Paul preaches in this lesson is a change in perspective. We must count the things of the world as rubbish if they interfere, in any way, in our exercising our devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing on earth can be more important to us than our allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, and we must be ready, on a moment's notice, to suffer persecution and death for His Holy Name.

Now, we are blessed to live in a nominally Christian country. At this point, it is not likely that we will be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice as were the disciples and martyrs for the cause of Christ, but we must be vigilant, steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, recognizing that conditions might change and we may be called upon to make a sacrifice that we did not anticipate for the name of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And when the devil sends his minions for us, we must have clean hands and a pure heart. Oh, the church ought not be caught up in sin so that the devil can throw our sin in



our faces, but it must be clear to all who understand that the persecution that is to come is not based upon our actions, but on our belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the church cannot be stuck on the things of this life. It is the very trap of the devil that we get caught focusing on those things that we have, and the obsession to obtain more and more. Greed is a green-eyed monster that will eventually destroy...destroy your common sense, destroy your peace of mind, destroy your attitude and disposition, and it will also destroy your relationship with others.

Although greed begins small...it soon develops into a monstrosity...and it will eventually control your desires, your ambitions, your goals, as well as your emotions.

Greed may start out disguised as 'self-improvement'...but it soon becomes 'self-centered', and selfish. It is never pleased with that which it has, it always demands more and more. More money, more possessions, more recognition, and more influence.

Greed will make money your master, and gold your god, and everything else is either used, or abused in order to obtain more of it. Greed is obsessed in acquiring a bigger and bigger inventory. It is never satisfied. The harder one endeavors to please greed, the more it demands. It is a large empty pit that's never filled. The more you put in, the more it requires...until it renders you extremely weary and exhausted in mind, body and soul.

Greed has disgraced all sorts of relationships. It has destroyed marriages. It has ruined business relationships. It has betrayed friendships, and it has caused innumerable bankruptcies.

Greed doesn't want to just want you to keep up with the Jones', it demands that you get ahead of them...way ahead. If you have to lie to do it, then lie. If you have to steal to do it, then steal. If you have to be crooked to do it, so be it. If you have to forfeit all pleasures in order to do it, do whatever is necessary...just get ahead of them.

Greed has no conscience. Nor does it care how it may look to others. It doesn't care how it may offend others, nor how it may cause others to suffer.

Greed has a clinched fist. It will not give to help the poor. It will not contribute to the needy. It will not share with those who are less fortunate. Greed holds on to ALL...!

Greed will not help provide for the widows or the orphans. It will not help support missionaries. It will not consider the cries of the desperate. It will not donate anything to anybody for any reason at any time or any place.

The cause of greed is selfishness and pride. They feed greed's every motive. How will 'I' benefit...? How will 'I' be blessed...? How will 'I' be promoted...? How will "I" be enriched...? How will it profit 'me'...?



Greed goes far beyond just wanting to be successful, or just desiring to prosper. It demands its share and everybody else's share as well. It isn't pleased with just getting 'more, it must have 'all'.

Watch greed at work when there is a large amount of money to be distributed among several, or even just among two. Greed will fuss, and fight, and claw, and scream, and kick, and argue, and wrongfully accuse, and intimidate, or whatever else it so desires...just to obtain more than it's rightful, or legal share...and sometimes it will do all of this and more...even if there is just a 'nickel' at stake. Once it sets its heart on it, it will stop at nothing to acquire it.

Greed...all the money in Las Vegas, and all the gold in Fort Knox will not satisfy its hunger, or quench its thirst. It never has enough.

Greed not only has divided families or separated friends, it has even toppled kingdoms, and brought down empires. It has crushed businesses of international fame, and has caused multitudes to end up losing everything they had.

Besides prayer and seeking God's will for your life, one way to combat a 'greedy spirit' is to start giving...and give until it 'hurts'...and then give some more until it feels 'good'...!

Ultimately, we must not only give our things. We must give ourselves. Just as the Lord God gave. **John 3:16-17** tells us:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

The Lord God sent His Son into the world that the world might be saved. And oh, that which the Son had to do in the world to save the world. He had to suffer, and die and ignoble death on Calvary's Cross, naked and bleeding before the world, nailed to the Old Rugged Cross while the very ones that He was sent to save jeered at Him, spat on Him and reviled Him.

But the Lord Jesus Christ endured the Cross. Although He as rich, He made Himself poor that the riches of the Kingdom of God might flow through to us. Although He had all power, He made Himself weak that the riches of the Kingdom of God might flow through to us.

So now, the Apostle Paul makes it clear, as he stood in prison, that we must follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must put away our allegiance to the things of this life and the wicked ways of this world, and be prepared to always tell the story of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love;
I love to tell the story, because I know it is true,
It satisfies my longings as nothing else would do.

I love to tell the story, more wonderful it seems
Than all the golden fancies of all our golden dreams;



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I love to tell the story, it did so much for me,
And that is just the reason I tell it now to thee.

I love to tell the story, it is pleasant to repeat,
What seems each time I tell it more wonderfully sweet;
I love to tell the story, for some have never heard
The message of salvation from God's own holy Word.

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest;
And when in scenes of glory I sing the new, new song,
It will be the old, old story that I have loved so long.

I love to tell the story,
It will be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and His love.

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