

The Cross in My Life - Part 1

by Derek Prince

Derek Prince's sermon explores the profound impact of the cross on a believer's life, emphasizing its role in provision, victory over Satan, and the dangers of legalism.

Duration: 28:23

Scripture: Jeremiah 17:5, Matthew 13:39, Galatians 1:3-4, Galatians 3:1, Galatians 3:10

Topics: "The Cross", "Christian Living"

Description

This sermon delves into the significance of the cross in the life of a believer, emphasizing how the cross is the foundation of God's provision for every aspect of a believer's life and the basis of Christ's victory over Satan. It highlights the danger of legalism and the need to embrace the transformative work of the cross within each individual. The sermon also addresses the subtle dangers of legalism, carnality, and the curse that can result from losing sight of the cross.

Transcript

So, we're going to speak tonight about the cross in my life. First of all, I have been pointing out in previous sessions two very important facts about the cross. First of all, it's the basis of God's total provision for every believer.

Everything we ever need in time or eternity, in every department of our lives-- spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, financial, temporal or eternal-- has been provided for us through the cross. There is no other basis. Either we receive on the basis of the cross or we do not receive.

Paul said, He who spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things? Just try to absorb those closing words. God will also, with Jesus, freely give us all things. But without Him, nothing.

On the basis of the cross we can receive everything, but without that basis we are not entitled to anything. Secondly, and this is also very important, the cross is the basis of Christ's total defeat of Satan. Through His death, His substitutionary sacrifice, His victorious resurrection and His triumphant ascension, Jesus has administered to Satan and his kingdom one total, permanent, irrevocable defeat.

There is nothing Satan can ever do to change that fact. And it's on that basis that we have victory over Satan. If we come in contact with Satan, if we have a conflict with Satan, on any other basis but the cross,

we will be defeated.

But on the basis of the cross we can be totally victorious. Now because of these two important facts about the cross, Satan has a strategy against the church. He cannot change what has been accomplished by the cross.

That's eternal. It's settled by God. But what he can do and what he seeks to do is to hide from the church what was accomplished by the cross.

So that when the church loses sight of what was accomplished by the cross, then the church no longer enjoys the benefits provided. The church no longer lives in the full provision which was made by the cross, and the church is no longer capable of administering Christ's defeat to Satan. Now this is brought out very clearly in one particular verse in Galatians chapter 3 and verse 1. I have meditated on this verse now for at least ten years, probably longer.

When I first read the verse, like so many verses in the Bible, I just read it and I didn't think much about it. Gradually it impacted me more and more. I see in it myself today a key to understanding the problems of the church.

This is what Paul says. Now there are two versions according to different original texts. I'm going to follow the shorter version which is followed in the NIV and the NASB and probably others.

O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? Before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. Now that's an amazing statement. Probably you've never been sufficiently amazed by it.

But, Paul says to these Spirit-filled Christians, and you'll see in a few moments they've been saved, they've been baptized in the Spirit, they had witnessed and were witnessing miracles. But he says to them, who has bewitched you? Witchcraft is the primary word for the spiritual forces released from Satan's kingdom into the earth. So these, quote, Spirit-filled Christians.

And you know when I hear the word Spirit-filled and I see the lives of some people called Spirit-filled, I say, Yes, but just a thimbleful. You can fill a thimble, you can fill a cup, or you can fill a bath. All of them are filled but they don't contain the same amount.

But when I see the lives of Spirit-filled Christians I say to myself, They don't realize that Satan has a strategy against them of which they're not aware. Actually, I found myself in a situation in 1963. I don't want to go back into the details.

I had just immigrated to the United States. I'm one of the few people who immigrated to the United States by accident. Because I came for a visit.

The immigration authorities at the border told me that six months was too long for a visit. Well I said, Maybe you can help me because I don't want a lot of immigration authorities in different countries. And I know you never argue with them, you just put yourself at their mercy.

So they said, Come on in and we'll arrange it. And so that way, I with my first wife and our five-year-old adopted black African daughter, made it into the States. Now if we'd ever made application outside with that particular combination, we'd never have been accepted, you understand.

So that was God's way of sneaking us into the United States. Anyhow, I found myself a little while later pastoring a Pentecostal church in Seattle, Washington. I cannot go into the problems of that church.

But let me just briefly state what had happened, just to give you some kind of idea of what can happen to spirit-filled people. The wife of the pastor fell in love with one of the board members. And as a result, the pastor's wife divorced the pastor, the board member divorced his wife, and the pastor's wife and the board member married and carried on pastoring the church.

Now all this was publicly known, there was no secret about it. Well you'd say that couldn't happen in a Pentecostal church. It could and it did.

And when I talked with the people, they said to me, there's something about that woman. When she looks at you, your blood runs cold and you just don't know what to say. And she had actually gained total control over that congregation.

My first wife and I, Lydia and I, really we'd never been in a situation like that. I began to seek God, I didn't know what to do about it. Because, by that time she had moved out but the congregation was still under her domination.

And I read this verse, Foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? And I said, that's it, they're bewitched. I couldn't believe at first that, you know, Pentecostal Christians could be bewitched. But when I grasped the truth and Lydia and I took our stand, agreeing together in prayer, we broke that power, the congregation was released, the situation was restored.

But that was where I was first introduced to the reality of Galatians 3.1, Who has bewitched you? Now how did Paul know that they were bewitched? The second part of the verse tells us. They had lost the vision of Jesus Christ crucified. What had witchcraft done? It had moved in and obscured the reality of the cross and all that was obtained for them through the cross.

What was the result of losing the vision of Jesus Christ crucified? I believe this will always be the result. And I believe it's the result in many, many congregations today. They went into carnality and legalism.

And basically wherever you find legalism, it's the product of carnality. Even though it may sound extremely spiritual, and legalistic people often think they're more spiritual than others, nevertheless it's an expression of the flesh, of carnality and not of spirituality. And it goes together with the works of the flesh.

Let's read these next verses, verses 2 through 5, and I think you'll see the truth of what I've been saying. This only I want to learn from you. Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Notice, they had received the Spirit.

Are you so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? They had begun in the Spirit. Have you suffered so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vain? Therefore, he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Notice, God was working miracles among them. They were saved, baptized in the Spirit, and they had miracles taking place.

And yet, they were bewitched. And Paul says two results, expressed in this, the works of the law and the works of the flesh. Legalism, carnality.

Legalism is one of those words that Christians tend to use to criticize other Christians. So I'm going to offer you a definition so that it's not vague. As I understand legalism, it's the attempt to achieve righteousness with God by observing any set of rules whatever.

Whether it's the law of Moses or Pentecostal law or Baptist law or Catholic law, it makes no difference. Anyone who is seeking to achieve righteousness with God by observing a law or a set of rules, is in legalism. An alternative definition is this.

Legalism is adding anything whatever to the requirements which God has laid down for achieving righteousness with Him. And God has said all that is needed is to believe in Him who delivered Jesus to death for our offenses and raised Him again for our justification. No person, no church, no organization and no Bible teacher has any authority ever to add any requirement to achieving righteousness with God except that believing in the One who delivered Jesus for our sins and raised Him for our justification.

And any addition to that, in my understanding, is legalism. So here were people who had begun in the Spirit, who had seen miracles, but who had been tricked by Satan. Because Satan had obscured the reality of what took place on the cross and they'd gone back into fleshly attempts to please God by keeping rules.

Does that sound like anybody you've ever met? Does that sound like any churches you've ever been in? In America, and I'm not talking about other countries necessarily, but a lot of churches call themselves Grace Church. My observation is the ones that talk most about grace generally know least about it. They are centers of legalism.

Now, the result of this is even more shocking. It's stated in the tenth verse, Galatians 3.10. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. For it is written, cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Understand, if you're going to be justified by the law of Moses, you've got to keep the whole law all the time. And if you fail to do that and you've put yourself under the law, you bring a curse upon yourself. For the law itself says cursed is everyone who does not keep all the law all the time.

So, the result of this cross being obscured by Satan's activities were legalism, carnality and a curse. That's a solemn statement. I'll give you just one other Scripture which says in one verse what took place with the Galatians.

In Jeremiah 17 and verse 5. Thus says the Lord, Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength or his arm, whose heart departs from the Lord. The curse is pronounced on somebody of whom it says his heart departs from the Lord. So this is a person who has known the supernatural grace of God and experienced it in his life.

But then he turns back to making flesh his strength. In other words, he turns back to the best he can do by his own efforts. And in doing that, if I may use the phrase, he has snubbed the Spirit of grace.

He has in effect said to the Holy Spirit, You're not good enough. I think I can do it better my way. And on that behavior God pronounces a curse.

If you want to look at the next verse, you'll see as vivid a description of somebody under a curse in one verse as you could ever wish for. Jeremiah 17, verse 6. For he, the man under the curse, shall be like a

shrub in the desert and shall not see when good comes. He shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land which is not inhabited.

What a vivid picture of somebody under a curse. Blessings are all around him, rain falls, the earth is fruitful but it never reaches him. He lives in a dry, barren, cursed land.

Oh, how many hundreds of people are dealt with in that category. Since God has given me this understanding of how a curse operates and how people can be delivered. But I want to challenge you tonight to consider, as I've described the problem of the Galatians, could it be your problem? Could it be the problem of your church? Could it be perhaps the primary problem of the professing church today? Because almost every major movement in the church began with a supernatural, sovereign visitation of God.

Otherwise they would never have impacted history. No matter which denomination you go to, and I don't want to name any specific denomination. They began because God visited them sovereignly, with supernatural power.

How many of them today are relying on the same sovereign, supernatural power as gave them birth? I would say very few, if any. I introduce this message this way because I want you to see we're dealing with something that's real and current and extremely important. It's not some remote little group somewhere that's gone astray.

It's Satan's main weapon against the church of Jesus Christ, is to obscure the reality of the cross. And what results as I understand it, is that what I call the soulish, is substituted for the spiritual. Now man is spirit, soul and body.

The soul has its legitimate functions but it cannot take the place of the spirit. But when people move away from the supernatural and begin to rely on their own ability and efforts, they move out of the spiritual and into the soulish. I'll give you just a list of different ways that this manifests itself in a church, or the church.

These are just examples. I'm not making a law out of them, I'm just giving you some examples. But what I'm saying is, a religious substitute takes the place of the spiritual reality.

Here's a list of seven substitutions. As I go through them, just check and see. First of all, theology takes the place of revelation.

Theology is man's reasoning. It's making, what would I say, rules, inferences, but it's not direct revelation. Education takes the place of character building.

I think you should notice that Jesus never just taught people. They had to follow Him. In other words, it wasn't just intellectual knowledge but it was a lifestyle that was imparted.

It's very, very dangerous to train people intellectually and not deal with their character. Because the Scripture says the carnal mind is enmity against God. So when you educate the carnal mind you're educating an enemy of God.

And what you get at the end is an educated enemy of God. I would suggest to you the majority of seminaries today are producing educated enemies of God. I'm not trying to be dramatic, I just believe that's the way it is.

In a certain sense the main enemies of the gospel are the products of the seminaries. Thirdly, psychology is substituted for discernment, which is supernatural. Fourth, program is substituted for supernatural direction, the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Fifth, eloquence is substituted for supernatural power. Sixth, reasoning is substituted for the walk of faith. And seventh, laws take the place of love.

I'll say that very quickly again. And as I do it I just want you to think how much of it is relevant to your situation. Theology in place of revelation, education in place of character building, psychology in place of discernment, program in place of supernatural leading of the Holy Spirit, eloquence in place of supernatural power, reasoning in place of the walk of faith, and laws in place of love.

Let me ask you a question. If you happen to know any Christians you would categorize as legalistic, if you happen to know them. Would you say they're very loving? Somebody came up with the right answer.

See, laws and love in the Christian life tend to compete with one another. The people who are busy keeping and enforcing laws are often remarkably unloving people. If you want the standard biblical illustration, it's the Pharisees.

Have you noticed how many miracles of Jesus they objected to? Blind eyes were opened, blind people walked, they never once expressed satisfaction at that. All they objected to was He was breaking their rules of the Sabbath. You'd thought even a Pharisee with a heart of stone would be glad when somebody who was born blind had his eyes open.

Not so. They don't keep the Sabbath. Or, he doesn't keep the Sabbath.

All right, now, the important thing about Galatians is that not only does it reveal the problem, it reveals God's solution. To me this is a wonderful example of the inspiration of Scripture. Because Paul didn't write a theological treatise.

He sat down probably in some very difficult situation and dashed off a letter because he was deeply concerned about the Galatians. It's a comical thing about the Galatians. Their problem, as I've said, was legalism.

Paul wrote letters to other churches and almost invariably he begins by thanking God for the churches he was writing to. He wrote to the Corinthians. There was incest, adultery, drunkenness at the Lord's table.

And he still thanked God for the grace of God given to them. But when he comes through the Galatians he is so upset that he doesn't thank God for them, he simply says, I marvel that you have so soon moved away from the grace of God. Legalism disturbed him much more than open sin.

It's a much subtler and more dangerous problem. All right, now let's look at the remedies. This is why I've entitled this message, The Cross in Me.

I want to make this very personal to everybody here. You see, it's one thing to get excited about what God has done for you on the cross. It's quite different to embrace what the cross is intended to do in you.

I have to say in my present, in the circles in which I move at present, there's very little mention made of what the cross is intended to do in us. And I would say, in my opinion, ninety percent of the church's problems are due to that one fact. You see, in the long run you will not enjoy the benefits of what the cross

has done for you, unless you accept what the cross is intended to do in you.

The cross in you is the safeguard of all the blessings and provisions of the cross for you. Galatians states five deliverances that are provided for us through the cross. I want to go through them in the order in which they occur.

The first one is stated in Galatians 1, verses 3 and 4. I think it's one, my guess would be ninety percent of you have never even thought about it. I may be wrong, if I am, forgive me. One of the reasons I say that is I went a long while as a Christian and a preacher without thinking about it myself.

All right, Galatians 1, verses 3 and 4. Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins on the cross, that he might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of God. So through the cross God has provided deliverance from this present evil age. Now there are two Greek words that are used in Galatians and it's necessary to separate them.

The King James and even the New King James doesn't observe the distinction all the time. The word used here in Greek is aion, from which we get the English word aeon. And it means an age, a period of time.

The other word which is also used in Galatians 6.14 and we'll come to it at the end of this series of studies, is cosmos. Which is translated world. I'll talk about world later but let's look for a moment at the concept of age.

We are living in a certain age. There were other ages before us and there will be ages after this. And this present age is called an evil age.

I'll show you very specifically why it's an evil age. But let's first of all take note of the fact the present age is going to end. If you live as though it were never going to end, you're living under a delusion.

Personally when I say the present age is going to end, you know what I say next? Thank God! I wouldn't want this age to continue the way it is forever. Look at the parables of Jesus in Matthew chapter 13. You know, this is the chapter with the seven parables.

And I don't intend to go into the parables, I just want to take some quotations. Interpreting the parable of the wheat and the tares in verse 39, Jesus says, The enemy who sowed the tares is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age. And in the next verse He says, Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.

And in verse 48 in another parable He says again, So it will be at the end of the age. And you can find many other Scriptures. But it's extremely important for us always to remember, the present age is going to end.

It is not permanent. If we live and think as if it were permanent, we're living under a delusion. And the power behind that delusion is witchcraft.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/qL1h8KDf9t8.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/derek-prince/the-cross-in-my-life-part-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net