

# Trustworthy Trust

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, I'd like us to turn back to Galatians chapter 2, which Mary read for us. Let me read again! Verses 19 to 20. For through the law I died to the law so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live, I live, sorry, the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

So we looked at this verse last week as well. Our title was Crucifying Control. And we were thinking about the fact that at the cross the gospel doesn't just deliver us from slavery. The gospel also crucifies our control. Paul says it's no longer I who live, I am not in control. And in fact, Paul was never in control.

Because as we saw last week, our sense of control for the ultimate issues of life is actually an illusion. We're not in control of these things. And often our desire for control can be harmful to ourselves and to others.

And our longing for control, our need for control is actually only met in Jesus. It's when we cast ourselves into his hands, we finally find the one who's in perfect control of our lives.

This week, I want us just to come back because there's another aspect of this verse that I want us to think about, particularly the second half of the verse, of verse 20.

[ 1 : 20 ] And our title is Trustworthy Trust. And this is connecting to the wonderful phrase that Paul uses in verse 20, where he says that he lives by faith.

And that's a beautiful phrase that in many ways captures what for many people is the difference that it makes to become a Christian. And so when you follow Jesus, faith becomes a really important part of your life.

So sometimes people might talk of a time when they didn't have faith, and then they came to faith. And if we're following Jesus, you know, our lives are to be shaped by the faith that we have come. I might also describe someone as, people talk of themselves as a person of faith. And we might also describe someone as religious, as a believer, or as something like that. A Christian is someone who lives by faith, and we'll often have these categories.

A Christian lives by faith, someone who's not a Christian doesn't. Now, all of that language is good, it's helpful, but it's not completely accurate.

[ 2 : 28 ] And that language of, you know, a Christian is someone who lives by faith, someone who's not a Christian is someone who doesn't live by faith, it's not really the whole truth. And it's definitely not the whole truth of verse 20.

Because here, it's again crucial to see the importance of the little words in the Bible. And the big little word that I want to highlight here is the fact that Paul says he lives by faith in the Son of God. In other words, if we say, I'm a Christian, I live by faith, we're telling the truth, but we're falling short of the whole truth. Because the key point, the whole truth, is that we live by faith in Jesus.

I live by faith is not enough. It's an inadequate description of what it means to be a Christian. Now, you might be thinking, Thomas, that's obvious, and I don't really know why you're making a fuss about this.

Well, it all raises a crucial point. The reason why I live by faith on its own is inadequate as a description of the Christian.

[ 3 : 39 ] The reason it's inadequate is because everyone lives by faith. Everyone believes things.

Everybody puts their trust into something. Everybody sets their hopes on an object. Every single person in the world lives by faith.

The crucial question is, what is that faith in? And so the choice is never faith or no faith.

The choice is faith in Jesus or faith in something else. And if that's true, which I believe it is, if everyone is living by faith, the key question is, is the object of your faith trustworthy? Is the object of your faith trustworthy? And that is such an important thing to think about because every day we trust things. So we get information in the media. You look at the news this morning. [ 4 : 50 ] You think, are you trusting it? Can we trust it? Is it trustworthy? A great example of that is just now, if we lived in Iran just now, we heard from Adam on Thursday night, he was speaking about Iran. In Iran, you can't get the internet. The only thing you can get just now is state media news.

The only way to get news is through the information provided by the state. Is that trustworthy? Is it through in any other country as well? You get provision of medication from a pharmacy. You get a box with a label on it. You've got to trust what that says. You've got to trust the dosage that the doctors prescribe for you. When you get into the car and drive home just now, there's only a white line between you and a head-on collision.

And every time you go past somebody, you're trusting their ability to drive safely. As we go to school or we get trained, we're trusting the education getting provided by a teacher. And just now, of course, in our own country, there's a whole ton of declarations from politicians. Are those statements trustworthy? We have to think about this in so many areas of life.

[ 5 : 53 ] We are always being asked to trust. And the question is, are the sources that we've been asked to trust trustworthy? Every single one of us has to think about trustworthy trust.

Now, there's hundreds of little ways in which that plays out in our lives. Every time we read something. Every time we pay for something. Every time we post a letter. Every time we lend something to someone. Even every time you eat something. And this is especially true. If there's anybody here who's got an allergy, you pick up something. You have to read the ingredients. You need to trust that list of ingredients. And it has got to be trustworthy. And so it applies in hundreds of ways across day-to-day life. It applies to bigger issues of life. You put all your wages into a bank.

Is that bank trustworthy? You are putting a chunk of your salary into a company that's going to provide you with a pension in 30 years' time. Is that company trustworthy? You go to hospital. [ 6 : 51 ] A surgeon's going to open you up and operate on you. Are they trustworthy? You're going to marry somebody. Are they trustworthy? You send your kids to school every day to educate your children. Is that school trustworthy? All these things involve trust.

And in 99.9% of cases, these things are trustworthy. And that's good and important. Of course, occasionally, very occasionally, these bigger things are not trustworthy.

And the consequences of that are devastating. And so this issue applies to day-to-day stuff. It applies to the bigger things in life. Most importantly of all, this issue of trustworthy trust applies to the biggest questions of life.

The issues of ultimate reality, of life and death, of time and eternity. Now, the gospel actually addresses all these levels.

The gospel guides us about day-to-day conduct. The gospel sets boundaries for the bigger issues of life. But mostly importantly of all, the gospel gives us answers to the ultimate questions of life.

[ 7 : 55 ] And the key point I want to try and set before you today is that for these ultimate answers, it is only in Jesus that you will find somebody who is trustworthy of your trust.

Now, that, of course, raises the question, well, how do you know that, Thomas? How do I know, how do we know that Jesus is trustworthy? That's a crucial question for all of us. And I hope I can answer it.

And I'm going to give you three reasons why I think Jesus is worthy of your trust. All of them come from Galatians 2.20. Faith in Jesus is trustworthy trust because of who he is, what he thinks, and what he's done.

So first of all, thinking about who he is. As we said, the in in verse 20 is incredibly important. That in is crucial. It's reminding us that faith is never a kind of abstract entity.

Faith's always directional. It's always towards something. Faith is always in something. That's what that tiny word is capturing, the directional emphasis of faith.

[ 9 : 01 ] Now, we're asking the question, well, what's Paul's faith in? And the answer is super simple, yet utterly mind-blowing. His faith is in the Son of God.

Now, it's simple because what he says is crystal clear. It's mind-blowing because the identity of Jesus as the Son of God lifts our minds to the most profound category of thought that we can ever think about.

Because we're lifting our minds to think about God. And that doesn't mean that we're just thinking about the kind of religious dude that people mention.

If we're lifting our minds to think about God, then we're lifting our minds to think about the absolute of reality. The answer to origin, destiny, meaning, purpose, existence.

Everything. Everything. The one who's over it all. The absolute. The creator from which everything else comes upon which everything else depends.

[10:03] The explanation for the existence of us and the world around us and the universe that stretches out before us. We're thinking about the source of all power, energy, order, goodness.

Think of everything that we have day to day. The power, the energy, the order that our lives depend on. The goodness that we enjoy that is so, so precious. Where does it come from?

It comes from God. All of this is getting us to think about the infinite, eternal, unchanging God. And the big point that this verse is pointing us to is that when we think about that ultimate reality of God himself, what the Bible reveals to us is that God is Trinitarian.

God is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And so the Son of God is the Son of the Father, the Beloved of the Father, the Eternal Delight of the Father.

It's all pointing us to that when we think of God, our conception of God mustn't be of this solitary, singular being. But rather, it's always, always, God has always existed in this beautiful, mind-blowing mystery of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

[11:15] Perfect relationship with the Father's love to the Son, the Son's love to the Father. That love carried and shared by the action and movement of the Holy Spirit. I don't have the words to explain that.

The best words that I can find are going to fall a million miles short. The key thing I want to highlight is that that phrase, Son of God, is telling us that Jesus' entire existence is always at the highest level.

The phrase, Son of God, is taking us to the highest level of reality, of existence, of being, of perfection. Jesus is God himself, forever equal to the Father, forever perfect in holiness, power, wisdom, glory, and everything else.

And the big point is this. It means that as far as the gospel is concerned, that's the level you need to be at to be trustworthy. That's the level you need to be at to be trustworthy.

So when the gospel calls you to trust someone, that someone is the Son of God, forever and always, at the very pinnacle of reality.

[12:29] In other words, the gospel is dealing with the biggest questions of life and death, of time and eternity, of truth and reality. And for all of these things, God is calling you to trust somebody. But the somebody he's asking you to trust is his very own Son.

And the key point is this. The gospel is never asking you to trust some guy. And that's so crucial because so many of the alternative belief systems in the world actually come down to trusting some random guy.

That's true of so many religions that have a specific founder, whether that's Islam or Mormonism or anything like that. You can trace it back to a particular individual guy who founded it all, who wrote it all, who said it all, who said this is the way it has to be.

It's a guy. It's true of philosophies and political ideologies. You think of some of the most powerful movements over the 20th century. It goes back to one guy. Marxism. One guy. And so many other philosophies and emphases come back to the teaching of one guy.

And it's even through today when you see the effect of an influencer on people, particularly on the younger generation. You can have one guy, one girl, says one thing online, all done. The influence is huge.

[13:49] In it all, you're trusting some guy. A random man or a random woman. And the key point is this in terms of the gospel.

If Jesus is just another random guy, even if he's historically important and even if he's massively influential, if Jesus is just a guy, we've got nothing.

I've got it all wrong. I've got it all wrong. And you've got it all wrong if you're a Christian. The gospel stands and falls on the identity of Jesus.

And at every point, the gospel is telling you he's not some guy. The identity of Jesus is at the highest level. Or to put it all another way, God knows how powerful, how precious and how personal your trust is.

And he knows how serious it is for you to trust someone. He knows how much it matters. And in terms of what he wants you to put your trust in, God says, nothing is good enough except my son. [15:05] And that's what makes trust in Jesus trustworthy trust. It's never trust in some guy. It's never trust in a religious code.

It's not even trust in the pinnacle of human wisdom. It's always higher than that. It's always at the highest level. God is saying, I want you to trust my son.

God the son himself. That's who we're called to trust. And all of that kind of backs us into an inescapable dilemma.

And this is one of the crucial things about Christianity. We've said this many times before. Christianity really is an all or nothing religion. Well, every religion has to be that. Truth has to be that.

And, you know, so Jesus has said before us as one, he's God the son, he's at the highest level. I'm saying that makes us trustworthy.

[16:06] And the choice is then, okay, do I accept that or do I reject that? And if you reject that, if you say, well, actually, no, I don't think that. I don't agree with that. I'm not going to accept that.

Then you are then faced with a massive question. Is your judgment trustworthy? Is your judgment trustworthy?

Trustworthy trust, just, it does back us into a corner that we have to think about. So who he is, massively important. But what he thinks is maybe even more important.

As we said, the question of Jesus' identity is like one of the most profound things that we can think about. And, you know, we have to wrestle with that. What do I think of him? Do I recognize who Jesus claims to be?

Do I honor him as I should? Because if Jesus is the son of God, then what we think about him is crucial. But the focus of verse 20 is not actually on what we think about him.

[17:13] The focus of verse 20 is on what he thinks about you. And Paul tells us something utterly beautiful. He tells us that he loves you.

Now, there's a few things I want to highlight here. The first is that if Jesus is the son of God, then he's at the highest of levels and we are tiny in comparison.

And we can lay no claim to his love whatsoever. If Jesus is the son of God, he's the ultimate somebody. And Paul and you and me are total nobodies. And yet, what does he think of you? He loves you. Second thing it highlights is that Paul is emphasizing here that that love precedes anything that we've ever done to earn it.

And that's captured in the tense that Paul uses. You can see that it's translated in a kind of past tense here in English. That's not to say that Jesus once loved Paul and he doesn't do it again. That's not what's been conveyed at all.

[18:13] It's not describing something that only lies in the past. Instead, the key thing here is that the son's love for the sinner comes long before the sinner's love for the son.

The son's love for you comes long before your love for him. And that's actually emphasized even further by the tense that's used here.

I'm going to kind of bore you all a little bit with some Greek today. I don't know why I'm doing that, but I'm going to all the same. We have past tense in English. In Greek, you don't really have past tense. You have what's called aorist tense.

Don't really worry if you've never heard of that word. The key point here is that aorist tense, although it's translated past tense, aorist tense in Greek is not really about the pastness of something, but about the completeness of something.

It's a completed tense. Completeness is the emphasis. So when it says he loved me, that word loved is in this tense. It's the tense of completeness. It's describing a complete love.

[19:21] In other words, it's describing a love that lacks nothing. And fourthly, the amazing thing is that that love is directed towards a me.

In other words, there's a beautiful personalness to all of this love. It's personal in that it arises from the person of Christ himself. And it's personal because it's directed towards the me of Paul.

And that me in Paul was a complicated mess. Yet Jesus loved him exactly the same as true for you and for me. Exactly the same is true for us all.

And that personal love towards the sinner is what lies at the very heart of the gospel. And it lies at the very heart of why Jesus is trustworthy. Because one of the amazing things about Jesus' love is that it never, ever, ever comes with an if.

In other words, you don't earn it. You don't maintain it. You don't acquire it. You don't deserve it. You do nothing except receive it. And this is where, again, you need to look at the alternatives. So many alternative objects of faith demand your love, but they won't always love you back.

[ 20 : 40 ] So if we live by faith in money, the money's not going to love us back. If we live by faith in our career, where we work is more than likely going to forget about us soon after we're done. If you live by faith in your achievements, those achievements are actually going to so often throw the doubt in your mind that you haven't actually done enough and you need to do more in order to be good enough.

People living by faith in something other than Jesus will pour their love into something that doesn't love them back or that will only love them back for a while. Because the gospel, and the gospel is so much better than this, because the gospel doesn't even say, if you're not going to love you, he's already loved you forever.

And that means that you can look back at every moment of your life, every joy and sorrow, every triumph and failure, every treasured moment, every bitter regret, and you can say that he loved me. In all of those moments, he loved you. Because with Jesus, love is never for a moment. This is what Jesus thinks of you.

This is what Jesus thinks of you. He loves you. He's always loved you. You're the object of his love. [ 21 : 53 ] In fact, the Christian can say, well, all of you can say, all of you can say, whether you're a Christian yet or not yet a Christian, you can say that, you can say, I am the failing object of his unfailing love.

Because we are all this. We're all failing, stumbling, messing up. But you are the failing object of his unfailing love.

That's why faith in Jesus is trustworthy trust. But the amazing thing about Jesus' love is that he doesn't just say it with his words, he proves it with his actions.

Paul says that he lives by faith in the Son of God who loved him and gave himself for me. Now, I probably shouldn't do this, but stuff it.

I'm going to do it anyway. I'm going to give you these words in Greek. They always say don't do this, but you're getting it. So, first word is paradontos gave.

[ 23 : 03 ] Now, it's actually the word that means hand over. It can also be translated betray. So, when you've got the language of Judas, betray, and Jesus, same word. So, it's betray.

But the reason that's the word for betray is because it really means to hand something over. And that's kind of conveying actually more than just gave in English.

Like, it's deeper than that. It's just this handing over from something to something. And so, Jesus is handed over from light to darkness.

Handed over from paradise to agony. Handed over from innocence to condemnation. From joy to agony. From holiness to judgment.

From life to death. From perfect love to total forsakenness. He's handed over. And he hands over eauton.

[ 24 : 02 ] That's how you say that word. Himself. He handed himself over. He gave himself up.

It's like Jesus is standing between this devastating void that sin creates between God and humanity. And he says, I'll step into it. God the Son is the one who gets handed over.

But, he does it willingly. Deliberately. And obediently. That word, huper.

It's translated for. But, really what it means is on behalf of. Everything in the giving of himself.

It's for someone else. It's on behalf of another. So, all of this is describing the work of substitution. Representation. Mediatorial work.

[ 25 : 02 ] Replacement. It's all on behalf of another. And it's on behalf of emu. Which is the Greek word for me. The Son of God gave himself up for me.

Paul could say that. And everybody who is or who becomes a Christian can say it too. The other that all of this is on behalf of is you.

And again, all of this is the language of completed action. So many of the voices that demand your trust will do so on the basis of I will.

So, materialism. Buying stuff. Getting stuff. Will say, trust me with your money and I will make you happy. Investment says, trust me with your pension and I will make you secure. Social media says, trust me with your attention and I will keep you occupied.

Alcohol says, trust me with your problems and I will make you feel better. All of these claims for trustworthiness are based on I will do it. But Jesus' claim for trustworthiness is based on I have already done it.

[ 26 : 12 ] I've already done it. And that's what makes faith in him. Trustworthy trust. All of us are living by faith.

It's inescapable. All through this week, all through our lives, we have to exercise trust. That's true for day-to-day actions. It's true for the biggest questions of ultimate reality.

Everyone is living by faith. The crucial question is, what is that faith in? And we've all got to think about this. And especially if you're not yet a Christian or not sure, you've got to think about this.

Because if you're not trusting in Jesus, you trust in something else. It's not a trust or no trust. It's in Jesus or in something else or someone else. Whatever that may be. It's Jesus or something else.

But what I want to finish with, I need space. I should have given myself more. I should have given myself a blank slide. If it's an alternative to Jesus, if you're not yet trusting in Jesus, and if you're pushing him away, and if it's an alternative to Jesus, the alternative to Jesus always is less, thinks less, and does less.

[ 27 : 31 ] The alternative, whatever it might be, is not God the Son. It's less. It's less than that level.

And whatever the alternative might be, thinks less, because nobody else can say to you that you've been loved forever. And it does less, because the kind of false promises of money, power, career, sex, status, entertainment, all of them have got one thing in common.

None of them have been nailed to a cross for you. So please think about trustworthy trust. That's what Jesus can give you.

And the truth is, that's what only Jesus can give you. Amen.