

# Galatians 2:14 Kennington

by John Nelson Darby

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*The sermon explores the fundamental principles of Christianity, emphasizing justification by faith and the believer's connection to God through Christ and the Holy Spirit.*

**Scripture:** John 12:32, John 14:6, Romans 6:6, Romans 8:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:18, Colossians 3:1-2, Hebrews 10:14, 1 John 2:15-17

**Topics:** "Justification By Faith", "Living By Faith"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the core principles of the Gospel in his sermon on Galatians 2:14, focusing on justification by faith and the complete revelation of God through Jesus Christ. He contrasts the limitations of Judaism and the law with the grace and access to God provided through Christ and the Holy Spirit. Darby explains that while the law served to reveal sin, it could not bring true redemption, which is found in the sacrifice of Christ. He urges believers to recognize their identity in Christ, having died to sin and being made alive in Him, and to live by faith, not by the distractions of the world. Ultimately, he calls for a heart fully devoted to Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

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## Transcript

This epistle, generally, deals with the fundamental principles of the gospel, i.e., justification by faith, and another which I will speak of.

The Galatians had received Judaism, and it was that which made the apostle stand in doubt about them.

But Christianity is the fullest revelation of God, first in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ - "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" and in the work of the Lord Jesus, and then in the gift of the Holy Ghost which followed; the full revelation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, i.e., the Godhead fully revealed. And, now, "through him [i.e., Christ] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." These are things which the angels desire to look into, elementary to Christianity though they are.

But the world into which God has sent salvation is utter vanity; and the Lord Jesus Christ "gave himself for our sins, so that he should deliver us out of this present evil world"; a world indeed whose true character is brought out by Christ's coming into it, as He says, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me," and again, "Now is the judgment of this world." Our place is this, we are in a world which is in utter darkness from Christ having gone out of it ("The night is far spent"); it is here that we are, and it is here that we have this revelation of the Father,

Son, and Holy Ghost. While Christ was in the world, He was the light of it, but the Light has now gone to a much brighter and more blessed scene.

In Galatia, Judaizing teachers had brought in the law, and it seemed plausible to insist upon it. But the law had power over a man only so long as he lived. Judaism belonged to this world, it was set up to try if man could walk with God in it.

Only God could not then reveal Himself to man. He dwelt in the thick darkness. Quite true His cloud filled the tabernacle, but what was the effect? Just this, that man could not go in. That was under law, i.e., the rule for man here, but not for heaven and a heavenly people; you do not talk of "killing" in heaven, or about stealing or false witness.

62 The Lord could pick out two words in it which went beyond this, but it was more contrast than likeness after all, shewing still that man could not be with God. It dealt with man on the earth, God saying, as it were, "I am behind the veil, and nobody must come near Me." Indeed that was so.

The law was provisional with its washings and carnal ordinances that enabled a man to have to say to God, while He was still behind a veil. Had God displayed His glory, they would all have been cut off in their sins. By means of sacrifices certain legal failures were met, so that the people might go on; but they were still in the world.

Under it there was a continual memorial of sins. Sins were not absolutely put away. It was thus a provision that intimated something better was to come; but the veil was unrent and the repetition of the sacrifices showed that the work was not done. It was grace in a provisional way only.

Looked at simply and purely, the law is condemnation to everybody, for the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins. It was a dealing with man as man down here, testing him. That was the great point of the law. It did not say that men were lost; it turned out they were, when they found it was spiritual, and they came to judge themselves; but they were under probation for our instruction while God was testing them.

And then another step was taken. Christ came, and God was in Christ; and there at last, God comes out, though that is only half the truth.

He clothed Himself with humiliation and dwelt with men in perfect goodness and in perfect love, removing every outward evil that sin had brought in; the Holy and the Blessed One passed through this world, manifesting the Father Himself amongst men where they were.

This was no law sent to men to require them to be something in order to come up to God and answer for themselves. It was grace.

And in it all, I find God sovereign above evil. He did not come to seek righteous men but sinners, and just because they were sinners; if the heart has found redemption, it is blessed to turn back and take the gospels and see all that He was there. The perfect goodness and love of God brought down even lower, in a sense, than men, that men might learn what God in goodness is.

63 Yet the Lord must say, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain."

If He came into a world that was sinful, for His love He had hatred; His presentation among men was the last thing God could attempt, and, by itself, it only increased the sinfulness of man. All that passed in the

midst of Judaism. By itself, His presentation would never have made a basis for Christianity, because there was no atonement made. In John 12, directly He takes the place of the Son of man, His widest title, He says, I must die or else I must abide alone.

In His dying for us the foundation of Christianity was laid. He was "lifted up," not crucified on the earth, as He says, "Lifted up from the earth." He must be an entirely rejected Christ, and that unto death, or there could be no point of attraction for men.

There were promises to the Jews and He was "minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers"; but man's sin must be thoroughly brought out; not merely his sins, but the state he is in. Sins were there, no doubt, plenty; and as God looks down upon the world, what does He see but corruption and violence?

Now that the whole world has rejected the Son of God, its day of probation is over, so that it is said, "Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

And yet in another sense, the end of the world has not come; but when you talk of God's dealings with man, as man in this world, it had come to an end. He could do no more for His vineyard than He had done, it was all of no use. Whether as without law, or as under law, or with Christ Himself among them, they would have God upon no terms whatever.

Then I see in the cross that man, in Christ, is gone from the world; on the other hand, He says Himself, "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do," and there you have man glorifying God in the place of sin.

So the whole thing is morally settled.

I get perfect sin in man, if I may use such an expression, because it was hatred against God acting in love, and I get this

Blessed One perfect in His love to His Father, and perfect in obedience in the very place where He is "made sin."

64 Therefore, you see, the whole work as regards God's judgment, and what glorified God as the ground of God's dealings, was complete and finished; and what is the consequence?

Man goes right up into the glory of God.

The hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father; but the world was done with. "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." All was at an end before God.

People say, "But did not God create these things?" To be sure He did, but the devil makes people use them to reject Christ. You can't have them in connection with the Father, because they are of the world which rejected the Son; "The friendship of the world is enmity with God."

Since the rending of the vail, there can no longer be any religion for the world as such. Christ "gave himself for our sins, so that he should deliver us out of this present evil world"; and so He sends the Holy Ghost down to those who believe on Him, to connect them with Himself in heaven.

A real Christian, then, is a man who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and is sealed with the Holy Ghost. He is thus entirely connected with the Lord in heaven.

Just as the Lord came out of heaven to the earth, so now man has gone in to the glory of God; that is the other side of the truth; and it is as our Forerunner, too.

This is the complete salvation that I get when I get Christianity.

There is nothing of the flesh in Christianity, and nothing for the flesh. The apostle had been a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but now he does not know even Christ after the flesh; and therefore he asks the Colossians, "Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" They that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; and the law applies to all that; but I have died in Christ, and the whole question now is one of connection with Him. We are passing through the world which rejected Him, but we are connected with Him in glory. He came in love, and is gone in righteousness, and we are "made the righteousness of God in him" that which is fit for heaven, and nothing else is. Sealed with the Holy Ghost, I stand between the first coming of that Blessed One, and His second coming to put me into the full place that He has earned for me. My sins are totally gone for ever. I have not merely forgiveness at any given moment for what I have done; blessedly true though that is, it is only half the truth. But Christ has offered one sacrifice for sin, one only, and that, at the end of the world; if that has not wrought for me a perfect acceptance and justification, I shall never have one, because He cannot die again, "for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world." If there is any sin left for Christ to clear me of, He must die again and shed His blood again to do it, and that cannot be.

65 But, having made propitiation by His blood, Christ is in the presence of God for us, and therefore, when I go to God at any time, imputation is impossible, or God would deny both the Christ who is before Him, and what He has done.

I have to humble myself for my faults, and the deeper the better, but if I allow imputation, I am denying the efficacy of Christ's work.

Anything less is nothing better than mere priestly absolution; but that cannot be now, because God has accepted this one offering, and Christ is sitting. Sitting is an emphatic word. "Sit!" The priests of old never did, but Christ does; He has sat down in continuity from henceforth expecting until His enemies be made His footstool.

Then, He will rise up for judgment.

Now, for His friends He is sitting there.

Other blessed truths come in in their place; but as regards our standing, God never remembers our sins and iniquities any more; and the worshipper once purged has no more conscience of sins.

I insist upon this because it is most vital.

If your sins - I speak as to the work done for them, I am not talking about your feelings as to them - if your sins are not put away by the blood of Christ - I speak to Christians - they never can be. But He has borne my sins in His own body on the tree, and I am as white as snow.

Then another thing. There is the nature - the flesh. What about that? That is not sin committed. Nor does its existence in me give me a bad conscience; if it did, I never should have a good one. But how have I to deal with it? I am crucified with Christ. I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. But under the law you cannot live unto God; I am crucified with Christ; it is not merely that Christ has died - been crucified, but I have died - been crucified with Him. So in Romans 8, "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, [for sin, not for sins] condemned sin in the flesh."

66 Where did God condemn sin in the flesh? On the cross. Thank God! It is all condemned and done with; where it was condemned it died. Ah! then the condemnation is over, gone, and I, as in the flesh before God, am gone, and now have nothing more to say to it.

If I look at myself as a child of God, I say, I died as a child of Adam on the cross.

Whose child are you, then?

I am God's child, and I do not own the flesh any more. So he says, "Yield yourselves unto God as those who are alive from the dead."

I accept death unto sin also, and I do not belong to this world, or its religion; no, nor would I have it for I have Christ in the glory of God.

The apostle does not talk of sin in Philippians, because, though going through the world, he has passed out of that condition entirely, and is there simply seen as running through the world towards the prize.

So now, we know God revealed, not hidden behind a veil, and our place is with Christ where He is.

In Romans the Christian is always viewed upon earth; he has died to sin, is alive in Christ, and is perfectly justified; he is walking through the world in that condition, and has to yield himself up to God.

In Colossians you get him dead, as in Romans, but also risen with Christ, and he has a hope laid up for him in heaven.

In Ephesians you get a step further, as there he is sitting in the heavenly places.

Each of these three is a Christian state, so far.

And now let us see how the Christian lives. You cannot live in this world without an object before you; so he says, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." How far can we say that we live by the faith of the Son of God? "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," that will be by the faith of the Son of God.

67 I may fail, but here he speaks as a Christian.

And mark how this acts upon the heart and the affections, it is He "who loved me and gave himself for me."

You get two things connected together: Christ lives in me, and is this blessed object, and I have the certainty of His deep affection for me. He has laid down His life for me, and I live by the faith of Him. How far can we say that?

His death has closed the whole history of man in the flesh. He loved us and gave Himself for our sins, and now He is the Firstborn among many brethren. Then are we living for Christ, or has the world got hold of our hearts? It is possible to live like Lot for a time. Are we living in association of faith with Christ in heaven or are we living in this world?

The time is short; it is the time of God's longsuffering now, and Peter says, He "is ready to judge the quick and the dead."

God knows the moment when grace will cease to gather souls to Christ in glory. Be assured there is reality with God; "We walk by faith, not by sight." Which are we living by? Faith or sight?

Things to attract are stretched out on every hand. Shops are full of things everywhere; we know well what that is, but do we allow all that? Or are we so living by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us, that the world and the devil cannot distract us? We are liable to it, all of us. But can we say, "This one thing I do"?

The Lord is patient in His love, but are we with purpose of heart living to Him who died for us and rose again? We know how far short we come, but still, is there a perfect heart with us so that our conscience is good? Conscience is purged and made perfect before God, by the blood of Christ, but I speak of it now in a practical sense.

There is for us the present joy of having Christ in our hearts, by the power of the Holy Ghost, until we reach that blessed day, when He shall come and take us to be with Himself.

The great truth and essence of Christianity is that it takes the heart out of this world, and fixes it on Christ. It makes us live by Christ, on Christ, and to Christ.

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