

# Bible Portraits of Christ 07 Bearing His Brand Mark

by James Booker

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*The sermon explores the significance of bearing the marks of Christ in a believer's life, emphasizing spiritual transformation and commitment to the Gospel.*

**Duration:** 41:20

**Scripture:** Galatians 5:13, Galatians 5:26 - 6:2, Galatians 6:11-12, Galatians 6:14

**Topics:** "Christian Living", "Fruit Of Faith"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the book of Galatians and its three main parts. The first two chapters address the personal aspect of the gospel and Paul's concern for preserving the true gospel of God. The next two chapters delve into the doctrinal aspects of the gospel, providing detailed explanations. The final two chapters highlight the practical side of the gospel, emphasizing the commitment to Christ and the marks that should be seen in the lives of believers, such as fruit bearing, burden bearing, seed bearing, and brand bearing. The speaker encourages the audience to reflect on these marks and evaluate if they are present in their own lives.

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## Transcript

It is a joy to be with you through the week and to fellowship together, one with another, and also around the Word of God. Shall we turn, please, to Galatians, Chapter 6? The book of Galatians, please, Chapter 6. I will begin reading at verse 11. Galatians, Chapter 6. Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you in mine own hand, as many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised.

Only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ, for neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law. For desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor non-circumcision, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be unto them, and mercy upon the Israel of God. From henceforth let no man trouble me, but I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirits. Amen. Again, just like to the Lord's great lean prayer, our gracious Father, we thank thee for the Lord Jesus Christ afresh.

What will it be to dwell above and with the Lord of glory reign? In the meantime, our Father, we have been singing of his mighty love. We have been considering his blessed name, and through the week we have been considering some of the various characteristics of our Savior as revealed in the Word of God, who grant then in these few moments together we might be challenged, erected by the Holy Spirit of God, and cause us to leave here this evening with a desire to live for Christ. For this we pray in his worthy and precious name.

Amen. I'd like to consider with you this evening bearing the brand marks of the Lord Jesus Christ, or if we care to put it another way, are you a marked Christian? Are you a marked Christian? During the week we have been looking at some of the marks, some of the portraits of Christ. We've been noticing his hands, and his feet, and his head all wounded for us.

We've been noticing his face marred, his eyes of love and grace, and also we've been noticing his touch. I'd like to consider with you tonight just kind of reverse things a little bit and then wonder how many of the marks of Christ are seen in our life. He shows us his wounds.

You remember how he gathered among his own, and he showed them his hands, and his feet, and his side. He said, behold, behold. Now here Paul is saying, I have marks of the Lord Jesus Christ in my life, and we want to consider that for a little while this evening, and trust it might be a challenge to your heart as it has been to mine.

In the book of Galatians, this is a very interesting and challenging book. It's divided very simply into three parts. The first two chapters have a very personal touch to it.

In those first two chapters, the apostle Paul is deeply concerned, as he is throughout the whole of the book of Galatians, with the thought of the gospel of God. There were those who were seeking to mar, or hinder, or try if they might destroy the true gospel of God, and Paul was deeply concerned in this particular letter that that might not be so. And we notice as we go through this epistle that Paul, I think more than any of his other epistles, seems to be very dogmatic and strong, emphatic, not turning to the left, to the right, looking straight down the line and saying, this is the gospel of God.

And let's not turn either way, let's keep on to the truth of the Lord. And so, in those first two chapters, he deals with the personal aspect, how the gospel affected his own life, and then in the next two chapters, chapters three and four, he gets involved in the doctrine relating to the gospel, and he goes into detail describing to us the doctrinal aspects of the gospel in a masterful way. And in the last two chapters of this book, he deals with the practical side of the gospel, and he shows that there's a personal aspect to it of a commitment to Christ, there's a doctrinal aspect, but there's also a practical aspect that the gospel is a gospel of liberation, a gospel whereby the Holy Spirit of God comes into our life and liberates us not only from the bondage of sin, but from the power of sin and enables us to walk to the glory of God.

And Paul seems to close on a very triumphant note by saying here in verse 17, from henceforth let no man trouble me, but I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, I want you to notice how in this little passage we've read tonight, he's been talking much about circumcision. He has told us in verse 12, they constrain you to be circumcised.

In verse 13, for neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law, but it is I to have you circumcised. In verse 15, for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision. So, you see, Paul is very much concerned about the fact that some of these Jewish false teachers had been coming from Jerusalem, they had been coming in among the Galatian saints, and they had been emphasizing the fact that you could not be a child of God, you could not be saved unless you have the mark of circumcision.

That was a must as far as they were concerned. Now, Paul has been fighting this all the way through his epistle, and now he makes a contrast between the mark of circumcision with the mark of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, we've been hearing much about the mark of circumcision.

We've been hearing much about the mark of Moses in relation to the Old Testament, but he said, beloved, I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ. We all have marks of one kind or another. Some have birthmarks, and of course when you come south, it's not very long before you have sun marks.

When you, I know as soon as I go back to Onorah, they will say, I see you went out in the sun, the marks will be there. It'll be seen. It'll be obvious if I trust it will be by the time I get back to Onorah.

Many of us have scar marks. Perhaps some have war marks. Some have disease marks.

Many have worried marks, and those marks have been erased, at least not erased, but just implanted in that face so that there's a worry mark standing out rather clearly. Some have vaccination marks, and so the marks continue on. Many have operation marks.

I remember a year and a half or so ago when we took a group to the Holy Land and on to Athens. I had an accident while in Athens, and they rushed me off to the hospital, and when I got eventually into this room with 17 other hospital patients, one large room, we could not communicate because our language of course just didn't work together, and so these folk wanted to be very helpful to me and wanted to show their interest, and so what they did, these men came around and they were showing me their operation marks. Rather an interesting time we had looking at operation marks.

They seemed to be rather proud of them, and so we do have marks of one kind or another, but I wonder if we do have the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ in our life. Let's think about that then, shall we, for a few moments. When Paul says, from henceforth let no man trouble me, he's saying I want to hear no more of this idea of circumcision.

I don't want to hear any more of this idea that we have to work and strive in order to obtain salvation. He said, I've gone into this in tremendous detail, and he said, away with that, no more of that, and then as an added comment he said, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, the word marks is an interesting word.

In the Greek language, it simply means stigmata, and it's from this word that we get the word stigma, and apparently this particular word really means a brand, and it has in mind a long pointed instrument which apparently they used in those days for branding, and they would heat this instrument up, this pointed instrument, and they would brand mark upon certain people. Not merely animals, but certain people. So, apparently it was common in Paul's day to see certain brand marks embedded in the flesh of certain people.

In fact, there are at least five different illustrations of this in the way that brands were used in the day of the Apostle Paul. For example, slaves were very prominent. Some fifty percent, apparently, of the Roman Empire was in slavery, and as the slaves, in fact, in Galatia, in Phrygia, this was the center of the slave market for the whole of the Roman Empire, and here the slaves were sold to the highest bidder, and one of the first things the master would do, the new owner would do, he would take this branding point, this heated branding point, and he would mark his specific mark upon that slave, and that slave was marked out from that point on as being owned by the new master.

In fact, as you go through the book of Galatians, you find that frequently words relating to the slave market are brought before us. If you go back to verse 5 in chapter 1, he speaks about liberty, which is linked with the thought of slavery and being set free. You have the word free, you have the word entangled, you have the word yoke, you have the word bondage, and some have gone through the book and have found at least 40 different words that were associated with the slave market of that day which Paul used when he wrote to these dear saints at Galatia.

So, think of that first illustration that Paul, I'm sure, had in mind, the slave market, the branding of the slave. Paul says, I bear in my body the brand of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul pictured himself on the slave market of sin.

The savior comes, he bids the praise, the highest praise, his precious blood, and now Paul can step forward and say, I've been bought with a price, I'm not my own. Christ has bought me with his precious blood, and he says he's branded his name upon me. I'm his, and I'm his for life.

And how frequently in the gospel, at least in the epistle, he's delighted to speak of himself as the bond slave of Jesus Christ, the bond slave of Jesus Christ. Are we marked out with that particular mark in our life, beloved? When we think of all the things our savior has done for us, some of those things of which we've been considering through the week, have we come to the place in our life where we say, I bear in my body the mark, the marks of the Lord Jesus, the ownership of Christ. I'm his completely.

I'm not my own. Bought with a price. You remember back in Exodus chapter 21, they had that law in the days of the Hebrews where a slave would work for six years.

At the end of the six years, he was allowed to go out free. However, if during that six-year period he married a woman who was also a slave, and during that six-year period they had a child or two, at the end of the six years he was allowed to go free, but he couldn't take his wife with him. She had to remain.

He couldn't take his children with him. They had to remain as well. And you recall that if he didn't want to leave his wife, if he loved his wife, if he loved his children, if he loved his master, he would say to the master, I love you and I love my family, and he said, I don't want to go out free.

I want to be your slave, a willing slave, for the rest of my life. Then you remember he had a mark placed upon him, and you recall how he was taken to the door, and there was a hole drilled through his ear, and so from that point on, if his children said, Father, how come that mark? He could sit down and say, well, I'll tell you. There was a time, Cain, when I had the choice of being free or remaining as a slave.

If I was to be free, I'd have to leave you behind, but I loved you too much, and I was willing to bear this mark, to take this suffering in order to remain with you and have you remain with me. Our Savior has gone through that for us. His mark sits at his point of the mouth, in his hands and his feet.

He said, it was my desire to have you with me. I loved the master, you recall that, and I loved you, and I gave my life for you, and now we're to be united to him eternally, never to be separated. On the other hand, are we willing to say, Lord, I love you.

I don't want to be my own master. I want to be under your control completely. I want thy brand upon me from this moment on.

The brand of the Lord Jesus. Then notice, please, in connection with this brand, as we mentioned a few moments ago, it has the problem of stigma, and the only way to use this particular mark or brand in the days of the Apostle Paul, if there was a criminal who was a dangerous type who had served a sentence, but he was a person that could be very, very dangerous, they would put a mark on him. They would brand him before they would let him free, so that as he mixed among society, they would see this particular person with this special mark, and they would know he was a dangerous criminal.

He was marked for life, and as a result, he became an outcast. As soon as they would see that mark, they would have nothing to do with him. He was rejected by the multitude as a whole.

Paul says, I have the mark of Christ upon me, and he said, the moment that mark has been placed upon me, I have become an outcast as far as the world is concerned. He said, I'm outcast with Christ. I'm identified with him, and you remember when Paul made a stand for Christ, how the persecution began, and how the hatred that he had toward the Christian now just reversed.

But, nevertheless, Paul says, I have the brand of the Lord Jesus. I'm identified now with a despised and rejected savior, and then you recall possibly that in connection with this branding, they did it in another situation, because as you know then, there were many temples around, and all sorts of false gods that they worshiped, and many of the devotees of these various gods, when they became so devoted, they would go to the priest or the priestess of this particular god and said, I want to dedicate myself to this particular god. They would take that person, and they would take this branding iron, and they would brand him with the name of that god upon him as a mark of his devotion for the rest of his life to that god, and whenever Paul would walk around, perhaps he would see certain ones with a brand of some particular god, false god, upon them.

Said the apostle Paul, I have the brand of Christ. For me to live Christ, if I want Christ to be magnified in my body, whether by way or by death, I want Christ to be seen in and through my life. He lives within.

I want to see him, his life, live out through me. He was devoted 100 percent to his Lord. This was also used regarding occasions when enemies were captured, and they would bring them in, and they would brand them, and they would mark them out as a mark of resentment or hatred, which would be rather similar to the idea of a criminal being marked out as well, and one other way in which they used this marking was in the army, so we're told, and apparently in the armed services of that day, if the soldier became quite taken up with his captain, with his leader, that they'd gone through a good battle.

They had noticed the valor and the bravery of that particular soldier, the leader. They desired, then, to be branded with the name of that captain upon them, as being identified with that particular group under that particular captain, and to him it was an honor to have that name branded on him, all as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. What an honor it was for him to say, Christ is branded upon my life.

No doubt, basically, behind Paul's words would be the fact that up and down his back, as well as the front of his body, there would be the scars and the marks of the whipping, of the flogging, of the imprisonment, of his hands and feet in the stocks, of being dragged through the city, and he could take off his outer garments and show the marks, the liberal marks, of his life in identification with Christ. Now, we're not called upon to have such physical marks. It might be, and it might not, but, beloved, we are called upon to bear in our body the marks of Christ's ownership in our life, and as you read through the last part of the book of Galatians, you find that some of those marks are brought out here.

As many of you have noticed, I'm sure, that the word there is mentioned a number of times, at least four times in the last two chapters, and as a result, we have in the latter part of chapter five, fruit-bearing, which should be true of every child of God, and then when you come to chapter six, verses one to five, you have burden-bearing, and that should be a mark that should be seen in the lives of all Christians. In verse seven and nine, you have seed-bearing, as we go forth bearing the precious seed of God's Word, and finally in the latter part of this particular chapter, you have brand-bearing, fruit-bearing, and burden-bearing, and seed-bearing, and brand-bearing. Now, let's think of some of the marks that should be seen in your life very quickly.

Mark number one. Do you have it? I believe you all claim to have it. The birthmark.

The birthmark. Notice what he says, please, in verse 615, that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. He said, away with circumcision.

Let's not get involved with certain ordinances, certain duties and duress. Are you a new creature in Christ Jesus? Have you been born again? And as you go through this epistle, he speaks about the fact that we have faith that we are in the family of God. We're children of God by faith of Jesus Christ.

He speaks again and again about the fact that when we put our trust in Christ, the Holy Spirit comes into our life, and we're born of God. It's John chapter three all over again. Do you have that particular mark? I'm sure everyone possibly, or most everyone, could stand up and say tonight, thank God I have the spiritual birthmark.

I've been born again. I go back to such a time in my life, and I remember that moment when the Spirit of God came into my life when I was born from above. Thank God for that birthmark.

But how about the growth mark? How about the growth mark? And the growth mark, I suggest to you, has to do with the fruit of the Spirit. Remember in verse 22 of chapter five that the fruit of the Spirit is love, and joy, and peace, and longsuffering, and gentleness, and goodness, faith, meekness, temperance against such there is no law. And there you have the Godward aspect, and then the not only the Godward aspect here, but the manward aspect, the selfward aspect.

For example, you notice these nine manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit divide into three parts. Love, joy, and peace. That's the Godward aspect.

As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, this love which he has imparted to our life begins to grow and develop. That love that paths of all understanding, that love which is unmeasurable, that love, beloved, has been imparted by the Holy Spirit of God. Romans chapter 5 and verse 5, the love of God has been shed upon our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.

And with that love, also he gives us his joy. He gives us his joy, joy unspeakable and full of glory. He gives us his peace, that path of all understanding.

These are things that come from him, with God's very nature, and now that is implanted to us and is developed through us by the Holy Spirit of God. Is love growing in your life? Is the joy of the world growing and developing in us? Do you bear in your body the marks of the Lord Jesus? They are the marks of Christ. He is love.

His joy was full. We have all the fullness of peace in him. Is that being manifested in your life and mind? Do you bear in your body the mark, those marks of the Lord Jesus Christ? But notice again, we're just touching these, just scratching the surface.

Notice, please, in verse 1 of chapter 6, and here we have the mark of spirituality. The mark of spirituality. Whethern if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

You see, what God is, what Paul is concerned about here is the concern for one another. That's one thing that I notice here as part of the poem. Perhaps more than any other place I've gone to is that God has given to the Lord's people here a concern, one for the other, and it's delightful to see, and it's something that one could be thankful for and rejoicing.

But we need to have that tremendous concern. Notice when you go back, for example, in verse 13 of chapter 5, by love serve one another. Serve one another.

We go on to verse 26 of the same chapter, provoke one another. But, of course, I'm reading out of context, right? Let us not be desires of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. And we know how the flesh begins to develop that sort of attitude among God's people.

And so, as this spirit of concern, one for another, is developed by the Holy Spirit of God within, it will lead to entering into the reality of verse 1 of chapter 6. Notice, for example, the condition that is suggested here. The condition is this. Here's a man overtaken, overtaken in a fault.

Now, the word fault is sin. It's translated trespass, or sin, or offense many times in the rest of the New Testament. And here is someone who has been trapped, as the form of overtaken suggests, has been trapped into a sin.

Now, it doesn't tell us what that sin might be, but you know, and I know, beloved, and this is something we have to constantly remind ourselves about, we're all offended in some things, and what seems to be a tragedy to one person does not seem that way to another. In other words, some people have a personality that is rather easygoing. Other people have a personality that is very, very hard to get along with.

These are personalities that we seem to have been born with, characteristics that we have. Some lose their temper quickly, and others seem to be more even-tempered. These are things we seem to have before we come into salvation, and perhaps some who have a more even temper, they have a little problem putting up with people who are always flying off the handle, always just being all upset about every little thing that happens.

Or perhaps here is one, and their particular scene in life is the sin of gossip, and they're just quite involved in that area of gossip. The telephone's a terrific place at gossip, and other places too, and that they're

involved in things like that. Maybe in this case over here, here is someone who just has a spirit of bitterness, and it just seems that no matter what happens, it just develops a bitter spirit in their heart.

Here's someone else over here, and their problem is jealousy, and so it goes on. And we search our own hearts, and we know that we fit into one of the characteristics of the flesh in one form or another, but the trouble is we look at someone who perhaps hasn't got the problem, or at least has a problem we don't have, and we do not have the love and the concern for them that we ought to. And Paul is saying here the mark of a child of God that's growing, a spiritual mark, is a concern for one who is trapped in a sin, whatever that sin might be.

Sometimes some are more inclined toward a sexual type sin than some other type of sin, and we sort of maybe stand off in horror and say, I have nothing to do with them, I wipe my hands and the whole thing, and we take a kind of a holier-than-thou attitude, and not realizing that the spirit of the Lord is concerned about us, the spirit of concern and love for our brother and sisters. A condition overtaken in the hope, but notice beloved the concern that we should have. It says, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.

Now, that word meekness is a word that kind of hangs up so often, does it not? You have seen, I'm sure, in programs that's often portrayed on television and places like that, and isn't it interesting whenever they portray the... if there happens to be a minister in that particular flock, it happens to be someone who just seems to be a boy of intelligence, and stumbling around, and just someone who ought not to be into anything. Kind of a meek, very mild person, and with no idea which way they're going. That's the concept the world has, and when we think of meekness, sometimes we think of it that way.

I remember some years ago, hearing Mr. Brown was speaking on the truth of the spirit, and when he spoke about meekness, he made a point by saying that in his younger Christian days, when he thought of the word meekness, what came to his mind for a number of years as a young Christian was a little insignificant man with horn-rimmed glasses and so on, hiding under a bed, and looking up out from under the bed, and seeing a great big woman with her hands on her hips looking down at him, and with a very stern look, and him saying under the bed, shaking, I mean to be the master in my house, and to him that was the idea of meekness. I think many of us get that idea that meekness is sort of like that, but you know the point of meekness comes from a word that in the Greek setting, it was identified with the horse of time, a horse that was being prepared for the war, and as they were about to go in the battle, the horse was there waiting, waiting for the master, the owner, or the one in control of the horse to climb on, take the reins, and to guide that horse into battle into the exact place the master wanted to go. That's meekness.

Meekness is that strong healthy horse, not fearing the battle, but meekly willing to allow one to take over the reins, and to guide him in all his strength to the battle, and the Lord is looking for saints of God developing in their lives through the spirit of God, the spirit of meekness and submissiveness to Christ, that he might take over the reins of our life and guide us, and what is the final point here in this verse? It's that we might restore, that we might restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, and that word restore, as most of you know, is a word that is translated in the New Testament to mend. When they were mending their necks, it's the same word, and it's a medical word, apparently. It's a word that indicates taking a bone that has been broken, and carefully putting it back together again, mending the joint, mending the bone.

Now, that's a painful thing. That's a very delicate thing. At camp, frequently we have some who break a bone.

Maybe they fall off the swings, or something else around, maybe from the top of the cabin sometimes, or from the top of the bunk, and they have a broken bone, and you're there trying to help, but they don't want you near, and you have to be careful. You have to be concerned. You can do more harm than good if you don't know what you're doing, and beloved, there are many saints of God who have been overtaken in problems.

I'm sure you look around me from the park here, and you know there are some that they haven't got away from the Lord, or perhaps they're in a state of bitterness, and maybe your attitude toward them too at this point is that, well, I just can't be bothered with them anymore. To me, what's a spiritual, some of the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ, is to seek to restore, seek to mend, seek to heal in love and consideration one for the other, considering ourselves lest we be tempted, because what for the grace of God, beloved, will we be tonight? May the Lord challenge our hearts that as we go forth this night, we might be concerned that we bear in our body, as He's borne in His body so many marks for us, may we bear in our body the marks of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Father, we commit ourselves to thee now in our Savior's precious name, and pray that, beloved, through the Spirit of God, challenge our hearts.

We long, Father, to know the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. We long to have that concern one for another. We long that Christ might be magnified in our body, whether by life or by death.

And we long, as Paul longed, for those donations that Christ might be formed in them. And to this end, our Father, we desire that Thou wouldst search our hearts, and that we might present ourselves to Thee afresh, and say, Lord, take my life. Let it be consecrated wholly for Thee.

Let us be praying our Savior's worthy and precious name. Amen.

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