

# Gentile Dogs Have Hope Too

by Tim Conway

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*Tim Conway's sermon emphasizes that Gentile believers, once marginalized, are now included in the hope and inheritance of Christ alongside Jewish believers.*

**Duration:** 56:33

**Scripture:** Mark 7:25-30, John 17:17, Acts 10:34-35, Romans 1:16, Romans 9:25, Romans 10:14, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 1:13

**Topics:** "Salvation By Faith", "Unity In Christ"

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## Description

This sermon delves into Ephesians 1, emphasizing the significance of hearing the Word of Truth, the Gospel of salvation, and believing in Christ for salvation. It explores the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, highlighting how both groups have obtained an inheritance through Christ. The message stresses the inclusive nature of salvation, urging unity among believers of all races and backgrounds. The importance of sharing the good news of Christ's work for sinners is emphasized as the means by which individuals become Christians.

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## Transcript

Well, this morning, let's turn in our Bibles to Ephesians 1 once again. We're going to resume our study of Paul's epistle to the church at Ephesus. Let's read v. 11-14.

In Christ, we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation and believed in Him were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it. To the praise of His glory.

So I want us to pick up in v. 12, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory. Now, we just dove into this letter right at this point. If we just looked at v. 12, you open up your Bible, and for whatever reason, you just dove in right there, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory.

Or if you just dove in, maybe as my Bible does, it has an indicator in v. 11 that it's starting at least a new subsection of this chapter. If you just dove in, in Him we have obtained an inheritance. If you just read that, you would be tempted to think, I would be tempted to think, that the we in v. 11, the we in v. 12, we, now

think about that, that's a pronoun.

That's a plural pronoun. We, it's first person, which means if I use it, I'm including myself. If we just picked up right here, v. 11 and 12, and we saw that we, our first tendency would be to think that Paul is speaking about himself and the Ephesians, and perhaps all Christians.

That's what we would be tempted to think. But there's a good reason to believe that Paul is not speaking about himself and about us. Not about himself and the Ephesians, but that he's speaking about himself and other Jews who are believers.

This becomes really apparent when we notice the contrast here. Notice, v. 11, in Him we have obtained an inheritance. V. 12, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ.

And then he gets to v. 13 and he says, in Him you also. Now that is to the Ephesians. That you, that is a pronoun.

It's not singular. He's not speaking to a single person here. It's plural.

He's speaking to a group of other people that he is disconnecting himself from. He is part of the we. The Ephesians are part of the you.

There's two groups here. You can see that's happening. I'm not making this up.

It's not artificial. It's actually here. It's really apparent.

We have both obtained an inheritance, but we have and you also have. And you notice it in v. 14. The guarantee of our inheritance.

And now that seems like that plural pronoun. He's now pulling the Ephesians in with him. But what you have is a separation here.

We, you. Now, this isn't the only time in this letter that he speaks this way. Where he speaks to Gentile Christians like the Ephesians as you.

Where he sets himself over here and speaks in a second person plural pronoun to them. Let's look at chapter 2 because we see this again. Chapter 2. If you notice with me in v. 11, what I want you to do is notice how Paul regards Gentile believers as separate from himself by using a pronoun that's second person.

You. Notice v. 11. You'll see this immediately.

Therefore, remember that at one time, you, and by the way, I'm not making a stretch here when I'm saying it's referring to you Gentiles, because that's exactly what he says. This helps us recognize when he's talking about we and you that when he says you plural, he's speaking to the Ephesians and he has in mind Gentiles over against Jews. That's exactly what's happening here.

You Gentiles. Remember that one time. You Gentiles in the flesh called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision.

Uncircumcision is what you call Gentiles. Circumcision is what you call Jews. At least, notice he says in the flesh.

By the way, when you're talking spiritually, he tells the Philippian Gentiles we are the true circumcision. We're the true Jews. But this is speaking physically.

See, which is made in the flesh by hands. He's talking about just that which is a circumcision which is made in the flesh by hands. We're not talking about spiritual realities.

These are physical realities. But notice this, v. 12, remember that you... there it is again. You Gentiles, remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

What a string of things. Brethren, you and I are Gentiles. What a string of woe.

But now in Christ, here's our pronoun again, you. Now in Christ, you. Notice what he says now about you Gentiles.

He doesn't call them Gentiles. He doesn't call them uncircumcision. Brethren, what a way to be described.

When you were lost Gentiles, this is you. Can you remember? I remember. In fact, when we were sitting there, I don't know why, I remember being back in college and I remember being in my bedroom, and my bed was right next to the window and I remember a storm came in one time and I heard a crack of thunder.

I don't know why I can remember it, but it was scary. I think it made me think of eternity. And you know what? I think I had thoughts that things are good with me and God.

But you know what the reality is? I was far off. You Gentiles, far off. Far off.

But, you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our... now He includes them. Who has made us both.

What's the both? Jew and Gentile. He's made us both one. Remember what we saw back in v. 10? He's uniting all things in heaven and upon earth in Christ.

Remember that? That's what we have happening right here. Both one and as broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace. And might reconcile us both Jew and Gentile to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

Notice this, and He came and preached peace to you, Ephesians, you San Antonians, you Gentiles who were far off. He came and preached peace to you and peace to those who were near. Now that's how He's describing the Jews Himself.

We were near. Not in, but nearer than you. We had more light.

God had owned us as a people. God gave us the prophets and He gave us the oracles and He gave us the law and He gave us Moses and the Messiah came from us. For through Him, we both... there's the both again.

We have access in one Spirit to the Father. Notice this, so then you... He doesn't say us. He says you.

You Gentiles. You're no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

Here it is again, in Him, you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Now, here's my question. I mean, here we are on Tuesdays.

We're seeking to deal with the racial issues that we're confronting. And here's one of the things that I would ask or one of the things that would come to my mind. Isn't this divisive talk? I mean, when we speak as Christians about us and them, isn't the very nature of those pronouns divisive talk? I mean, look, to tell you the truth, I hate to hear when people in the church talk about us and other people in the church as them.

I hate it. If I hear black Christians say us and them, or vice versa, if whites or Hispanics say us, or if Orientals were to say that, us and them. I hate it when I see in Romania, it's the Romanians and it's the Gypsies.

It's us and them. I hate it when we got visited by, I remember a Hindu couple came. Their parents were born in India.

Maybe they were born in India and came here young, a couple. And they'd come over from Houston, and in Houston they have their own Indian church. And it's basically us and them.

I hate that. That is divisive talk when we use pronouns like that. It should not be that way.

Divisive use of terms, using pronouns like that, separate. It sets us apart. When I come to Scripture, you know what it says in Galatians.

You know that Paul told the Galatians, there is neither Jew nor Gentile. That's what he said. He said there is no circumcision and uncircumcision.

He said there is no male and female. There is not a division like that. There is no slave and free.

There isn't that separation. He says much the same thing when he speaks to the Colossians in 3.11. He says there's not Greek and Jew, circumcised, uncircumcised, barbarian, scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all in all. There isn't that separation.

And here's what I believe is a reality when I look at Scripture and I think about partiality and I think about race and I think about ethnicity. Certainly, we would have to come to the conclusion that if we are growing in Christ and maturing in Christ and perceiving rightly and discerning rightly as we ought, the most fundamental reality about the pronouns that we use should be inclusive of every other Christian. I'll tell you this, when we talk about us and them, the us ought to be me and my black brother, me and my Hispanic brother, me and my Oriental brother.

The them? My black brother's lost family. My lost family. That is the greatest reality, brethren.

We come out of a lost world where we identify with family, we identify with political groups, we identify with country, we identify as followers of sports teams, we identify with all these things that separate us and them. Brethren, the them? My Christian sister, the them is those that are lost of every gender. The us and

the them.

It's those on the outside. The them is lost whites. The them is lost Hispanics.

The them is lost men and women. The them is lost African-Americans. The them are the lost whites.

The lost Orientals. That's how it is. Our identity at the most fundamental level is Christ.

Christ is all. Christ is all. Do you believe that? Do you really believe that? So, why does Paul use terminology? Look, if we know something about Paul, there was nobody more concerned about unity in the church.

There was nobody that probably walked a more godly life as a fallen, saved sinner. I know of no example greater than Paul. Aside from the perfections of Christ, here's the man that came closest.

This man is using terminology, we Jews, you Gentiles. Why would he use such terminology? Well, it's clear, brethren, he does not mean to divide. He simply is using the terminology.

Look at v. 12. You can see it. The only reason he's using this terminology is because of chronology.

Chronologically, the Jews were first. The Jews were near. We were far off.

That's the difference. That's what he's noticing here. It's just a reality that puts us in two separate categories as Christians.

Not to divide. It's just to deal with this reality about the fact that the Jews hoped, your Bible may say, trusted in Christ before Gentiles began to hope and trust in Christ. The Jews believed first, and then those of the other nations followed.

That's just a reality. The ESV says, "...so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory." Your Bible may say trusted. The word literally means to be in the first stage of expectation or to be the first to hope.

What does he mean by that? What does Paul say? What does he mean to say about the Jews who were the first with an expectation or the first to hope? What does he mean by that? Now, he may mean this. He may mean that the Gospel, when Christ and His disciples went through the land, they took the Gospel to the Jews first. They were the first to believe.

When we think about the word hope, hope, this word does actually contain an idea of a future expectation. And so it may actually be that what he means is that through the many, many, many, many centuries, the Jews were constantly looking for the Messiah. The Gentile nations weren't.

Now, it could mean either of these. Paul may very well mean both of them. In both ways, the Jews were first.

Let's just think about this. Think about how we see both of these realities in Scripture. You remember when Jesus was brought to the temple? Two people showed up to greet Him at the temple when He came to be circumcised at eight days.

Do you remember who they were? Simeon and who? Anna. Simeon and Anna. And listen, Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel.

That's what it says in Luke 2.25. Of Anna, it says that she began to give thanks to God and speak of Him, Christ, to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. Now notice that. You know what that's telling us? You have Jews who are waiting for the redemption.

In fact, isn't it interesting, when Christ comes and He gathers His disciples around, what are they saying? They're going to one another and saying, hey, the Messiah has come! Come on, let's show Him to you! They're waiting. There were people who were waiting. The Jews were first.

Those Gentiles out there were not waiting. But here, the Jews are waiting. Why? They had the oracles of God.

They were those that had the Old Testament Scriptures and they saw the Messiah is predicted there. Look, even those who didn't have a clear idea, even those who were not being prepared alright by God to receive Him, the Pharisees, the scribes, so many of them, they still expected the Messiah, even though they were looking for a different kind. The Jews had this expectation.

You read this of Joseph of Arimathea in Mark 15.43. It says, he was himself looking for the kingdom of God. The two on the road to Emmaus, you remember them? They were talking to the Messiah Himself. Their eyes are closed.

They can't see it. But there He is. And they're saying, we hoped it would have been Him.

We thought it was Him. We were pretty certain it was Him. But in the end, it wasn't Him.

And He says, it was Him! But they had a hope and they were looking and they had an expectation. And so, you see that that way, they definitely had this hope. They were looking, they were anticipating, they were expecting.

But on the other hand, once Christ actually came, were the Jews first to hear, to know, to receive the message? They were. Romans 1.16, we see this. I am not ashamed of the Gospel.

It's the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. To the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Now, I know that might not specifically be talking about chronology there, but there is the reality that the Jew is first.

Acts 1.8, when the commission is given to the disciples and Christ is getting ready to ascend, His last words were, there is an order to the way you reach this world. And where does it begin? He said, you start at Jerusalem. You move outwards to Judea, and then beyond there to Samaria, and then to the end of the earth.

Or how about Matthew 10.5? When Jesus Christ first sent out His disciples two by two, do you remember what He said to them? Very specifically, He said, these twelve Jesus sent out instructing them, go nowhere among the Gentiles. Really? Wow! We were left out. Yep, in the early stages, it was the Jew first.

We were left out. Don't go out there. Now, isn't it interesting that when Gentiles came, when Gentiles heard, when Gentiles believed, in fact, Jesus even said, I haven't found faith like this in Israel.

I mean, they were there, and when they came, yeah, they might have been called dogs. In fact, you know what? You know, I called my message, Gentile Dogs Have Hope Too. We're going to look at that text a little more in a second.

Acts, when you go to the book of Acts, even when Paul went into his city, it was Jew first, was it not? What was his custom? To go to the synagogues. He went to the Jews first, and then he went to the Gentiles. The Jews were the first to receive the Gospel, the first to realize that Jesus Christ was their only hope of salvation.

They saw this. That, there was hope in no other name. They were the first.

They were the first to be shown this. The disciples, his disciples, those first twelve, they were Jews. They were the ones that got to see the glory firsthand, up close.

They were the first to recognize that all of our anticipation, all of our expectation, all of our confidence is found in Him. They were the first. Brethren, they were the first to hope in Christ.

Can you think of a better definition for what it means to be a Christian? One whose hope and confidence are in Christ. These Christian Jews were the first to center their every hope in this One who had come from glory, this One called Emmanuel. The first to look and believe.

They were the ones. They saw Christ on that cross. They were the first at the tomb.

They were the first to know He had risen. They were the ones that saw Him ascend. The Gentiles were not let in yet.

Yes, the veil had been ripped, but they weren't there in the inner groups. They weren't there in the inner room. They weren't there on the day of Pentecost.

They weren't there at first. Oh, but it was coming. It was coming.

But they're the first, and that's all to the glory of God and He designed it that way. The Jew was the first to have the hope that Christ bore all of His sins away. Look at this in Mark 7. When we're talking about the Jew first, this text stands out in my mind and it's largely what influences my title as much as anything that I find in Ephesians.

Mark 7. Mark 7.25 Immediately, but immediately, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of Him and came and fell down at His feet. Now notice this. Now the woman was a Gentile.

Mark that. A Syrophenician by birth and she begged Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. Notice these words.

He said to her, let the children be fed first. And He even says this, it's not right to not feed the children first. It's not right to take the children's bread.

Who are the children? The children. The Jews. And throw it to the dogs.

That's us. We're the dogs. But she answered Him, oh, this is how faith lays hold on Christ.

It's not easily put off. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord.

Do you notice that? How many would have responded with disgust? They would have been offended. How dare you call me that? Yes, Lord. That's how you want to answer the Lord.

Yes, Lord. Yet, here's the argument of faith. Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.

And He said to her, for this statement you may go your way, the demon has left your daughter and she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone. Let the children be fed first. The Gentiles are first.

Let's go back to Ephesians. Go back to Ephesians. Ephesians 1. Brethren, if you let your eyes go on v. 13, and you pick out that little word which means you're included.

It's a little four-letter word, also. You've got to circle that and jump up and down for joy. In Him you also.

Where does this leave the Gentile dogs? Also. That is one of the most blessed words that can sound in your Gentile ears. Also.

In Christ you also. Brethren, do you hear what that's saying? We're included. We got in when we heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of our salvation.

We believed in Christ also. We're sealed also. We get the Spirit also.

We have an inheritance also. We were far off. The far off dogs.

And we get in. Brethren, for 1,500 years, Gentiles were mostly on the outside looking in and there was no also. Do you know what there was? There was century and second century and five centuries and ten centuries and fifteen centuries of Gentile damnation.

By and large, 99.999% of the Gentiles went to hell. They were destroyed. You know who they are? They are our forefathers.

Damned. That's what Paul said. Without hope.

Without God separated from Christ. They were without God in the world. For their unrighteousness and for their ungodliness and suppressing what could be known about God.

God damned them. Century after century, our forefathers are in hell, brethren. The dogs perished.

Listen to this. You don't have to turn to this text. Just listen to it.

It gives you a feel about how the Jews even felt about the fact that Gentiles, God included, they're in Acts 10, and the believers from among the circumcised. That's the Jewish believers. Those who had come with Peter, they were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Listen to this. The gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. Why do you put even in there? Because it's something that was unheard of.

It's like even the dogs got fed the children's food. The children are expected to get the food, but now, even the Gentiles. Wow! I mean, this thing was merciful before.

This thing was glorious before. This thing was grace before. But when you extend this to the dogs, whoa, even that! Even God has stooped to do that.

We also got in. What an amazing thing. Speaking of the Gentiles in Romans 9, Paul says, as he's quoting, I believe from Hosea, well, yeah, he says that.

As indeed he says in Hosea, he says this is speaking about the Gentiles. Those who were not my people, I will call my people. Her who is not beloved, I will call beloved.

You think about that. Your forefathers were born, whether they come from Mexico, whether they come from Africa, whether they come from Ireland, England, Germany, Austria. Our Gentile forefathers, they were born, they grew up, they farmed the land, they got married, they had children, and all the time, they were not beloved.

The love of God was not upon them. Can you imagine? Can you imagine if you really think about what that means? You live through your life, and God's love is not on you. That's what it's saying.

Brethren, Ephesians 1.13, "...in Him you also..." Also, God has included even the dogs. Us outsiders, having no hope without God in the world, but now, we also are in. We have a stake as well.

Brethren, I beseech you, brethren, let's not make issues in the church out of race. Brethren, hear what I'm saying. Us blacks, us Hispanics, us Orientals, us whites, we're all Gentile dogs together.

And we got in together. The greatest reality, brethren, is that, did you hear what Jonathan read? Christ's prayers that they might see His glory. A hundred years from now, we are beholding the glory together.

That just absolutely eclipses any problems that we can have concerning race. That unites us. Brethren, we're all one species or another of dogs.

But now we're in. Even the Gentiles. We've been included.

And you know what? If that's true, it makes everything else relatively insignificant. Brethren, don't you realize what we've got? We have salvation. We're in.

We're not going to perish forever and ever and ever. Age after age after age in the lake of fire where our forefathers are. My grandfather, my great-grandfather, my great-great-grandfather, and yours too, they're there.

And we've been delivered together. Are we going to make issue about our skin color now? We're in. If there's anything to unite us, brethren, how does this come to be true? How can this be? I mean, the question we need to ask is how is it that any of us actually became a Christian? Now, we see back up in v. 4, right? He chose us.

We see in v. 11 that it has to do with being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will. We see that. But notice here in v. 13, in Him, you also, when you heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

Now, did you notice that? When we talk about what it means to become a Christian or how a person becomes a Christian, yes, you can start. You can start by God choosing. You can start by God predestinating.

You can start there. You can start in the fact that God planned this. This is the mystery.

The Gentiles are being added. God had this planned. It's according to His purpose before the foundations of the world.

It's according to the counsel of God. Yes, we can go there. But you know what v. 13 is showing us? It's showing us the means.

God uses means to make people Christians. If you are a Christian, you became one this way. What way? By these means.

Through this instrumentality. And notice the first thing. What's the first thing here? Do you see it? We must hear.

Right? In Him, you also, when you heard the Word of Truth, which Paul also calls the Gospel of your salvation, this is God's way. Brethren, hear me. This is God's way of making Christians.

He uses your ears. Does He choose an eternity past? Yes. But in the course of time, He uses means.

He uses instrumentality. What is it? It's your ears. Or it's your eyes as they read off a page.

He uses your natural faculties for taking in information. Do you see that? Romans 10:14 We well know, how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? How do you believe unless you hear? How do you believe unless you know? How do you believe unless the information is put in? Whether it's through your ears, through your eyes? How do you believe unless you come to somehow use one of your physical faculties to bring the information in? God uses that. If that's true, brethren, we need to hear.

We need to see. Listen, if no one becomes a Christian unless and until they hear, then we better go forth and tell. That's our commission.

And I'll say this to you, if you're sitting here and you don't know the Lord, or it's questionable, you're not quite sure, if you don't know the Lord, listen to me. Listen very carefully. Jesus said these words.

In Matthew 13, verse 15, He said, This people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed. Listen to this. Lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.

What a way. We like to put God first, which we're well to do, but isn't it interesting how often Scripture will actually say things like this, as though it's dependent on us? Why do you think so? To throw responsibility upon the sinner? You see what He's saying? If somebody will hear, and understand, and turn, Jesus says, I'll heal them. What does this mean to you children out there that are lost? You adults that are lost.

It means don't leave your Bibles unread. Read your Bible and understand it. Read and live.

Hear. Don't think to yourself, oh, I've got to go to church today. I'm just going to try to get through that.

If I can just get off in the back and play around in the back. If I can just shut down. If I can just bring the phone.

Bring the game. Bring this. Distract myself to get through that horrible hour when the preaching happens.

No! Open your ears and live. If you don't open your ears and understand, you die. You go to hell.

God uses means. He uses instrumentality. Don't turn it off.

Don't leave your Bibles unread. Don't leave the preaching unheard. This is how God makes Christians.

Do you want to be a Christian? Do you want your eyes open to the glory of Christ? Do you want your sins forgiven? Do you want to escape hell? Then you've got to hear. Listen to hear. Listen to understand.

Be aware. Pay attention. Come here.

Your life depends upon it. It depends upon it. If you don't hear, you won't turn and He won't heal you.

You've got to hear. You've got to hear. If you're a Christian, you become one this way.

Notice the next thing here. Verse 13. Again, it's the means.

It's the instrumentality. What's next? The Word of Truth. Do you want to know God's method for turning a sinner into a saint? Here it is.

This is God's way of making Christians out of us. It's truth. We've got to hear, but not just anything.

And not just any truth. When He's talking about the Word of Truth, He doesn't mean any truth. There's lots of truths out there that don't do anything for your soul.

You notice, He says the Word of Truth and then He clarifies exactly what He means. And what does He mean? He means the Gospel of your salvation. Brethren, the truth that He has in mind, we heard it again in John 17.

Your Word is truth. And Jesus says that Word talks about Me. It's the Word of Truth that talks about Christ.

It's the Word of Truth that leads to salvation. It's the Word of Truth that is Gospel. Remember, Gospel means good news.

That's the Word of Truth. It's the good news. That's what we need to be talking to people about.

The good news that pertains to salvation. It is the Word of Truth. The Gospel of your salvation.

What happens? We listen to the Word of Truth and we find something in that Word that's desirable. We find in that Word of Truth hope. They were the first to hope in Christ.

It says there, but you also, when you heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, you see what He's got in mind? He's got in mind a message that so sets forth Christ that He might be believed in. This is what happens. This is what happens in the course of time.

Yes, in eternity past God chooses, but what happens in the course of time? Brethren, what happens is, God isn't here just simply forcing people and dragging people into the kingdom. What happens? People come under the sound of the Word of Truth and something begins to happen. What happens? They begin to see something desirable in the message.

Something that's good news. That's what Gospel is. It becomes good.

You know how it is when you listen to the Gospel and there's nothing in it? It doesn't sound like good news. There's nothing desirable. Any of you been there? You heard some of the truth.

You heard that Jesus saves. You heard different parts of truth, but it was never good news. Because really, the good news was the party on Friday.

Really, the good news was that idol that consumed you. The money or the job or whatever in your life. The thing that you were chasing after.

And so it was never good news. Because anything that ever had to do with Christianity or with church, you just felt like it was the thing that was going to steal your joy away. But suddenly what happens? You come under the sound of the Word and something happens where for the first time you recognize that Christ in this message, He has done something that gives me hope.

It breaks in upon your souls as the greatest news that man could ever conceive of. You ever been there? You heard the Word of Truth. And for the first time in your life, because you're under conviction of sin, listen, Jesus said that He came for the sick.

And unless you get to the place where you're sick, this is what happens. That Word comes to a sick man. And it's about a physician and he looks and for the first time he recognizes.

You see, we're too well the other times when we heard the message or any part of it. So it was never good news to us. But suddenly it becomes good news.

Because we're under this burden of sin and we feel that God is just to throw us in hell. We feel that it's like Christian. He's got this load on His back.

And for the first time we recognize this thing is going to crush me down to hell. I need help here. And there's Christ set up.

Brethren, the Word of Truth, the Gospel, the good news, you tell Him what God has done for sinners. That's good news. Brethren, beware of your hyper-Calvinism.

Because hyper-Calvinism, the message of the doctrines of grace set forth by so many immature Christians is not good news. To tell people that God elects is not in itself good news. To tell people that Christ died for some people, not for others, that does not sound like good news to the typical lost guy out there.

To tell people that basically they're totally depraved, that's not good news. To tell people to go to church is not good news. To tell them that God is just is not good news.

To tell them that God sends sinners to hell, that's not good news. To tell people so much of what Calvinists like to say, that in itself is not good news. What's the good news? The good news is what God has done to deliver sinners from the penalty and power of their sin by the sending of His Son Jesus Christ into this world to pay for sin, to break its power, to rescue us, to save us from all of our enemies, to save us from the wrath of God.

That's the message. That's the Gospel. It's good news.

That's what leads to salvation. That's the message. And that's the instrumentality that God uses.

How does anybody become a Christian? This way. Not by telling people that they need to go to church. Brethren, you see what this says? You get all the time people, they've got this idea, much like I had when I was lost.

How do you become a Christian? Ah, you basically turn over a new leaf. I remember. I've told you this story before.

I remember it specifically. I'm driving down M43. And I'm headed to the beach.

And I'm driving by this church. And I have a trunk full of beer. And it's early on a Sunday morning and it's going to be a beautiful sunny day.

All my friends at the beach. And I went by a church. That's not what you want to see when you're living like that.

Because somehow it's going to rub your conscience. But I looked over and I see all these people nicely dressed and they're all filing into a building. And I remember thinking, I'll need to take care of that one day.

And I just figured, just like I decided to go to the beach today, I can decide to do that one day. But basically, that's how you become a Christian. You make some resolution.

You turn over some new leaf. You get religion. You see, this just blows all that right out of the water.

It's not that. That's not what makes us Christians. Many assume that somebody's a Christian because they're philanthropists.

Look at all the good they did. Look at what Mother Teresa did. If there's anybody that's a saint, if there's anybody a Christian, it's got to be her, right? That's how we think.

People have some supernatural experience or some special kindness of God and they think everything is okay between them and the Lord. But such thinking is entirely wrong. I probably had this idea.

Basically, the key to becoming a Christian is going to church. That's what I thought. But that's not what Paul's saying here.

That's not it. Such thinking is entirely off. There's no salvation apart from the Word of Truth.

There's no becoming a Christian apart from the Gospel of our salvation. Brethren, that's what we need to tell the world. That's what we need to tell them.

What has God done for sinners through Jesus Christ? Tell them how God reconciles us to Himself by crushing Christ on that cross. Tell them that! Tell them He suffered. Tell them God afflicted Him on that cross.

Tell them God poured out His soul there. Tell them that God abandoned His Son. Why? So that we might be forgiven.

Because He came to stand in our place. He came like us in every respect. He came and He kept the law perfectly.

And He went and He paid the penalty. He satisfied the justice of God. He satisfied the wrath of God so that we can be set free.

We who are guilty. Even us dogs. We can be set free.

Tell them that. Tell them how God made Christ to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Tell them that.

That's the message. The good news is to tell people what the God of this universe has done for sinners as a result of the life and death of Jesus Christ and how we can be forgiven for our sins. We deserve hell.

We deserve the same thing our forefathers got. Our forefathers are not in hell as innocent individuals. The sins of our forefathers are great.

And you know what? We were walking in the same way and deserve the same thing. But you tell them what God has done and how we can be rescued not because of any work that we do, but if we will find our hope in Christ. Trust Christ.

Believing in Him. Your only hope. There is no other.

That's how God makes Christians. May God make some Christians today. Father, we thank You that even the Gentiles, we also, when we heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of our salvation, and believed in Him, were saved, sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

And we, oh Lord, we have been brought in to be numbered among the people of God and to have an inheritance with the people of God. We who were not loved. We who were not beloved.

We who were not the people of God are now the people of God and we are now the loved. And we shall behold the glory of Christ very soon. Lord, I pray that such a spirit of love and unity would just compass us as a church no matter what color our skins are.

That we as those who are far off, we've been brought near together of all ethnicities. We Gentiles have been brought near together by the blood of Christ. Our peace.

Our hope. Our reconciliation all found in Him. Thank You, Father.

We thank You in Christ's name. Amen.

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