

UNTIL CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU

GALATIANS 4:19 • TV-035B

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, MARCH 20TH, 1977

By

HENRY T. MAHAN

Transcribed, edited and published
MAY 24TH, 2019

HENRY T. MAHAN TAPE LIBRARY

Zebulon Grace Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501
PH: 606-631-9053

Galatians 4:19

“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.”

I want you to take your Bibles and open them with me to the book of **Galatians chapter 4: verse 19.**

Now this will be a very important message for each of you. I do pray that you'll listen carefully. Follow in the Scripture, **Galatians 4:19.**

Paul writing says this: *“My little children of whom I travail in birth again”* and here's our text and here's our topic: **“UNTIL CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU.”**

Now the greatest mistake that I can possibly make is to assume, to take for granted, to suppose that I am a child of God. That's a great mistake and to neglect that important work of self-examination, that important work of always continually seeking the Lord, seeking the Lord.

Now Paul said this in **Philippians chapter 3**; *“O that I may win Christ and be found in Him.”*

Paul, who had been an apostle, a founder of churches, who wrote 13 of the 27 books in the New Testament, and yet here we have him exclaiming, *“O that I may know Christ and the power of His resurrection. O that I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”*

UNTIL CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU

GALATIANS 4:19 • HENRY T. MAHAN

And Peter wrote this in his book, *“Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.”* And even David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel said; *“As the deer panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul for thee the living God.”*

Now we read Scriptures like this; preachers, Sunday school teachers and church attenders; we read Scriptures like this throughout the Bible: *“The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?”* And we reply, “But not mine, not my heart. I know that I’m all right. Other people may have deceitful hearts. Other people may be deceived but I’m not deceived.”

And then we read Scriptures like this; *“Who hath believed our report? To whom is the arm of the Lord (or the power of God) revealed?”* And we reply, “Well certainly to me. I’m deeply religious. I’m deeply taught. I’m orthodox, I’m fundamental. I can’t be wrong.”

And then we read Scriptures like this, Paul writing to the church at Corinth and said; *“I fear, I’m troubled, lest Satan beguile you from the simplicity of Christ, (unless Satan trick you and deceive you).”* And we think, well others may be deceived and they may be beguiled but certainly not me.

And then we’ll read in **Matthew 7**; Our Lord said, *“Many will say unto me in that day (the Day of Judgment). Lord I preached in your name and I prophesied in your name and I cast out devils in your name.”* He said; *“And I will say to them, depart from me I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity.”*

“But that can’t happen. I’ve had an experience. I’m faithful. I’ve joined the church. I’ve served the Lord;” so had these people. Now we need to be cautioned against religious presumption. We need to be cautioned against an assurance that has no foundation.

Before our Lord went to the cross He was sitting around the Last Supper table with His disciples and He said to them, the twelve, *“One of you will betray me. One of you will sell me.”* And they, everyone, looked at Him and every one of them, the Scripture says, *“All of them began to say; Lord is it I?”*

Now, have we graduated beyond that point of self-examination? When the Scripture continually tells us; when we come to the table of the Lord to examine ourselves and not come with presumption, examine ourselves, and so eat the Lord’s Table, *“Examine ourselves whether Christ is in you, except we be reprobates. Know ye not your ownelves how that Christ dwelleth in you, except you be a reprobate?”*

Our Lord Jesus Christ, when He was 12 years of age; His parents took Him up to Jerusalem for a certain Feast Day. And they stayed there two or three or four days, and then they left. And the Scripture says; *“They had gone a full day’s journey and they began to look for Him at the end of the day.”*

UNTIL CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU

GALATIANS 4:19 • HENRY T. MAHAN

And Joseph said to Mary, “Have you seen the child Jesus?” And she said, “*No I thought He was with you.*” They had gone a full day’s journey supposing that He was with them and they had left Him back in Jerusalem.

Now the Scripture talks about life being a day’s journey. Is it possible that we who are ministers and who are religious people and who are teachers of the Scripture and professors of salvation; is it possible that we could travel a full day’s journey supposing that Christ was with us and find out at the Judgment, “*I never knew you?*”

So you see, the greatest mistake that I can make is to assume that I’m a child of God. And to desert this very important work, this very important area of personal examination at all times, of this, “*Giving diligence to make my calling and election sure;*” this is what Paul is writing in our text to the church there in Galatia.

He says, “*I travail till Christ be formed in you.*” This is the end of all true preaching. It is to bring the sinner to the feet of Christ, to bring the sinner to the feet of Christ in godly repentance, in godly sorrow for sin, in a continual sorrow for sin, and to bring that sinner to the feet of Christ with a sincere saving faith and not only that, but also to perfect by the Spirit of God’s work; a living and vital union between the sinner and the Saviour which Paul described in this way, “*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*”

Now my friends, salvation is more than a profession; salvation is a living union with the Lord. And it’s more than getting religion; the Pharisee’s had that. Salvation is a living union. Christ said, “*I am the true Vine and you’re the branches. Without me you can do nothing.*” I’m the head and you’re the body.

Salvation is more than just believing in one God. James said, “*The devil believes in one God, and trembles.*” Salvation is more than just turning over a new leaf. The Sadducees did that. Salvation is more than just orthodox doctrine, fundamentalism. The Scripture calls that “the dead-letter of the law.” And it’s a lot more than that because Saul of Tarsus had that.

I want to take six Scriptures from the **book of John** which I believe describes salvation as it really is, not as we say it is, not as preachers preach it is, not as the creed and Catechism display it to be but what God says it is.

First of all: In **John chapter 1:12**; will you turn over there with me, **John 1:12**? Salvation is more than making a profession, a profession of faith or a profession of belief or a profession of religion.

Salvation is to receive a person. **John 1:12** says this; “*To as many as received Him, (Him, not His church, Him, not His doctrine, Him, not His ordinances, Him and not His people, to receive Him) to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.*”

UNTIL CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU

GALATIANS 4:19 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Now let me say this, salvation; it's true, that the work of salvation lies first and mainly in His receiving us. Salvation is not what I do for God it's what God does for me. *"Salvation is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."*

He receives us. He receives us from the hand of the Father as our Surety. He became our Surety in the counsels of eternity, in the covenant of mercy, in the great purpose of grace. Christ received us. He became responsible for us. He is our Surety. The Scripture says: *"He's the surety of a better testament."*

And then He receives us as our representative. He came down here into the world and took on Himself bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. He became our representative before the law, before the justice of God. He represented His people; *"In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren. He was numbered with the transgressors"* that He might faithfully and lovingly and obediently represent them.

And then He received our sins as our substitute. He took our sins in His body. He literally, actually took our place: *"With His stripes we were healed. He was wounded for our transgressions."* He received our sin.

And then He receives us from the hand of the Holy Spirit as we're drawn by the Spirit, for we are the called of Christ Jesus. We are called to Him and brought to Him and given to Him. So, really and truly, the first and main work of salvation is His receiving us.

But we do; it is true that the believing sinner receives Christ. We're not dead logs. We're living persons, responsible and accountable people. And we willingly, lovingly, receive Him. We receive Him as our Redeemer.

"To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." We receive Him:

**"Rock of ages
Cleft for me
Let me hide
Myself in thee**

**Let the waters
And the blood
From thy wounded
Side which flowed
Be of sin
The double cure
Save me from
Its wrath and power."**

I receive thee as my substitute. I receive thee as my Lord:

**“All hail the power of Jesus’ name
Let angels prostrate fall
Bring forth the royal diadem
Crown Him Lord of all (receiving Christ).”**

Salvation is more than a profession of religion. It’s more than just saying I believe something. It’s to receive a person, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Secondly: Salvation is more than making a decision; it’s a new birth.

In **John chapter 3:3** our Lord said to a religious man, a religious leader, a religious teacher; *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”*

Now changing my name, calling myself, Henry Smith will not make me Mr. Smith’s son. I am not his son and I cannot make myself his son by calling myself by his name. And changing my name and calling myself a Christian will not make me a child of God.

There’s only one way that I can be Mr. Smith’s son and that’s to be born into his family, begotten by him, receive his nature, his likeness. And even so that is the way unto the kingdom of God.

Now the world may laugh at what we call a “born again experience” but it’s God’s Word. It’s a teaching of Scripture. *“Except a man be born again He cannot see the kingdom of God. Except a man be born of water, (the Word, and of the blood) and of the Spirit (and of the power of God), he cannot be a child of God.”*

He can call himself a Christian. He can call himself this, that, and the other, a child of God, but a person has to be born again.

Thirdly: Changing my mode of dress will not make me a Christian. I could put on an Indian costume up here. I could have feathers in my bonnet and I could paint my face like they did years ago and put on an Indian garb and dress like an Indian. I wouldn’t be an Indian.

I’m an Irishman. I’ll always be an Irishman. And I cannot by changing my mode of dress become another nationality. And even so a person cannot by wearing the robes of religion make himself a child of God.

The only way that we can become children of God is to be born of God. And in that birth and in that regenerating process receive the nature of God. Even as Jesus Christ, though He were in the flesh, and though He was a man; He still was the brightness of God’s image and person. He had the nature of God.

UNTIL CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU

GALATIANS 4:19 • HENRY T. MAHAN

And the only way that you and I and natural men can become Christians is by the process of the new birth whereby we receive the nature of God.

And then changing my language; I can learn Spanish and begin to speak fluent Spanish but that wouldn't make me a Mexican or a Spaniard. And changing my language and my way of life; I could live in a Pueblo and I could take up all the habits of the natives but that wouldn't make me a Mexican.

And even so, I can change my way of life and my language and begin to attend church and that won't make me a child of God. I must by the new birth become a new creature and receive the life of God, the Spirit of God, and the nature of God.

Christ said that to the Pharisee's. He said, "You are cleaning the outside of the cup and you're neglecting the inside." That's where the work needs to be done. And when that new life and new nature, the life of God and the nature of God, possesses the heart and soul; the outside will take care of itself.

That's what our Lord is saying. The world will make light of this. I realize this simply because they do not understand it. *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh. And the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."*

He doesn't comprehend them and he doesn't understand them. They are a mystery to him. That's what the Gospel is called in the Word of God, a mystery. *"But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."*

Thirdly: In **John chapter 7, verse 38**, our Lord tells us that salvation is more than believing a doctrine; it is a refreshing experience, it's more than believing a doctrine.

Our Lord said in **John 7:38**, listen; *"He that believeth on me as the Scripture has said, out of his belly (innermost being) shall flow rivers of living water."* Now the joy of the Lord is not a head-work it's a heart-work.

We can memorize Scripture. We can be catechized and indoctrinated and learn the creed but the joy of the Lord is a heart work. *"And the peace that passeth understanding"* is a heart work.

And the love for Christ and the love for His people is a heart work. It's not something that you can learn in your head; it's something experienced in your heart. That's what He's talking about.

The person that is regenerated, a person who is brought to a living union with Christ has a well of living water springing up within, forgiveness, mercy, tenderness, gentleness, and kindness. That's a heart work. It's not a head work; it's a heart work.

Growth in grace is a heart work. All you have to do to see this is to look at the life of Saul of Tarsus. Look carefully at his life. He was brought up in religion. He said; *"I was a Hebrew of Hebrews. I was born of the tribe of Benjamin."*

UNTIL CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU

GALATIANS 4:19 • HENRY T. MAHAN

He was catechized. He was indoctrinated. He sat at the feet of the greatest religious teacher of his day, Gamaliel. He graduated from the most outstanding religious University of his day. He was a man who said of himself; *“I exceeded many my equals. Concerning the law, I was blameless.”*

He was a student of the Scriptures. He was zealous of orthodoxy. He was a defender of his denomination, but as empty as a tin can and as lost as a pagan and as without God as a heathen, though he had all of this in his head.

He had the brilliance of religious orthodoxy. And he had the keen mind of a religious debater but he didn't have God in his heart.

We must not neglect to study the Word of God. God's Word says, *“Study to show thyself approved unto God.”* And most of the time when we err we err because we don't know the power of God nor the Scriptures.

We must not avoid; we must not neglect the study of God's Word or the preaching of doctrine. A building has to have a foundation in order to build a home, a house. But also a right knowledge of Christ is a heart work. *“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. With the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*

And the fruits of the Spirit are a heart work. That's where this takes place, this joy, peace, happiness, assurance, contentment, humility and patience. These things take place in the heart.

Now turn to **John 6:53**. Now this; this is a difficult Scripture and I may be able to help you right here. I think this helped me a great deal. But salvation is more than form. It's more than kneeling at the right time. It's more than crossing yourself at the right place. It's more than saying the right words at the right time.

How can we please God with our forms when the Jewish people had all of the God-given, Moses ordained ceremonies, credentials, Sabbath Days, feasts, sacrifices, ordinances, and rituals and God says; *“I'm sick of these things.”*

Fourthly: So, in **John 6:53**; salvation is more than form; it's feeding on Christ!

He says, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you; (now listen carefully) except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood you have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life. I'll raise him up at the last day.”*

Now, I'm not surprised when people don't understand that. You say, “Well I certainly don't understand that verse.” Christ said; *“He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life. He that eateth not my flesh and drinketh not my blood hath no life.”*

UNTIL CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU

GALATIANS 4:19 • HENRY T. MAHAN

I'm not surprised that you don't understand. They didn't understand it when He spoke these words. In fact, these people to whom He uttered that statement replied; "How can this man give us His flesh to eat? How can this man give us His blood to drink?"

Now you only understand this verse of Scripture when you have a new man who lives and feeds on Christ and who needs Christ.

Now we know what it is to have a fleshly nature. We know what this fleshly nature craves; it craves clothing to keep our bodies warm. And when our bodies are not warm we're aware of it. We need something to drink when we get thirsty. Our throats get parched and we need water. And we know what it means to be thirsty.

And we get hungry. When we go without food for a few hours and we begin to experience hunger pangs; with that old nature, that old man needs to be fed. He needs something to drink.

Even so, this new birth that we were talking about a moment ago, this regeneration of the Holy Spirit which creates a new man; you'll find the Bible talking about, "*Putting off the old man and put on the new man created in righteousness in Christ Jesus; (that which is born of the flesh is flesh)*" and its needs are met by flesh; they're supplied by flesh.

"*That which is born of the Spirit*" is what, it is Spirit? The soul doesn't need water. It doesn't need food. It doesn't need clothing. What does it need? It needs Christ. And that new spiritual man must have spiritual food, just like the old man needs physical food; the new man needs spiritual food. And Christ is that food.

I'm thirsty. Christ said, "*I'm the water of life.*" I'm hungry. Christ said, "*I'm the bread of life.*" I'm weary. Christ said, "*Come unto me and rest.*" I am burdened. Christ said, "*Peace be unto you.*" I am guilty. Christ said; "*Though your sins be as scarlet I'll make them white as snow.*" I'm ignorant. Christ is my wisdom. Do you see what I'm saying? That's what it is to feed on Christ.

And that new man gets hungry. I know people who don't care anything about preaching. They get weary. They grow weary listening to preachers. And I grow weary listening to many of them. But they grow weary and bored and tired. What's wrong?

They don't have a spiritual nature that needs to be fed. That spiritual nature can only feed on Christ. It can only be satisfied by the Word of God. "*Desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby.*"

It's not surprising to me that you grow bored listening to the Word of God because you have no spiritual appetite. You are flesh. You don't have a spiritual nature. If you had a spiritual nature it could only be satisfied by the Word.

And it yearns for the Word and hungers for the Word; "*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness; they'll be filled.*" How, by the Word of God? "*Eat my flesh, drink my blood,*

UNTIL CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU

GALATIANS 4:19 • HENRY T. MAHAN

and you'll have eternal life." Christ is our *"Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, bread of life, and water of life."*

All right, in **John 15:5**; now listen to this, salvation is more than an isolated experience. Now this is going to reply very candidly and very positively to religion as we know it today. You're watching all these folks walk the aisle and make professions of faith. This is what I'm saying; salvation is more than an isolated experience; it is abiding in Christ." **John 15:5**, Christ said; *"I am the Vine; you are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruit. Without me you can do nothing."*

No man is redeemed unless he abides in Christ, unless he continues in Christ. It doesn't matter how many confessions of faith or decisions or time he's been down the aisle or baptized or joined the church.

Unless he abides in Christ; listen to **Hebrews 3:6**; *"Christ is the Son over His house whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing firm unto the end,"* if we continue in the faith.

Men are being led today to believe that a decision for Christ, or a profession of religion, or to pray the sinner's prayer gives them a title to heaven.

They're being led to believe that to walk down an aisle and say "I believe that Jesus Christ died on a cross and was buried and rose again, I accept Him as my Saviour; that gives me a title to heaven no matter what type of life I live, no matter what type of journey I pursue, no matter what kind of course of life I walk; I'm fixed up now. I've made my decision."

The Scriptures do not teach that. The Scriptures teach that salvation is a life that continues. It's a race that's completed. It's a faith that is held and kept and grows. *"We have been saved, we are being saved, and we shall be saved."*

Repentance is not an isolated act that happened 20 years ago. We have repented, we are repenting and we shall repent. We have believed, we are believing and we shall believe. Listen to **1 John 2:19**; *"They went out from us, they went out from us, but they were not of us. If they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us."* He's talking about some folks who left the faith, who departed from the assembly, who left the people of God.

Now multitudes of people are resting in and trusting in what they call "one time professions, first time decisions." They join the church. They call themselves saved, not so, not so, not unless they continue in the faith of Christ.

"Christ is a Son over His house whose house we are if we continue," not unless they abide in Christ. Now that's so, to abide in Christ. When Paul came to the end of his journey he said; *"The time of my departure is at hand. I fought a good fight, I've kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."*

UNTIL CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU

GALATIANS 4:19 • HENRY T. MAHAN

It is to abide in Christ, to be in Him and to continue in Him!