

Contribute absolutely nothing in terms of your right standing with God, in terms of being declared righteous, in the realm of justification. They have absolutely no merit at all. It is grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. And that's the logical conclusion to which you must come if you take your doctrines to their appropriate places, if they're right.

So the call of the text then is this, take doctrines to their logical conclusions. And there's three doctrines that we're going to see Paul bring up here in particular. Take the deity of Christ to its logical conclusion. take the resurrection of Christ to its logical conclusion, and take grace, the grace of Christ, to its logical conclusion. So take the deity of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and the grace of Christ to its logical conclusion. So first, take the deity of Christ to its logical conclusion. It begins here in verse one, Paul, an apostle. Now an apostle simply means a sent one, someone who is sent.

And so by whom Was the apostle Paul sent? Well, he answers that question first negatively, doesn't he? He says, I was not sent from men, nor was I sent through a man. So on the one side, he says, I'm not sent to be an apostle by any other human being. But on the other hand, he says positively, who has sent him? He is an apostle through Jesus Christ and God the Father. Now, why exactly does Paul spend this time at the start of this letter trying to make it abundantly clear that he's not sent to be an apostle from a man, but rather that he was sent by Jesus Christ and God the Father?

Well, in part, it's because the false teachers were questioning his apostolic authority. They were questioning whether or not he had such authority. And so he's trying to make it very clear, no, you need to listen to what I've preached. You need to take my doctrine seriously because I'm an apostle. I'm a sent one from God himself. So he's defending his apostleship, but underlying this really is a deeper sense in which he's defending the gospel itself, not just his apostleship. He's defending the gospel because he sets Jesus on the side of the divine as God in verse 1.

On the one hand, you have men, and what do you have on the other side of the but? So you've got a but in verse 1, and on the one side of the but you have men and man. And what's the logical conclusion of whatever's on the other side of that? The Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father. He is saying Jesus Christ is on the side of that but that is deity. He is divine. He is the second person of the Trinity. He is God himself. He is saying that Jesus is God in the first half of verse one.

And why does he want to insist on that reality? They didn't deny it, did they? These people did not deny that Jesus Christ was God. But what must, and if you accept that, what must it logically mean about salvation? If Jesus Christ is God, and he came to save people, his people from their sins, what do you think God must have succeeded in doing? saving his people from their sins. Why is that the inevitable logical conclusion?

Because God is not going to fail in his purposes. You see, you and I might have a goal today. I'm going to accomplish X. And you know what? You might mean that with all your heart, and you might try with all of your strength, and you might fail to accomplish that goal. Why? Because you're finite. because you're not God.

But if God came down to save his people from their sins, if Jesus is God, what must that mean in the realm of salvation? He must have succeeded. He must have accomplished it. He could not have failed because he's God. His deity directly relates to how you view salvation.

Beloved, if you're here this morning and you believe that Jesus is God, and you think you have to do something to help him save you, then you've just denied logically that he's really God. You said you came down to try to do something, but you're gonna need my help to accomplish it. That is not true. That's a logical absurdity. And so Paul wants him to know right away, I'm not saying he's saying to them, I know you don't deny that Jesus is God, but as you read my letter, you'll realize that you have forgotten what that must logically mean in the realm of salvation.

Jesus Christ came to save his people from their sins, and I tell you, he's done it. And that's good news for you this morning. You are in Christ this morning, you can know that because God shed the second person of the Trinity, because he came down and shed his blood on the cross, you can know that he has accomplished salvation for his people. And that is good, good news for the believer.

But secondly, we need to take the resurrection of Christ to its logical conclusion. He goes on in verse one to speak of this Christ, who raised him from the dead. So the Christ, about whom he is writing in verse one, is a risen Christ. He died on that cross, and then according to verse one, he is raised from the dead.

Why? Again, we have to ask the question, why does Paul mention the resurrection of Christ at the start of this epistle? Some will say that he's mentioning the resurrection of Christ simply to defend his own apostolic authority. And it seems evident that that is a reason that he is mentioning it. Because what does an apostle have to do to be an apostle? He has to have seen the resurrected Lord, and he's suggesting here I've seen this resurrected Lord. I am a true apostle. But more fundamentally to his message in this book is the reason he's mentioning the resurrection of Jesus here is because if Jesus is really raised, again, what must he have done?

He must have succeeded in his mission. He must have accomplished it. It is finished. He has done it all. As it's famously been said, every other world religion says do and live. And Christianity says done and live. He has done it. He is risen. He has accomplished it. And that's proven by his resurrection. He defeated hell. He defeated sin. He defeated death in his resurrection. So again, what must that mean for justification? What must that mean for the way of salvation? That means he succeeded, doesn't it? It means he accomplished it.

It means there's nothing you can add to it to make yourself righteous in the sight of a holy God. He was raised for our justification, the end of Romans chapter four. And so he's wanting to stress this reality that he's risen, not because these people don't believe it. These false teachers believe it. But what they haven't done is taken it to its logical conclusion in the realm of salvation. If they really believed in what the resurrection must mean for salvation, it means he succeeded. He finished it. He did it all.

And I can't atone for my sins. I can't make myself righteous in the sight of a holy God through my efforts. And so he concludes here in verse 2 with this mentioning of all the brothers who are with me. simply alluding to this reality that he's not the only one who preaches this gospel. All the other faithful brothers preach this gospel that he himself is preaching.

If such a gospel offends you here this morning that you can do absolutely nothing to save yourself and that Jesus Christ does it all, then that is not a problem with this gospel. That's a problem with your heart. This is the very good news that the human soul needs. There is no hope outside of this gospel. Every other way is a lie, and every other idea that you can save yourself is also a lie. You need Jesus Christ, the God-man who took on flesh and rose from the dead. And unless, if that offends you, that is pride.

That is good news for the person who believes in sin. That's good news for the person who believes that he needs help. That's good news because it means there is hope, there is life, but it's not in myself, it's in the risen, conquering Lord Jesus Christ.

So let's go on to this third doctrine we want to consider. Take the grace of Christ to its logical conclusion. We've seen the deity of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, now let's take the grace of Christ to its logical conclusion. Verses three and four. Verse three reads, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age according to the will of our God and Father. So we need to take the grace of Christ to its logical conclusion. He says here, grace to you and peace. And these two words are important We often define grace this way, but it can be defined other ways, but it's God's unmerited favor towards sinners.

In other words, if you actually believe in real biblical grace as it's defined in the Bible itself, you cannot, you absolutely cannot hold to an idea that your works save you. Because according to the Bible itself, go for example to the beginning of Romans 11, you will see that if If grace includes works, it's no longer grace. As soon as grace is mingled with works as a way of being right with God, it's not grace anymore. Because grace is antithetical to works in the realm of being justified, being declared righteous in the sight of God. It cannot go together. The way you are declared righteous in God's sight cannot be by your works. If it was, then it would not be by grace. And so grace is very important. It's God's unmerited favor towards sinners.

It's how we are able to be right with God. And then peace is also mentioned here. And peace just refers to reconciliation with God. How can aliens who are separated from God be brought into reconciliation or a right relationship with God? It is through the peace that is ours in Jesus Christ. Because God's wrath is poured out on Jesus in our place Now we get to have peace with God.

But apart from that, there is no way to have peace with God. The wrath of God has to be removed if we're going to have peace with him. And it cannot be removed by your works. One cannot clean himself up such that he can have peace with God. The enmity with God must be removed. And it can only be removed by being poured out upon Jesus in our place.

Just honestly look the law of God in the face and ask yourself, can I have peace with God by my law keeping? Consider the law, look at it in the face and what will you say? Consider it. Can I have peace with God by my law keeping? What is that law going to say to you?

Absolutely not. You have no hope. The only way you can have peace with God is by looking Christ in the face and saying, can I have peace with God? And the answer is absolutely yes. because he has fulfilled the law in my place." You look at the law and you will never find peace with God.

Why? Not because the law has anything wrong with it, but because there is a condition that is messed up in the human person, and that is that we are sinners. And so we cannot keep God's law. The law is holy, righteous, and good, but we do not obey it. That is the problem. And that's why we need someone to obey it in our place. And that's why you can have peace with God, but you can have it only by looking to Jesus, the law keeper. We cannot look inside of ourselves and find peace with God. You will never find it there.

But he goes on and he says that this peace comes from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is again another subtle but real allusion to Christ deity here because the source of grace and peace is found in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The sheer magnitude of these words and similar words at the start of Paul's epistles has probably worn off on all of you in the room. The wonder of this opening address that he gives in so many of his epistles where he mentions the grace of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ has probably worn off on you. But to help you maybe re-appreciate the wonder of what's being said in these verses, here's how J. Gresham Machen talks about it. Imagine for a moment if this or any of the other epistles said something along these lines. Grace to you from God our Father and Martin Luther. or grace you from God our Father and John Calvin, or even grace you from God our Father and Peter, the apostle, or John, the beloved.

Immediately, every one of you in this room senses that there's something messed up about that. There's something entirely wrong about that. It just feels off. And what that is, is it's blasphemy. Because what has just happened is right parallel alongside of God the Father has been placed a mere human. Perhaps an excellent human like Paul, but a human who is a sinner dead in their trespasses and without hope until Christ raised them from the dead. A person, a creature.

But the reason you don't go, that sounds strange when I read grace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The reason that doesn't strike you as strange is because whether you even realize it or not, Jesus is so clearly set forth as God in all of the Bible that when you get to a line like that, you just assume it's appropriate to write that way. But it's only appropriate to write that way because Jesus is God. As much as grace and peace come from God the Father, they come from the Lord Jesus Christ. And the only reason that can be said is because he is God.

And so what does this God do for his creatures? Well, the second person in the Trinity we read here who, verse four, gave himself for our sins. If you've ever heard that somewhat trick question, who gave up the Lord Jesus Christ for our sins or who sent him to die? There's a sense in which it's a multiple right answers to that question. You can think, for example, of John 3, 16.

The father gives him up, right? For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. You can think of Romans 8, 31 through 32, if God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, that's God the Father.

But then you read a verse like this, if God is for us, or rather you read a verse like this, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, Galatians 1.4. There you see Jesus voluntarily giving himself up for our sins. So as true as it is to say that God the Father gave his Son up for us, it's also true to say that God the Son gave himself up for his people. He wanted to die on that cross for the sins of the elect. He desired to shed his blood for the sins of his children.

And that's so hard to believe, but it's exactly what the scriptures declare. And it's hard to believe not because of a lack of clarity. It's hard to believe because of the depths of the wonder of the riches of the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

This word sin here that is being used for our sins, this means that we needed an atonement for our sins. We needed a blood sacrifice for our sins. We deserve death and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins. In this three letter word sin is contained almost the whole of the Christian religion.

And the reason is this, it is only the sinner who needs a savior. You see, if there is no sin, or if sin only be a small problem, then you don't really need a Jesus, do you? Or you can get away with a small Jesus, can't you? But when you see sin as what it really is, an utter abomination in the sight of a holy God, suddenly you say, I need a Savior. And I need that Savior to be a somebody who isn't just an anybody. I need that Savior to be deity. I need a Savior who is God himself because my sin is too big for anyone other than God himself to deal with."

And so what people need today is not to be told that they're okay. And the person who really has seen his sin will not be content if you just tell him, you're okay. The person who actually sees something of their sin knows that their conscience screams far too loud to be told they're okay and be content with that answer.

The person's conscience screams, I'm not okay. There's something deeply wrong. There's something tremendously corrupt in my being. Don't tell me I'm okay. Give me a solution to the problem that I know I have. That is where Christ comes. The human race is not okay. The human race has fallen. What you and I need, what humanity needs is a God who can save them. A God who can stoop down into the chasm and depths of their sin and raise them out of it. And no mere man can accomplish that task. The best a mere man can do is stoop down with you and find themselves stuck with you in the mire of sin and depravity. But the God-man stoops down

and he lifts the human out of sin, out of death, out of hell, that they might have life everlasting with God Almighty.

So this morning, do you here believe in sin? I hope that you do. And I hope that you believe that you are a sinner. And I hope that you believe that, that you might fly to Jesus. Because Jesus is the savior of sinners. He himself said, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. If you see that you are a sinner, this is the solution. This is the one you need. And I believe by God's grace, though I know not a heart, that most in this room know Christ.

But you got to keep going to Jesus Christ because you're going to keep seeing your sin. You've seen your sin this week. You know you haven't obeyed God's law like you should. What are you going to do with that fact? Run to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners.

So what would this reality, what would it look like for the Christian in the room this morning? to embrace this functionally, to embrace this glorious gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. What would that actually look like? What would be the result in our lives if we embraced this and applied it? Well, it would make us much more repentant, much quicker to repent.

And here's why. Because even those in a good Presbyterian church like this that believe in the doctrines of grace, There's always that temptation of, I don't want to go to Jesus with this. I don't want to go to my father with this. I don't want to own my sin like I need to own it. Why? Because secretly you think he's going to reject you if you do. But he won't.

And that is the glory of this gospel. I can go to him. with all of the utter horribleness of my inner being. The things that are so filthy that you are shamed. And you don't have to hide it. You don't have to sweep it under a rug. You don't have to lie to yourself and say it's not really there. You can just call it what it is.

You know, when I taught Old Testament survey at Belle Haven University, I mentioned this to Hunter this week, I wasn't planning on mentioning it in the sermon, but here we are. I used to tell the students all the time, we're reading Old Testament narrative and there's all these atrocious, things that happened in the Old Testament, as you know. And these students had never really read the Bible before, so they're blown away as they're reading these awful stories about terrible sins that you see throughout the Old Testament. And I would tell the students, let's call sin, sin, but let's call grace, grace.

We have to be able to do both of those. We've got to look sin in the face and call it sin. And it's only then that you're going to say, I appreciate grace because you can't appreciate grace if you don't really need it. You've got to see the law that you might see your sin and you've got to see your sin that you might say I need grace.

And that's the wonder of the gospel is this frees you up beloved to call your sin what it is. And then with all honesty revel in the wonderful work of Jesus Christ. One brief concluding remark I want to say something about this final verse to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Notice where this gospel sends the believer. The gospel sends the believer to glorifying God, to worship, doesn't it? Verse five.

And why? Because God gets all the glory. You see, if you had anything to do with the saving of yourself, then that line couldn't have been written. It could have said, to God be most of the glory and honor, but it couldn't have said, to God be all the glory and honor. Why not? Because some of it would have been due to you. But the reality is we've done nothing to deserve it.

And so the one to whom all the glory goes is God himself. It sends you to worship God. And that teaches you, beloved, that salvation is not primarily about yourself. Salvation is about the worship of God. God wants you to worship him. You don't exist for yourself. You exist for the worship of God. And so he concludes this opening statement by saying, God has saved you. that you might worship and glorify him.

Therefore, let us follow that call ourselves and worship him for the glorious grace he has shown us in Jesus Christ. Let us pray. Almighty God, we do come before you this morning and we confess that we need to learn more fully what it means to believe in the good doctrines of our holy religion, to believe that you are a God who is gracious and merciful towards sinners and to allow that reality to shape our attitudes in the way that we relate to you. Oh God, I do pray that the sins of our lives about which we are most weighed down at times, you would even use those realities of those sins to drive us to see the goodness and the loving kindness that you have for us in Jesus Christ and the way of salvation and that we would therefore hate our sin more and we would live more boldly for Christ, and we would love you more because of the love with which you have loved us. O God, I do pray that in preaching the unadulterated grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, we would have no desire to abuse that to wicked ends, but we would have every desire to, by the Spirit, use that for our own holiness of life. O God, we do want to live more fully for you. Help this exhortation from the book of Galatians to do that in our lives, to live more fully for you. Pray all this in Jesus's name, amen.