

Sermon by Chris Moroney at the 6pm. Healing Service at St. Andrew's Cathedral Sydney.
Wed July 5th 2006
Reading: Galatians 1:1-5 Topic: "Deliverance"

In the movie Superman Returns there is a dominant theme: does the world need a Saviour like Superman, or can the world do just as well without him, thank you very much.

Are the problems and the villains of Earth so vast and are the people of this earth so needy that we must have someone come into our world from outside so rescue or deliver us from a deadly peril?

Not surprisingly, in the movie the answer is Yes, we certainly do need Superman. He is the Saviour of the world. He alone can restore peace and security to Earth.

Superman Returns is a work of fiction. It is not true.

And yet it asks a question that is still relevant to the world and to the lives of all the people of this world: Do we need someone who can deliver us from the problems that we face?

Is there someone who can come into our world and make a difference?

Can we find deliverance from this evil world, from this fallen and cruel world in which we find ourselves?

For some of us the theme of Deliverance will bring back memories of another movie some years ago, where people needed to get out of a very scary situation.

Some of us might also think of the idea of being delivered from evil spirits or demons.

But the theme of our passage tonight is so much bigger than both those ideas.

Tonight we are thinking about "Jesus who delivers us from this present evil age."

1 PAUL – AN APOSTLE

Galatians

Paul's letter to the Galatians was addressed to a group of churches in Galatia, a region of modern Turkey. Paul had preached the gospel in these churches. He wrote to counter those who taught that Christians must keep the Old Testament law in order to be accepted by God. Paul began with a defense of his apostolic authority (chs. 1–2), then made it clear that all believers, Jew and Gentile alike, enjoy complete salvation in Christ (chs. 3–4). In chapters 5–6 Paul showed how the gospel of grace leads to true freedom and godly living. Perhaps the central message of Galatians is "a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ" (2:16). Paul wrote this letter sometime between A.D. 48 and 58. Paul is the author of this letter. He is writing to the churches, the gatherings of Christians in the region of Galatia. He is someone who has been Radically Changed by the Lord Jesus. And he was Wonderfully Sent

Paul was a man, who was a converted Jew. He was very keen to promote the Jewish religion and to stifle and prevent the Christian religion from growing. He became the apostle - the "sent one".

He was from God - sent on a mission - from God and Jesus Christ. He was not self appointed or man sent. God cares for you and for me. God wants to communicate to you and to me

He commissioned Paul to preach the gospel – to spread the Word

- to bring healing to the nations through proclamation and through the inspiration of Paul's letter / God's word.

Our God is: personal, relational, out going, loving and kind in communicating to us through his servants and through his WORD written, preserved and printed for us to read and hear and absorb.

Paul is at pains to tell them this message is -not made up by Paul or any other man- this gospel message is- revealed 1:12

Galatians 1:12 (ESV) For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. - from God- inspired by God see 1:1 and 1:11

Galatians 1:1 (ESV) Paul, an apostle— not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—

Galatians 1:11 (ESV) For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.

This is important in his argument

His letter is in response to false teaching in the church!

Some people were being misled – they were in danger of dropping out of the faith -- their salvation was in jeopardy -- their ultimate healing was in peril.

Paul is a wonderful example of the grace and the love of God.

A terrific picture of the fact that anyone can come to God and be welcomed, received, forgiven and made whole - through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

When he was Saul of Tarsus he was violently against the followers of Jesus Christ – apposed to God and his good purposes.

And yet God sought him out and turned him around. The persecutor of the gospel became a preacher of the gospel. The opponent of the church became a proponent of the church.

We must not think for a moment that there is anything too hard for God to do. We must not limit who God can bring to himself. We must not restrict our imaginations about what God can do in our lives if we are open to him.

If you are someone here tonight who has been made to feel that you are too far gone to ever be accepted by God or loved by God or forgiven by God, think again.

No matter what you've been or what you've become – come home. Come to Jesus.

Know his deep love and acceptance.

2 GOD – OUR FATHER

Here in 1:1 God the Father is the reason that Paul is an apostle.

God is active and powerful in the world. God is Neither Dead nor Distant

In 1:15-16 Paul outlines all the trouble that God went to in order to bring Paul to the point of conversion and appointment for the work of gospel preacher to the nations!

Galatians 1:15-16 (ESV) But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, [16] was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; God is: powerful, personal, active in the world, outgoing and he wants us to know him and he invites us to pray to Him!

Prayerful dependence on God is part of being fully human and truly Christian.

That is essential to the Healing ministry – to exercise prayer for everyone in need – entrusting them to our powerful and personal God.

The apostle Paul almost takes the powerful God for granted.

See in verse 1 “God the Father” – “who raised him from the dead”- that is the God that Paul serves- he is the God that Paul writes about- this is the God to whom we pray

God the Father – who raised Jesus Christ from the dead- He has the power of life and death- He is the one who controls this world and our destiny- this is OUR GOD

There is nothing that he cannot do!

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is his vindication.

It is God's stamp of approval for all that Jesus said and did in his life and by his death.

His being raised to life means that he now intercedes for us in heaven and rules the world and is going to come back one day to bring about the New Heaven and The New Earth.

This is the framework in which we live and struggle and pray and trust in God.

Our Father in Heaven

Notice too the very personal attribute that Paul keeps emphasizing about God in these verse 1:1 God the Father 1:3 God our Father 1:4 our God and Father. an important theme in this book especially later when he writes about us as sons. See Gal 4:4-7. Galatians 4:4-7 (ESV)

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, [5] to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as

sons. [6] And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" [7] So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

We need to acknowledge that it is not always easy for people to be positive about their view of God as Father –especially if their own Father was a problem for them. For all of us our relationship with our father is crucial for the way we view ourselves and the way we are able to relate to others.

We may want prayer for healing from the pain we feel from the way our fathers treated us, or neglected us.

It may be important, even tonight to pray for God's grace to forgive our fathers for their failures - after all they were only human. For those of us with fathers who were there for us in positive ways, we should give thanks to God. But for all of us, we need to let the scriptures inform our view of God as Father - our Father in heaven. We need to get the movement going in the right direction. Our heavenly Father is the model for our earthly fathers. Our earthly fathers will not provide the perfect model for understanding our Heavenly Father.

Our Heavenly Father cares deeply for each one of us. He knows us better than we know ourselves.

He is able to hear our requests and is able to give us what is best for us, in his good time, his perfect timing, which may not always be when we think is best.

Grace and Peace

In our passage, we notice what Paul says comes for sure from God our Father.

v.3 "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Grace" and "peace" may be traditional greetings, from Jewish and Greek cultures, but from a Christian perspective they have much deeper meaning – at a spiritual level. "Grace" is best translated as "underserved gift" – not something that comes to us by right, or because we have earned it or deserved it. The ultimate expression of God's grace is our rescue from sin and condemnation through Jesus. But God showers his grace upon us in all sorts of ways. If grace is God's gift of salvation, then peace is the result of having been saved. We can be at peace with ourselves when we are at peace with God. Even in the midst of troubles, problems and pain we can know the peace of God, because we know the God of peace. We can be at rest in the living arms of our Heavenly Father. Do you know the grace of God and the peace of God in your life and in your heart?

3 JESUS –OUR DELIVERER

We can know the grace of God and the peace of God through Jesus.

Her in verse 3 the Lord - Roman Ruler Jesus- Name Christ - Title Jewish: Promised Messiah King

He is Anticipated and Anointed "He gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age." Voluntary and Essential When Jesus died on the cross it was 1. Voluntary 2.

Essential

1. Voluntary- he willingly went to the cross- he learned obedience- he struggled but "your will be done"- he was born to die- he often told his disciples(* John 3:16) – see Gal 2:20 Galatians 2:20 (ESV) It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And 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.

2. Essential

Our human predicament is that we all break God's laws, accidentally and willfully and defiantly. We want to be independent. We think we know best. We live as if he was not there – as if we were GOD, masters of our own destiny. In defying God we condemn ourselves.

Only Jesus can rescue us from God's wrath and condemnation. This present evil age is under God's judgment. It is doomed, bound for demolition. Without God's grace providing our

forgiveness we too would be doomed. When he gave himself for our sins Jesus took the punishment we all deserve. He bore your pain and my pain in his body on the cross. He took our punishment for us.

He secured the possibility of our complete forgiveness.

HE DELIVERS US FROM THIS PRESENT EVIL AGE

The Bible is very clear that this is a fallen world, spoilt by sin, contaminated by evil. There are many pressures and temptations that this world puts before us every day.

1 John 2:15-17 (ESV) Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. [17] And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

This present age is passing away. It looks so permanent. In fact the physical is temporary and the spiritual is permanent. Jesus has brought in the new age of the Spirit and it will go on forever. When we put our faith in Jesus we become part of the age to come. We struggle on in this world, with God's help, through the Holy Spirit, knowing that one day we will be with our Lord Jesus forever.

The opportunity to be right with God is available as a gift to be received. It can sound too good to be true. But it is true. All we have to do is face up to our failure and confess our sins. Believe Jesus really did die for us. Believe that God has accepted Jesus' death in our place. Believe that God is going to forgive us, no longer hold our sins against us. Having done that, we live for him.

Jesus our Saviour is also our Lord and God is our Father. see v 5 How can we bring him glory?

Through living his way. This good news is central for becoming a Christian and going on as a Christian. It is all about GRACE and never about GOOD WORKS for SALVATION. see 1:6-7

Galatians 1:6-7 (ESV)

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— [7] not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.