

All In Agreement

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 June 2026

Preacher: Joe Tough

[0 : 00] Amen. Before we continue, let's come before the Lord in prayer once again. Father, you said that just as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud in flowers, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater.

So your word that goes out will not return to you empty, but will accomplish what you desire and achieve the purpose for which you sent it. Father, it's in that promise that we now stand.

Send forth your word and achieve your purposes, we ask. And anything from me that is not accurate to it, would you in your mercy cause it to fall to the floor and die?

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Can I trust you? It's a piercing question, isn't it?

Because every relationship that we have, well, it's built on its foundation. A foundation that, if stable, can withstand the harshest winds this life has to offer.

[1 : 13] Just think of soldiers amid battle. Brothers in arms fighting side by side with men they know they can depend on. Can I trust you?

Yes. Then I'm with you to the end. But you see, when the foundation of trust is called into question, whether by accusations from without or confessions from within, it has the potential to bring everything that's been built crashing to the floor.

Mistrust has the potential to turn relationship into mere rubble. And as we come again to the opening chapters of Galatians, this whole idea of, can I trust you, is hovering in the background of these opening chapters.

You see, Paul's relationship to the Galatians has been called into question. False teachers are spreading a false gospel. And the Galatian church, well, they're listening and starting to ask themselves whether or not they really can trust Paul.

I mean, is Paul really the most reliable source? And we saw last week, didn't we, as we walked through verses 10 to 24 with Joe, that Paul gave an impassioned defense.

[2 : 43] He wrote this, For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Galatians, you can trust Paul. Why? Well, because he's not making this up. He was taught the true gospel by God himself through a direct revelation, meaning he is just as much God-given authority as any of the other apostles.

Great. Case closed, then. Well, not quite. Because I think another question that was lingering in the background and that Paul seems to address in our verses this evening is the question of, Paul, are you and the other apostles really on the same page?

Do you preach one thing, and the Jerusalem guys, do they preach another? I mean, is there really any unity within the early church? And it's here, in the opening of chapter 2, that Paul takes us back in time, as it were, and tells us about a very important meeting in the life of the early church.

Just look down with me to verse 1. Then, after 14 years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me.

[4 : 19] What caused him to go to Jerusalem after 14 years? Well, verse 2, I went up because of a revelation and set before them, though privately before those who seemed influential, the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles.

Paul went to Jerusalem under the guidance of God to meet with those who seemed influential.

Now, later in our passage, James, Peter, and John are named, so it most likely refers to them who were the leaders of the early church in Jerusalem. So, Paul goes to confer with them about the gospel that he preached to see if there really was any unity in the early church, to see whether or

not Paul had been running in vain, because if the gospel to the Gentiles, that's the non-Jewish world, you and me, was not the same gospel to the Jews, and if the God-given messengers of the early church weren't all sharing the same gospel, then that meant right at the heart of the church, there was disunity, and there was contradiction.

But as I hope we'll all see as we walk through these verses together, as we pretend to be something of a fly-on-the-wall to this private meeting, is that we'll see they really were all in agreement, and that the foundation of the church really is secure.

So, let's see that together by first seeing the gospel being preserved in verses 3 to 5. Look down to verse 3. But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

[6 : 16] Now, that seems a bit random, does it not? I mean, great news for Titus, not needing to be circumcised. It's one uncomfortable procedure, so I'm sure Titus was delighted. But Paul, what does circumcision have to do with anything?

You're going up to Jerusalem to meet with the church leaders, to talk about the gospel. Why do you need to tell us, oh, by the way, when I went up to do that, to share with them the gospel I was preaching among the Gentiles, guess what?

They didn't force Titus to go under the knife. Why was that even a possibility? You said Titus wasn't forced, implying there was a chance he might have been.

Well, let's keep reading. Verse 4. Yet, because of false brothers, secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery.

There are wolves in the flock. people who've slithered their way in and are going about seeing the freedom that given to Christians in light of the gospel, and instead of rejoicing and being glad, they're seeking to bring people back into slavery.

[7 : 39] Now, this idea of being set free by the gospel and the idea of being taken back into slavery by false teaching is something that's going to be unpacked for us in greater detail later on in the letter.

So here, we're just looking for the broad brushstrokes, as it were, to understand the basics of what's going on. How were the false teachers seeking to enslave people?

And how does that have anything to do with Titus not being circumcised in Paul's meeting about the gospel? Well, as you will see as we continue to work our way through the letter, the false teachers that have slipped in are teaching people that in order to be saved, in order to be in a right standing before God and be one of his people, you need to follow certain parts of the Old Testament law.

Very simply, they were teaching that a right standing with God was dependent on your works. Right from the very earliest days of the history of the church, the gospel of faith alone in Christ alone has always been under threat.

There are always those who seek to add some other requirement to it. Now, in Paul's day, it was circumcision, coming from strict Jews who had been able to quote the Bible and smother people with complicated arguments, using different parts of Scripture to pressure them into believing that their simple trust and faith alone in Jesus, well, that wasn't enough.

[9 : 23] And today, it might not be circumcision, but the same attempt to change the gospel comes dressed in the robes of religion and self-improvement.

You'll be saved if you join our church, if you believe in Jesus and follow these list of rules. Now, often, what they will insist on will be something that you can find in the Bible, but that has been taken out of context and seriously twisted or misunderstood.

For example, priests, right? You open your Bible to the Old Testament and you see priests mediating before man and God that fail to recognize that it's a role Jesus perfectly and finally fulfills and start insisting that people go to their local so-called priest to confess their sins and be made right before God, and there you have a false gospel.

And false gospels need to be opposed. Because look down with me to verse 5. To them, we did not yield in submission even for a moment so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. so that the gospel might be preserved. It's striking language, isn't it? That the gospel, which is the power of God for people being saved, is something that needs to be defended.

[11 : 10] It needs to be stood for so that future generations might have it taught to them. You see, there are some fights worth fighting and some things that really do need to be strongly opposed and this issue of faith alone in Christ alone, it's one of them.

It's a fight that is needed to be fought in each generation as we need to hold on to it no matter the cost as it really is the foundation of everything.

It's right that we seek to oppose teaching that goes against it. It's right that we look to correct and warn people who don't hold to it because Paul calls those who don't hold to it and teach others false brothers.

People who teach a salvation that is dependent on your good works aren't people to be partnered with. They aren't people to be welcomed into fellowship. Quite the opposite.

They are people who should be opposed and warned. Now that's important to understand because I remember when I first became a Christian and I started looking to grow my understanding of the Bible and faith and I used to watch loads of different videos online and I came across all sorts and all of a sudden I'm watching people who started undermining the simple gospel I had come to believe.

[12 : 48] The really unnerving thing about it all was that they looked really religious and impressive. They'd call themselves Christian. They'd assure me that they were so I got all sorts of confused.

but you see when I came across more mature Christians in the faith standing up and opposing the teaching that was confusing me by calling it out for what it was simply and clearly from the Bible that to me was a lifeline that God used to stop me from being pulled away.

Christians more established in the faith standing in the gap and standing firm in opposition to false teaching is often the means that God uses to bring others back as the means that he uses to preserve the truth of the gospel throughout the ages.

So very practically if you're starting to watch anything online that calls itself Christian that is starting to make you doubt whether or not Christ's work on the cross really is sufficient to totally and finally save you whatever it is turn it off and ask for help.

Go to those in the faith that can help you think through what you're hearing who can take you to the Bible and show you clear and honest truth and if you're here tonight and you're more established in the faith and you come across teaching that seeks to undermine faith alone in Jesus oppose it and warn others you might know who are starting to get pulled away.

[14 : 42] Now that doesn't mean we all become keyboard warriors online that's rarely ever constructive or helpful but I think it should encourage us all to stand firm in the truth we have come to believe.

If that truth is that the only confidence you have before God comes from Christ and Him alone then plant your feet dig in your heels and don't let anyone anyone push you about because people will people always have it even happened to Paul at the various earliest days of the gospel advancing so don't be surprised when other voices get loud because there really is nothing new under the sun. So we've seen the gospel being preserved by Paul opposing those who seek to add additional requirements to it but now it's time for us to see the gospel proclaimed.

Just look down with me to verse 6 and from those who seem to be influential what they were makes no difference to me God shows no partiality those I say who seemed influential added nothing to me.

Now most Friday mornings I'll meet with Joe Donald and Ben for something called a service review. It's the time of the week where we'll meet together to think back and think forward we'll talk about the previous Sunday and the sermons that were preached and offer an opportunity for some feedback what went well or what could be improved on.

[16 : 31] Now after all that has been discussed whoever is preaching the coming Sunday will share their working on the passage they're about to preach what's the passage about how are they going to break it up what points do they have and after that's been shared it often comes a part where the question will be asked does anyone have something they'd like to add now admittedly it's not I'm at that point I'll ask another extremely poorly worded question that Joe will have to translate and decipher but if I don't and Ben and Donald starts shaking their heads and starts saying nope I've got nothing to add well that's the equivalent of the green light flashing and a big thumbs up so it is here those I say who seemed influential added nothing to me Paul shares the gospel that he's been preaching for the last 14 years and the question is asked of

James Peter and John is there anything you'd like to add and the head starts shaking no Paul there isn't now this is huge because here we are clearly shown that the early church leaders were all in agreement with the way people were made right before God there was no disagreement between

the apostles with one saying this and the other saying that as if Peter James and John contradicted Paul or disagreed with his ministry verse seven on the country we see that you've been entrusted with the truth Paul we see you've been entrusted to preach the gospel to the non-Jewish world for the God that works through us is the same God that works through you Paul God has ordained to work through Paul to bring his gospel to the ends of the earth and

James Peter and John can see that clearly they're all in agreement and we need to be encouraged again to have this same confidence in Paul because if this isn't true if Paul isn't someone God has sovereignly chosen to work through then rip Romans straight out the Bible rip Galatians rip Ephesians Philippians Colossians rip anything Paul has authored because well it's a waste of ink but here we see the early church recognizing that Paul is a reliable source his words are to be trusted are to be accepted as the true teaching about God because through him God will advance his gospel to the ends of the earth and verse 9 Paul we agree with your message we agree with your mission you've been sent to the non-Jews we've been sent to the

Jews let's seal our unity with a handshake and here we could say is the most important handshake ever given one that impact really does echo throughout the ages you see there's only ever been one true gospel message and there only ever been one united mission that this handshake seals and confirms so if you hear anyone trying to tell you that the words of Paul don't add up with the words of James or that the church at the beginning was never really ever united around one gospel and one mission don't listen to them some things in Paul's letters are very hard to understand Peter even says that in one of his letters and to that I say amen there is loads I don't yet understand but brothers and sisters let's rest assured we really can trust him the early church apostles were all in agreement the church's foundation is secure and

God really has used Paul to carry the gospel to the non-Jewish world I mean any non-Jewish Christian in this room is proof of that God's fulfilling his purposes through his God given means so it's time for the meeting to be brought to an end right I mean it couldn't have really gone much better could it Paul went up to see if he had been running in vain and has been shown that he definitely hasn't been Peter James and John are all in agreement with him it's been signed and sealed with a handshake one gospel that's been preached to both Gentile and Jew with unity between Paul and the other God given messengers of the early church time for Paul and Barnabas to pack up and take a relief Titus with them to continue the ministry they've been called to right but not so fast there's one more thing only they asked us to remember the poor the very thing

[22 : 15] I was eager to do now what does it mean to remember the poor what is Peter James and John asking of Paul here well what appears to be likely is that this is a call to remember the poverty stricken churches in Judea that would have been hit hard by a great famine that hit the land which we're told about in Acts 11 which we read earlier you see in Acts 11 a revelation was given that there was going to be a famine over all the world and upon hearing this the Gentile church in Antioch where Paul and Barnabas were based determined that everyone according to his own ability would give money and send relief to the Jewish churches in Judea now why is that all important well because if that's the context for this meeting then that means the revelation we read about in verse 3 is a reference to the revelation given in

Acts 11 which was the means that Paul and Barnabas were sent to remember your poorer brothers and sisters and Paul was like of course that's the very thing I've been eager to do all this time Paul was eager to see the gospel spread and advance into new lands and places but you see that desire also ran alongside another desire which was his eagerness to remember the poorer churches that had already been established we see this pattern throughout

Paul's missionary journeys as he sought to plant churches with that same DNA churches that sought to advance the gospel to the ends of the earth while also supporting their poor and less fortunate brothers and sisters the church in Antioch was a great example of that you see in Acts 11 we see them supporting the poor churches in Judea that have already been established and then in Acts 13 we see them set apart Paul and Barnabas to spread the gospel and plant more churches now Paul being eager to remember the poor just like the Jerusalem apostles emphasizes again their unity and again confirms Paul's reliability he was preaching the same gospel as the churches in Judea and now we see he was always eager to support them financially as they preached the same gospel as him so brothers and sisters be encouraged where you see this same emphasis being lived out take encouragement and let it be to you a sign of reliability when a church holds to the gospel of faith alone in

Christ alone and seeks to see that gospel advance into new places while at the same time seeking to remember the poor that they have among them be encouraged that we see that take place here amongst us upon accord let it give you confidence in the gospel work we seek to do here as a church family because we're following in good step with Peter James John and Paul as we seek to hold fast to the gospel that sinners are saved by faith alone in Christ as we seek to see that gospel spread here in Aberdeen and across the world while supporting weaker churches we know both here and abroad you can see all the different ways we seek to do that as a church family by simply taking a look at the partnership board that's been beautifully made for us by Emily downstairs in the hall now we all know our church family is far from perfect that's not a surprise to anyone but let's see encouragement where it's to be seen and let's give thanks to

God that the pattern we see here in the early church we see being lived out amongst us here in Aberdeen so in closing may we by God's grace and independence upon the Holy Spirit continue to grow in staying faithful to the one gospel and the one mission that united the early church the gospel of faith alone in Christ alone that was preached in unity by God given messengers of the early church the gospel that Paul preached to the Gentiles and Peter James and John preached to the Jews and which needs to be defended and preserved so that it can continue to be preached to future generations which is the one united mission of the church seeing it to continue to go out into new lands both to Gentiles and Jews while the poor amongst us are remembered when new churches are planted and existing ones are supported and strengthened that's the reliable pattern that's been handed down to us so again may that be the reliable pattern we remain faithful to may we as a little church family here seek to continue following in good step with

[28 : 20] Peter James John and Paul let's pray now as we close dear heavenly father we give you thanks for your word and for the one true gospel that you have seen spread throughout the world lord we pray you keep us here as a church family faithful to it standing firm to the gospel of faith alone in Christ alone if there are any amongst us that are starting to be pulled away from it would you please bring them back put people into their lives that can warn them and the Holy Spirit would you please convince them of your truth father we give you thanks for Paul and his ministry that you have used to spread your gospel to the ends of the earth would you make us all relax into trusting his reliability being confident and sure that the gospel he preached comes from you and lord thank you for the pattern that we see here of the early church leaders united around the one gospel and united around the one mission of the church would you make us a church family that continues to follow their example seeking to see the one gospel spread while remembering the poor amongst us and we pray this evening for each church we partner with and support and we ask that what we have prayed for ourselves would you also do for them build them up and provide for all their needs too be with us now as we seek to take the truths we are about to sing and encourage us through them we pray all for your glory and our good in

Jesus name Amen