

FROM JESUS' PROCLAMATION TO PAUL'S GOSPEL

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INTRODUCTION

The gap between Jesus and Paul has been an increasing problem for students of the New Testament and the beginnings of Christianity for most of the last two centuries. For nearly eighteen centuries of Christianity's history there was no problem, because there was no gap. The line of continuity from Jesus to Paul was seen as straightforward and unbroken. The Christ of Paul's theology was easily identified with the Jesus of the Gospels. But then questions began to rise. Why does Paul say so little about Jesus' mission in Palestine? If we had to depend on Paul for our knowledge of Jesus' life and mission, how little would we know, how bare would be our picture of Jesus. So, how much did Paul know about Jesus' mission? How much did he care to know about it? How important was it for Paul?

The problem began to be serious when the quest of the historical Jesus became a major concern. For the message of Jesus seemed to be so different from the gospel of Paul. And as the Jewishness of Jesus became steadily clearer for those engaged in the quest for the historical Jesus, the problem became still more severe. For Jesus could be understood in characteristically Jewish terms — Jesus as a prophet,¹ Jesus as a Jewish teacher, Jesus as engaged in mission for the restoration of Israel.² Whereas Paul, on the other hand, was charac-

1. See e.g. the summary treatment of one of the leading contributors to the quest of the historical Jesus — J. P. MEIER, «From Elijah-like Prophet to the Royal Davidic Messiah», in D.

1985; N. T. WRIGHT, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, London: SPCK, 1996.

teristically understood as the one who broke with his Jewish past, as the one who abandoned the Torah, as the one who turned what began as a Jewish messianic sect into a predominantly Gentile religion, as one who began to transpose the very Jewish message of Jesus into the language of Greek idiom and philosophy, as one who transformed the morality of Jesus into a religion of bloody sacrifice and redemption.

The gap, or should we say gulf, between Jesus and Paul can be documented on several fronts.

Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God; Paul preached Jesus. In the first three Gospels Jesus is not at the centre of his own message; his message was focused on God's kingdom and is summed up in the headline text of Mark: «The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news» (Mark 1.15).³ In Paul, however, the kingdom of God features hardly at all,⁴ and his gospel focuses on Jesus as Lord,⁵ and on the vital importance of being «in Christ».⁶

Jesus' message was primarily for Israel; Paul's mission was primarily for the Gentiles. Jesus did respond positively to the one or two Gentiles he encountered. But he is also recalled as sending his disciples on mission only «to the lost sheep of the house of Israel» (Matt 10.6), and as saying to the Syro-Phoenician woman, «I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel» (Matt 15.24). Paul, however, understood himself and is remembered precisely as «an apostle to the Gentiles» (Rom 11.13). And his mission to the Gentiles became a festering sore close to the heart of the mother church in Jerusalem, as attested by Luke's account of Paul's final visit to Jerusalem, where James, the Lord's own brother, informs him of the common opinion among the Jerusalem believers that Paul was an apostate from Israel (Acts 21.20-21).

Jesus was a local Jewish teacher; Paul was influenced by the religions and politics of his day. Late nineteenth century Liberalism characterized Jesus as preaching the simple message, to love God and one's neighbour.⁷ Whereas the

3. «The kingdom of God' appears regularly on Jesus» lips in the Synoptic Gospels – Mark 13x; Q 9x; special Matthew 28x; special Luke 12x; a total of about 105x in all.

4. Pauline corpus 14x, usually in the formulaic talk of «inheriting the kingdom» (1 Cor 6.9-10; 15.50; Gal 5.21; cf. Eph 5.5) or with similar future eschatological reference (1 Thess 2.12; 2 Thess 1.5; cf. Col 4.11; 2 Tim 4.1, 18).

5. In the undisputed Paulines (i.e. not including Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles) *kyrios* is used of Jesus about 200 times.

6. In the Pauline corpus «in Christ» occurs 83x, and «in the Lord» a further 47x; to which should be added many «in him/whom» references.

7. A. HARNACK, *What is Christianity?* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1900; ET 1901, 3rd edn 1904).

religionsgeschichtliche Schule maintained that Paul borrowed the myth of the dying and rising god of the mystery cults to proclaim Jesus as the dying and rising Saviour or as the divine redeemer of the Gnostic redeemer myth.⁸ Late twentieth century Liberalism has revived its predecessor's thesis in a new guise. Jesus was essentially a wisdom teacher, seeking to restore communal harmony within the villages of Galilee.⁹ Whereas Paul is now characteristically portrayed as working in the very different setting of the cities of the Mediterranean world and presenting Jesus as Lord in direct challenge to the lordship of the Roman Emperor.¹⁰

The issues thus posed are well summed up in William Wrede's famous description of Paul as the «second founder of Christianity» who has «compared with the first, exercised beyond all doubt the stronger —not the better— influence».¹¹ So, is Paul the real founder of Christianity? And is the message and mission of Jesus an accidental antecedent of Paul, of little actual relevance to the Christianity to which Paul gave enduring shape?

Alternatively, what are the continuities between Jesus and Paul? To what extent was Paul's gospel itself shaped by Jesus' mission and message? Was Paul inspired only by Jesus' death and resurrection, or also by the mission of Jesus which preceded his passion? I believe more can be said on this than is usually thought to be the case. I focus here on three important features of both their messages and argue that the similarity of emphasis is not coincidental but is best explained by the enduring impact made by Jesus' own mission prior to his death and resurrection.

1. THE OPENNESS OF GOD'S GRACE

1.1. *The distinctives of Jesus' message*

There is no doubt, as already indicated, that Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God, God's kingly rule. This was itself distinctive within the Judaism of his

8. H. GUNKEL, *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Neuen Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903); R. BULTMANN, *Theology of the New Testament, Vol. 1* (London: SCM, 1948; ET 1952).

9. J. D. CROSSAN, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, San Francisco: Harper, 1991.

10. Particularly R. A. HORSLEY (ed.), *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997); also *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation*, Harrisburg: Trinity Press International 2000); also *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* Harrisburg: Trinity Press International 2004.

11. W. WREDE, *Paul*, London: Philip Green 1907, 180.

time. Of course, for the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus, the imagery of God as king and of God's kingdom was familiar. But in the scriptures and post-biblical writings of Second Temple Judaism the phrase, «the kingdom of God», is hardly attested, and the theme of God's kingship is not particularly prominent.¹² So Jesus' focus on the kingdom of God was distinctive in itself. But the really distinctive features of his message were threefold.

a) *Jesus taught that God's kingly rule was already being experienced in and through his own ministry.* The hope of God's kingdom as soon to come was not unusual. Indeed, the second petition of the prayer taught by Jesus, «May your kingdom come» (Matt 6.10/Luke 11.2), echoes what was probably an early form of the Jewish Kaddish prayer: «May he let his kingdom rule in your lifetime . . . and in the lifetime of the whole house of Israel, speedily and soon».¹³ In contrast, however, it was Jesus' emphasis that Israel's ancient hope was *already* being fulfilled which so marked out his message. «The time is fulfilled» (Mark 1.15), claimed Jesus. The people to whom Jesus ministered were blessed, because they were seeing and hearing what many prophets could only long to see and hear (Matt 13.16-17/Luke 10.23-24). In response to John the Baptist's question, «Are you the one who is to come?», Jesus answered: «Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk . . . and the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor have good news brought to them» (Matt 11.3-5/Luke 7.19, 22). These were hopes for the age to come, especially as expressed by Isaiah;¹⁴ but in Jesus' ministry they were already coming about. Jesus' exorcisms were evidence that the «the kingdom of God has come upon you» (Matt 12.28/Luke 11.20). The present reality of God's kingdom, the active experience of God's kingly rule here and now marked off Jesus' preaching of God's kingdom and made his mission truly distinctive.

b) *Good news for sinners.* Jesus is remembered as claiming that «I came not to call the righteous but sinners» (Mark 2.17 pars.). This was in response to the criticism of certain Pharisees that he ate with tax collectors and sinners (Mark 2.16). Evidently this was such a feature of his mission that he became notorious for it, as indicated by the popular jibe directed against Jesus: «Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners» (Matt 11.19/Luke 7.34). And Luke's Gospel recalls that Jesus told his parables of the lost things (the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son) in response to Pharisaic grumbling: «This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them» (Luke 15.2).

12. See J. D. DUNN, *Jesus Remembered*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2003, 385 n.13.

13. More detail in DUNN, *Jesus Remembered* 409-10.

14. Isa 26.19; 29.18; 35.5-6; 42.7, 18; 61.1.

Now the significance of this is frequently missed, and because it is so important to our theme today I will have to take some time to draw out that significance, even if I can do so here only in somewhat simplified terms.¹⁵ «Sinners», of course, are simply those who break the law or who fail to keep the law.¹⁶ This does not mean, however, that Jesus was notorious for keeping company with criminals. The clue is given by the contrast between «the righteous» and «sinners», when Jesus says, «I came not to call the *righteous* but *sinners*» (Mark 2.17). For this points us to the fact that «sinners» was a *factional term* within the Second Temple Judaism of Jesus' time.

The fact is that Second Temple Judaism was characterized and almost torn apart by different factions. The most obvious factions were the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes, assuming, as almost everyone does, that the Qumran community was a branch of the Essenes. In addition we have to include what may well have been a fairly coherent movement whose views were expressed in the Enoch literature;¹⁷ and others behind the Psalms of Solomon. What made these groups distinctive factions within Second Temple Judaism? It was their conviction that their understanding of what it meant to be Israel, God's covenant community, was the correct understanding —the only correct understanding, so that only they were conducting themselves as faithful Israelites should act. They each interpreted the law in their own way and practised the law in accordance with their interpretation. *Halakhah*, we should recall, comes from *halakh*, «to walk»; their *halakhoth* determined how they should walk, how they should conduct their lives. Inevitably they disagreed with other interpretations and in some cases tried to persuade their fellow Jews of the correctness of their particular interpretations, of *their halakhoth*. The sectarian letter from Qumran to the leaders of Israel, known as 4QMMT, is a very good example of this. They wrote to inform the leaders of Israel of their own particular rulings, their *halakhoth* governing, for example, purity and sacrifice. It was because their rulings disagreed with the way the law was practised in Jerusalem that they had separated themselves from the rest of the people and gone down to Qumran. In writing thus their hope was to persuade the Jerusalem leadership of the rightness of the sect's rulings, their «works of the law». They were sure that if the leadership were persuaded by their letter, and began to practise «the works of the law» as the sect understood them, it would be counted to those who so acted for righteousness.

15. See more fully DUNN, *Jesus Remembered* #13.5.

16. E.g. Exod 23.1; Deut 25.2; Pss 1.1, 5; 10.3; 28.3; 37.32; 50.16-18; 71.4; 82.4; 119.53, 155; Prov 17.23; Ezek 32.8, 11, 19; Sir 41.5-8.

17. Emphasized particularly by G. BOCCACCINI, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1998.

More to the point, such groups naturally tended to regard themselves as «the righteous». They were righteous because they were observing the law as it should be observed. But the inevitable corollary was that those who disagreed with such factional *halakhoth*, and who thus did not practise the law properly, were law-breakers, «sinners». We find such usage running through the literature of the period from 1 Maccabees¹⁸ onwards. So the Enoch sectarians regarded themselves as «righteous», and they regarded others who calculated the Jewish feasts by a different calendar as «sinners». ¹⁹ The Dead Sea Scrolls refer to their opponents, that is, other Jews, in similar terms.²⁰ And in the Psalms of Solomon «the righteous» repeatedly denounce the «sinners», that is, probably the Hasmonean Sadducees who controlled the Temple cult.²¹ In all these cases the term «sinners» does not denote non-practising, law-defiant Jews, those who would be regarded by all as law-breakers, but Jews who practised their Judaism *differently* from the writer's faction. They were «sinners», that is, law-breakers, but only from a sectarian viewpoint, and only as judged by the sectarians' interpretation of the law.

Now we can see what Jesus was accused of: he was sharing table-fellowship not with blatant criminals, but with those whom the «righteous» Pharisees regarded as unfaithful to the law. And we can see better why Jesus said, «I came not to call the righteous, but sinners» (Mark 2.17). He was reacting against that Pharisaic factionalism. The factions of his day had, as it were, been drawing internal boundaries within Israel. They were drawing the definition of who should be counted a faithful member of the covenant people more tightly round themselves, excluding others, denying in effect that these others were recipients of God's covenant grace. To this Jesus reacted strongly. He refused to agree with that attitude. He broke through the boundaries the Pharisees were in effect erecting within Israel. The good news of God's kingdom was precisely for «sinners». Here we should remember that the name «Pharisees» had almost certainly started as a kind of nickname, «the separated ones», *perushim* from the Hebrew *parash*, «to separate». ²² That is, they separated themselves from those who would make them unclean, prevent them from being holy.

18. 1 Macc 1.34; 2.44, 48.

19. 1 En 1.7-9; 5.4, 6-7; 22.9-13; 82.4-7; and 94-104 *passim*.

20. 1QpHab 5.1-12; 1QH 10.10-12; 12.34; CD 2.3; 11.18-21; 19.20-21; 4QFlor (4Q174) 1.14.

21. *Pss. Sol.* 1.8; 2.3; 7.2; 8.12-13; 17.5-8, 23.

22. See E. SCHÜRER, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, revised and edited by G. VERMES – F. MILLAR (4 vols. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973-87) 2.396-7; S. J. D. COHEN, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, Philadelphia: Westminster 1987, 162; A. J. SALDARINI, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark 1988, 220-5.

They ate their meals as though they were priests in the Temple.²³ They believed that in order to be holy, set apart to God, they had to separate themselves and to eat separately from others. This was what Jesus objected to the belief that faithfulness to the law required such separation, the conviction that failure to observe such Pharisaic *halakhoth* cut people off from God's covenant mercy. For Jesus it was of fundamental importance that God's grace was *open*, and above all to those whom the religious regarded as beyond that grace. He broke through the boundaries between factions which limited the grace of God within Israel. He shared his table with the irreligious, with those regarded by the righteous as «sinners».²⁴

c) *Good news for the poor*. A third distinctive feature of Jesus' mission was that he saw one of his priorities to be to bring the good news of God's kingdom to the poor.²⁵ Poverty here should not be spiritualized, as Matthew's version of the first Beatitude may seem to suggest: «Blessed are the poor in spirit» (Matt. 5.3). For Luke makes it clear that Jesus' blessing was for the poor, that is, the materially poor: «Blessed are you poor» (Luke 6.20). But the difference between Matthew and Luke should not be overemphasized. For it had long been Israel's experience that poverty had many dimensions —material, social and spiritual. That is why Israel's prophets had denounced the ruthlessness and heartlessness with which the rich disregarded and exploited the materially poor. And why the psalmist could be so confident that God was pre-eminently the God of the poor,²⁶ and why the psalmist and his community could identify themselves as the poor and needy.²⁷

It is clear from the echoes of Isa. 61.1 in Jesus' preaching that Jesus drew from that passage an understanding of his mission.²⁸ Luke simply gives more explicit expression of this in his portrayal of Jesus' sermon in the synagogue of Nazareth. There he tells us that Jesus read from Isaiah, «The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor» (Isa 61.1). And then Jesus went on, «Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing» (Luke 4.17-21). As Jesus' first Beatitude also makes clear, the good

23. Emphasized particularly by J. NEUSNER, *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Rabbinic Judaism*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall 1973.

24. DUNN, *Jesus Remembered* #14.8.

25. In what follows I again draw on DUNN, *Jesus Remembered* #13.4.

26. Pss 9.18; 10.14, 17; 12.5; 14.6; 22.24-26; 35.10; 40.17; 41.1; 68.5, 10; 69.33; 70.5; 72.12-13; 102.17; 113.7; 132.15; see also 1Sam 2.8; 2Sam 22.28; Job 34.28; 36.6; Prov 3.34; Isa 11.4; 14.32; 29.19; 41.17; 49.13; 61.1; Jer 20.13; Sir 21.5; *Pss Sol.* 5.11; 15.1.

27. «I am poor and needy» (Pss 40.17; 70.5; 86.1; 109.22); see also Pss 18.27; 37.14; 68.10; 69.32; 72.2, 4; 74.19, 21; 140.12; Isa 54.11. See further E. Gerstenberger, *TDOT* 11.246-7, 250.

28. Matt 5.3-4/Luke 6.20-21 and Matt 11.5/Luke 7.22 both clearly echo Isa 61.1-2.

news for the poor was that «the kingdom of God is yours» (Matt 5.3/Luke 6.20). The kingdom of God is misunderstood unless it is seen to be for beggars. And other episodes in Jesus' mission make the same point. To the rich (young) man he says, «Go sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven» (Mark 10.21). And he goes on to warn, «How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God» (Mark 10.23). Elsewhere he warns, «Where your treasure is there will your heart be also» (Matt 6.21/Luke 12.34); and, «No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other; you cannot serve God and Mammon» (Matt 6.24/Luke 16.13). The point is clear: precisely because wealth creates a false sense of security, a trust which should be placed only in God,²⁹ it all too quickly and too often becomes the most serious alternative to God. Good news for the poor and warnings for the rich are the two sides the same coin.

1.2. *The distinctives of Paul's gospel*

The distinctives of Paul's gospel can be readily matched with those of Jesus' message.

a) *God justifies the ungodly now*. As the kingdom of God can be seen as the distinctive of Jesus' message, so for many the distinctiveness of Paul's gospel is most clearly seen in his theology of justification by faith. The imagery of justification is that of the law court. The judge justifies, that is, acquits those charged with wrong-doing. The most common use of the imagery of God as Judge in Israel's scriptures is with reference to the last judgment. Israel's hope was that in the final judgment its faithfulness to God's covenant and law would be recognized, Israelites would be acquitted and enter into the life of the age to come. Paul knows that imagery well. He draws on it in various places. For example, he warns the over-confident of «the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. For God will repay according to each one's deeds...»³⁰ For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous in God's sight,

29. «Mammon» is usually explained as deriving from 'mn («to trust»), that is something relied on (in contrast to God); «the word signifies "resources", "money", "property", "possessions"» (W. D. DAVIES – D. C. ALLISON, *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, Vol 1 1988, 643; see also J. P. MEIER, *A Marginal Jew, Vol. Three: Companions and Competitors*, New York: Doubleday 2001, 589 nn.92, 93.

30. The quotation is from Ps. 62.12 and Prov. 24.12; but the theme is often taken up in Jewish writings; for further detail, see J. D. G. DUNN, *Romans* (WBC 38) Dallas: Word 1988, 85, 97-8.

but the doers of the law will be justified» (Rom 2.5-13). Here already we find an echo of Jesus' warning to «the righteous» of his day, that his message of the kingdom was not good news to them. But it is the unexpected presentness of God's justification which I want to emphasize here.

So Paul writes to the Corinthians, quoting Isaiah, rather as Jesus had quoted Isaiah: «“At an acceptable time I listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you” (Isa 49.8). See, *now* is the acceptable time; see, *now* is the day of salvation» (2Cor 6.2). Or to the Roman Christians he can write, «Therefore, having been justified from faith [that is, already justified from faith], we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access into this grace in which we stand» (Rom 5.1-2). They have already been justified. Already they have access into the inner sanctum of God's presence, which only the High Priest could enter (the Holy of Holies) and only on the one day of the year (the Day of Atonement), and which for Israelites generally could only be a visionary hope for a visionary future. And later in Romans Paul paints his own picture of the final law court. Who on that day, he asks scornfully, will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, rather was raised, who also is at God's right hand, who also intercedes on our behalf' (Rom 8.33-34). Here the matter has already been settled. It is what has already happened in Christ's death and resurrection that is decisive.

In other words, there is a strong similarity between Jesus' message and Paul's gospel. *Jesus* spoke of God's kingly rule already effective in and through his ministry. *Paul* saw Jesus' death and God's act of raising Jesus from the dead as similarly enacting what had hitherto been thought of as belonging only to the future —the resurrection of the dead leading into the final judgment (as classically in Dan 12.1-3). As in Jesus' mission the kingdom of God was already present, so in Jesus' resurrection the final resurrection had already begun, and that which would determine the final judgment has already happened. The openness of God's grace through Jesus' mission became still more open through Jesus' death and resurrection. Such a coincidence is hardly accidental. It was the same openness of grace, the same realisation that what hitherto could only have been hoped for is already present, and active, and able to be experienced here and now. And it was the same Jesus: the line of continuity between the message of Jesus' mission and the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection is clear.

b) *Good news for Gentile sinners*. There is no doubt that a major contribution of Paul to the development of Christianity, perhaps his major contribution, was his opening out of the mission to the Gentiles. Without Paul the messianic sect of the Nazarenes may have remained a renewal sect within Judaism, destined to fade away or to be reabsorbed into rabbinic Judaism some generations

later. It was primarily Paul whose mission to non-Jews transformed the Jewish sect into an ethnically diverse religion, into what became a predominantly Gentile religion. That claim requires a lot more elaboration than I can give it now. Here the point I want to make is that Paul's outreach to the Gentiles was so much like Jesus' mission on behalf of sinners that some knowledge of Jesus' mission almost certainly influenced Paul's understanding of his vocation to take the good news of God's Son to the Gentiles (Gal 1.16). As in the case of Jesus the two key features are the appearance of the term «sinners» and the importance of table-fellowship with sinners.

For the righteous who regarded other non-observant Jews as «sinners», even more deserving of the title «sinners» were Gentiles. Gentiles by definition were outside the chosen people; in the words of Ephesians, they were «aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise» (Eph 2.12). They were by definition outside the law which defined Israel, they were literally law-less, out-laws. So, by definition, they were «sinners».³¹ Paul reacted to this very Jewish attitude toward «Gentile sinners» in the same way that Jesus reacted to Pharisees' condemnation of non-observant Jews as «sinners». This becomes clearest in the incident in Antioch which Paul recalls in Gal 2.11-17.³²

In the church in Antioch Peter had readily eaten with the incoming Gentile believers. But, Paul says, when a group came from James in Jerusalem, Peter and the other Jewish believers «separated» from the Gentile believers (2.12) —that word «separate» again. Paul rebuked Peter publicly for distorting and departing from 'the truth of the gospel'. Why? Because, says Paul, Peter in effect was trying to «compel the Gentiles to live like Jews» (2.14). And he continues his appeal to Peter: «We are Jews by nature and not Gentile sinners, and we know that no one is justified by works of the law but only through faith in Jesus Christ» (2.15-16). The issue is clear. Peter had reverted to the view that Gentiles were sinners by nature, and that Jews in order to remain faithful to the covenant had to separate from Gentiles. That meant, in particular, to eat separately from Gentiles, to maintain the laws of clean and unclean (Lev 20.22-26), to avoid all trace or taint of Gentile idolatry. So once again, it was table-fellowship which was the test —the test of recognizing and living out the openness of God's grace. The test of the gospel was whether people could eat at the same table, fully accept the other, and not limit the wideness of God's mercy by making his love too narrow with false limits of our own.³³

31. Ps 9.17; Tob 13.6; *Jub.* 23.23-24; *Pss Sol* 1.1; 2.1-2; Luke 6.33 (*hoi hamartōloi*) = Matt 5.47 (*hoi ethnikoi*); Mark 14.41 pars.; cf. K. H. RENGSTORF, *TDNT* 1.325-6, 328.

32. I have reflected on this passage for thirty years and sum up my findings most recently in J. D. G. DUNN, *Beginning from Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) ##27.4-5.

33. I echo the hymn of Frederick William Faber, «There's a wideness in God's mercy».

In short, as Jesus broke through the boundaries *within* Israel, Paul broke through the boundary *round* Israel. And in the same terms: non-observance of law and tradition, however sacred, did not put anyone beyond God's grace. And in the same way: by sharing the meal table with those whom the religious traditionalists would exclude. This again was surely no coincidence, but attests a clear continuity between Jesus and Paul.

c) *Obligation to help the poor.* Paul also stressed the importance of assisting the poor. This is again often neglected in treatments of Paul. But we know it is the one obligation which he had no hesitation in agreeing to in the Jerusalem council (Gal 2.10) —not in addition to the agreed gospel, but as integral to it. And we know that the collection he made among his churches for the poor in Jerusalem was his main concern in the last phase of his mission.³⁴ To deliver this collection was the only reason that Paul returned to Jerusalem, knowing that it might cost him his life (Rom 15.31), as indeed it did. And what is so striking is that in his letters on the subject he uses words which characterize his gospel. Contributing to the collection will be a *charis*, an act of «grace».³⁵ It would be an expression of *koinōnia*, of «shared experience» of that grace.³⁶ In Romans he includes «sharing/giving» and «acts of mercy» in the charisms which are the functions of the body of Christ (Rom 12.8). And in Gal 6.2 he counts «bearing one another's burdens» as fulfilling «the law of Christ». By this he almost certainly refers back to what these Christian communities knew about Christ, how Jesus had interpreted the law. «The law of Christ» was their knowledge of Jesus' own priorities —to bring good news to the poor.

2. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL TENSION AND THE SPIRIT

2.1. *Characteristic of Jesus' message*

I have emphasised the distinctiveness of Jesus' gospel as the proclamation of the kingdom as already present and active in and through his ministry. But as we also noted, Jesus also looked for the future coming of the kingdom, that is, presumably, of the full revelation of God's kingly rule. He taught his disciples to pray, «May your kingdom come» (Matt 6.10/Luke 11.2). What deserves

34. Rom 15.25-28; 1 Cor 16.1-3; 2 Cor 8-9. For more detail see DUNN *Beginning from Jerusalem* #33.4.

35. 2 Cor 8.1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 16, 19; 9.8, 14, 15 (also 1 Cor 16.3).

36. 2 Cor 8.4; 9.13.

notice now is the tension he maintained in his message of the kingdom, the eschatological tension of the kingdom.

a) *Living in the light of the coming kingdom.* The double aspect of Jesus' proclamation has caused much confusion. How could Jesus preach that God's kingdom was already present, yet still to come? Many scholars have found the two emphases to be so incompatible that one or other must be regarded as a later addition to the Jesus tradition.³⁷ But such a solution simply fails to recognize the character of grace: as something already given in its fullness; but as something always pointing forward to its fuller realization. The child can always be confident of the parents' love while looking forward to maturity. So Jesus, we may infer, had no difficulty in recognizing the fulfilment that was happening through his ministry, while looking forward to a still richer consummation of God's rule. This in fact is the most obvious way to interpret the tension between Jesus' proclamation of fulfilled hope (Mark 1.15) and the prayer he taught his disciples to pray for the kingdom to come (Matt 6.10). In his own ministry he resolved the tension by living his life and relationships in the light of the kingdom. We have already mentioned his concern for sinners and the poor. We could add his recognition of the need for forgiveness and to forgive (Matt 6.12, 14-15)³⁸ and his insistence that final judgment will take account of whether the hungry were fed, the thirsty given drink, the stranger welcomes, the naked clothed, and the sick or in prison visited (Matt 25.31-46). To live by kingdom values had an extensive impact on the way life was lived.

b) *The Spirit as the present power of the kingdom.* Jesus apparently did not speak much about the Holy Spirit. But what he did say is very much to the point here. For when he spoke of God's kingly rule as already active in his ministry, he was thinking primarily of the Spirit of God working through his ministry. This is implicit in the passages already referred to which indicate that Jesus believed himself to have been anointed with the Spirit and thus commissioned to preach the good news to the poor (Isa 61.1). It was this anointing with the Spirit—we may think of Jesus' anointing at Jordan after his baptism by John (Mark 1.10 pars.)—which empowered Jesus for his mission (Acts 10.38). It was this anointing of the Spirit which signalled the beginning of the fulfilment which his mission expressed. The link between the kingdom already

37. E.g., E. KÄSEMANN, «The Beginnings of Christian Theology» *New Testament Questions of Today*, London: SCM 1969, 82-107, argued that the irreconcilable contradiction between the two emphases could be explained only by postulating that the «already present» emphasis was authentic, and the «still to come» emphasis reflected the teaching of the early communities (101-2).

38. DUNN, *Jesus Remembered* #14.6.

active and the Spirit of God is most explicit when Jesus attributed his success in exorcism to the Spirit (Matt 12.27-28 par.). He acknowledges that there were several other successful exorcists in his time (12.27). But he stresses the distinctiveness of his ministry is that he exorcises by the power of the Spirit. The emphasis in the Greek lies on the first and the last phrases: «Since it is by *the Spirit of God* that I cast out demons, then has come upon you *the kingdom of God*» (12.28). The power of the Spirit is the presentness of the kingdom, God's kingly rule already in evidence.

2.2. *The already and not yet in Paul*

The same twofold emphasis is present in Paul's teaching. This is regularly expressed as the «already and not yet» in his understanding of the process of salvation. Salvation itself is the end of the process;³⁹ those in the process are 'those who are being saved'.⁴⁰ There has been a decisive beginning—all that baptism speaks of, a dying and being buried with Christ (Rom 6.3-4). But there is also a not yet—an outworking of the death of Christ in the wasting away of the old nature and a final sharing in Christ's resurrection.⁴¹ What is often missed, once again, however, is the degree to which Paul's already-not yet emphasis is the same eschatological tension as in Jesus' mission.

a) *The future tense of justification.* The centrality of Paul to Reformed theology has tended to focus only on the already aspect of Paul's teaching on justification—what we briefly discussed earlier. In so doing it has also tended to ignore the *future* tense of justification. For though, as we have seen, Paul does emphasize that through faith we can know justification, acceptance by God here and now, he also emphasizes that final judgment will also take place. And he emphasizes that final judgment will depend to at least some extent on the way lives are led—and that includes believers. «We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil».⁴² This «all» assuredly includes believers! For Paul, as for Jesus, final judgment will be «according to

39. Rom 5.9-10; 11.26; 13.11; Phil 1.19; 2.12; 1Thess 5.8-9.

40. 1Cor 18; 15.2; 2Cor 2.15.

41. E.g. 2Cor 4.16-5.5; Phil 3.10-11; see further J. D. G. DUNN *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Edinburgh: T & T Clark 1998, #18.

42. Rom 2.12-13; 2Cor 5.10; see further my *The New Perspective on Paul* (WUNT 185) Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005; revised, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) ch. 1 ##4.2(10) and 4.3(11).

works». ⁴³ In Paul as with Jesus the imagery of reward for achievement or good deeds (works) is not lacking. ⁴⁴ For Paul, like Jesus, salvation (eternal life) is in some degree conditional on faithfulness. ⁴⁵ Paul and Jesus share the same double emphasis, the same eschatological tension. Is that too accidental, or do we see evidence here of further influence of Jesus' mission, its character and emphases reaching beyond Jesus to Paul through channels no longer obvious to us?

b) *The Spirit as the arrab?n and aparch?*. An even more striking feature linking Paul to Jesus is the same realisation that the Spirit is the key to understanding the tension between the already and the not yet. For with the coming of the Spirit —we may think of Pentecost (Acts 2)— another of Israel's eschatological hopes had been realized. As the prophets had expected, the Spirit had been poured out in the last days. ⁴⁶ As Jesus' resurrection marked the beginning of the end-time resurrection, so the Pentecost baptism in the Holy Spirit marked the fulfilment of God's final purpose for his people. Paul rejoiced in that Spirit as much as any of the first Christians. But Paul did not go overboard on this, in a wave of wild spiritual enthusiasm —as has so often been the case when individuals have experienced a rich outpouring of the Spirit. For it is Paul who emphasized that the Spirit is the *arrab?n*, the first instalment that guarantees full and final payment (2Cor 1.22); and that the Spirit is the *aparchē* (Rom 8.23), the first fruits which signal the start of the final harvest. For Paul the Spirit is the power of God which transforms believers into the image of their Lord degree by degree (2Cor 3.18). The Spirit is the power which, again as the prophets had hoped, ⁴⁷ enables the obedience which fulfils the law (Rom 8.4) and bears the fruit of a transformed character (Gal 5.22-23). The Spirit is the power which in the end will complete the life-long process of salvation by changing our bodies of humiliation to conform them to Christ's body of glory. ⁴⁸

This is why, no doubt, for Paul, as for others of the earliest Christians, the Spirit of God can now be recognized as the Spirit of Christ. ⁴⁹ For the power which anointed Jesus, which gave Jesus' mission its power and effectiveness,

43. Matt 16.27; John 5.28-29; Rom 2.6-11; 1Cor 3.8; 2Cor 5.10; 11.15; Col 3.25; Rev 20.11-15.

44. E.g. Matt 6.1-6; 10.41-42; 25.34-40; 1Cor 3.14; 9.24-25; Phil 3.14; Col. 3.24; 2Tim 4.8.

45. E.g. Mark 13.13; Rom 8.13; 1Cor 15.2; Gal 6.8; Col 1.23.

46. Acts 2.17-21 quotes Joel 2.28-32; see also Isa 32.15; 44.3; Ezek 39.29.

47. Jer 31.31-34; Ezek 11.19; 36.26-27.

48. Rom 8.11; 1Cor 15.42-49; Phil 3.21.

49. Rom 8.9; Gal 4.6; Phil 1.19. Note also 1Cor 15.45; the «life-giving spirit» is the Spirit of God.

is the same power that believers now experience. That power bears the character of Jesus, and is distinguished from all false or misleading spiritual powers by the character of Jesus which it nurtures and grows in the believer. For Paul, «discernment of spirits» (1Cor 12.10), testing of the Spirit's gifts (1Thess 5.21), was always necessary. And the primary test was whether the manifestation of the Spirit, the effect of the Spirit, was Christ-like in character and Christ-forming in effect.⁵⁰ Paul could never have employed that test had he not known a lot more about Jesus' mission than his letters reveal. And no doubt it was his knowledge of the impact which the Spirit had had on Jesus which helped shape and determine Paul's pneumatology. As he himself says, «It is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed (or we may say, has "christed") us, by sealing us and giving us the *arrabōn* of the Spirit in our hearts» (2Cor 1.21-22). For Paul, the Spirit that anointed Jesus at the Jordan is the same Spirit that anointed believers and shaped them into the image of Christ. The very language implies that Paul was well aware that Jesus had been anointed by the Spirit and that the continuum between that anointing and the gift of the Spirit to those who believed was firm and unbroken.

3. THE LOVE COMMAND

A third feature which allows a line to be drawn directly between Jesus and Paul is their shared attitude to the law and their shared insistence that the law was summed up in the command to love one's neighbour as oneself.

3.1. *Jesus and the law*

One of the most depressing features of the quest for the historical Jesus has been the attempt by a succession of questers to set Jesus apart from his Jewish context. A classic expression of this was Ernest Renan's *Life of Jesus*, in which we find the following claim: «Fundamentally there was nothing Jewish about Jesus»; after visiting Jerusalem, Jesus «appears no more as a Jewish reformer, but as a destroyer of Judaism... Jesus was no longer a Jew».⁵¹ The key issue was Jesus' attitude to the law. Here it was easy to build on Jesus' controversies with various Pharisees, particularly on the Sabbath and on purity,⁵² and to draw

50. DUNN, *Theology of Paul* 263, 594-8.

51. E. RENAN, *The Life of Jesus*, London: Truebner 1863; ET 1864, cited by S. HESCHEL, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus*, Chicago: University of Chicago 1998, 156-7.

52. Mark 2.23-3.5; 7.1-23.

out the inference that Jesus in effect did away with the law. So it has been argued: the law and the prophets were until John the Baptist, but now, for Jesus, they belonged to the past.⁵³

Part of the attraction of this argument was that it allowed a clear line to be drawn from Jesus to Paul. For Paul has traditionally been seen as the one who above all broke with the law and rendered it totally irrelevant for Christianity. My near neighbour in Durham, Charles Cranfield, for example did not hesitate to draw a direct line between Jesus and Paul in claiming that Jesus knew himself to the *telos nomou*, «the end of the law» of which Paul speaks in Rom 10.4.⁵⁴

But this simply will not do. For a start, it consigns Matthew's portrayal of Jesus and the law to a later attempt to re-judaize Jesus. Matthew has Jesus saying:

Do not think I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5.17-19).

So we are bound to ask whether Jesus' teaching on the law was quite so negative and dismissive as many of the questers for the historical Jesus have maintained. Has Matthew perverted the teaching of Jesus? Or was Jesus more ambiguous, or more subtle in his teaching on the law? Did he use the law to penetrate to what was of primary importance in the relationship between God and his people? Did he think of the law more as an icon than an idol —a window through which one could look to see what God really wants of his people, rather than an object on which to focus attention as the goal in itself?

The answer begins to become clearer when we look at the other Gospel traditions on the subject. The Sabbath disputes show Jesus not as ignoring or disputing the sanctity of the Sabbath, but rather asking how that sanctity is best maintained and celebrated. So, the Sabbath does not rule out what was otherwise a quite acceptable way of relieving hunger. And the Sabbath does not rule out doing good or saving life, but gives opportunity to do just that (Mark 2.23-3.5). And Matthew's version of the dispute about purity raises the question whether Jesus actually dismissed all laws of ritual purity or rather reminded his critics that the purity of the heart was much more important than the purity of

53. J. BECKER, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998, 227.

54. C. E. B. CRANFIELD, *St Mark*, Cambridge University, 1959, 244.

the hands (Matt 15.16-20). And later in the Sermon on the Mount, what does Jesus do with commandments like those against murder and adultery? He does not disown them; he deepens them. The commandment against murder is intended to rule out not simply murder, but also the unjustified anger or insult. The commandment against adultery is intended to rule out not simply adultery, but also the lustful look and desire (Matt 5.21-22, 27-28).⁵⁵

Most striking of all is the way Jesus was prepared to sum up the law in just two commandments, the greatest commandments.

The first is this, «Hear, O Israel, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength». The second is this, «You shall love your neighbour as yourself» (Mark 12.29-31).

To be noted here, is that Jesus did not refuse to sum up God's covenant obligations on his people in commandments. The first of his two commandments, of course, was Israel's own creedal confession: «Here, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God» (Deut 6.4-5). So Jesus' fellow Jews would have had no difficulty in recognizing that as the top priority. But the second was a complete surprise: «You shall love your neighbour as yourself». For this is also a commandment from the Torah (Lev 19.18b). But it comes in a sequence of disparate rulings in Lev 19. Jesus evidently extracted this particular commandment from these rulings and gave it a key role in interpreting the law. We should not miss the fact that Jesus seems to have had no precedent for doing so. Explicit references to Lev 19.18 are lacking in Jewish literature prior to Jesus. And such allusions as there are give it no particular prominence, though subsequently the opinion is attributed to Rabbi Akiba (early second century) that Lev 19.18 is «the greatest general principle in the Torah» (*Sipra* on Lev 19.18). Almost certainly, then, it was Jesus himself who extracted Lev 19.18 and gave it this pre-eminent status within the law.⁵⁶ And probably Rabbi Akiba was influenced by Jesus, knowingly or unknowingly, in giving Lev 19.18 a similar key role in interpreting the Torah.

It is this which helps explain Jesus' attitude to the Sabbath and in the other disputes with various Pharisees, including, as we have seen earlier, his openness to sinners. It was because Jesus himself lived by the love command. For Jesus it was not possible to love God with all one's heart unless one also loved one's neighbour as oneself. Just as, no doubt, Jesus would have maintained that it was not possible fully to love one's neighbour as oneself unless one first loved God fully.

55. See further DUNN, *Jesus Remembered* #14.4.

56. See further DUNN, *Jesus Remembered* #14.5.

3.2. *Paul and the law*

The same problem has largely dominated scholarship's appreciation of Paul and the law. Lutheran scholarship has traditionally set gospel and law in sharp antithesis and attributed the antithesis wholly to Paul. The law and gospel are polar opposites; where the law is there can be no gospel. And it is true that Paul does speak negatively of the law on several occasions. The law multiplied sin, aroused sinful passions (Rom 5.20; 7.5). The written law represented a ministry of condemnation and death (2Cor 3.7, 9). Paul himself had died to the law (Gal 2.19). But once again there is more to it. In both Romans and Galatians Paul seems to build up a damning indictment of the law, only to reject that indictment. «Is the law sin?» Paul asks in Romans (7.6). No, of course not, he replies. The law as such is holy and just and good (7.12). The blame lies in the power of sin which abuses the law (7.7-25). «Is the law opposed to the promises of God?», Paul asks in Galatians (3.19). Certainly not, he replies. The law in its role as Israel's guardian was passé (3.21-26), but there is more to the story than that. Perhaps, then, Paul was reacting not so much against the law as such as against one function of the law, as I believe to be the case but have not time to develop the point here.⁵⁷

What seems to have been ignored, or too much played down, is the very *positive* attitude Paul shows to the law. When the law is read with the eyes of faith, then its relevance and continuing validity are sustained. «Do we nullify the law through faith?» Paul asks in Rom 3.31, and immediately answers, «Not at all, we establish the law». He goes on to show how Abraham expressed his faith in his reliance upon God (4.16-22) and later defines sin not as breach of the law, but as conduct «which is not of faith» (14.23). It is by living out of faith that one does the will of God. In Rom 8.4 Paul can even say that the whole point of God sending his Son to deal with sin was «in order that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not in accordance with the flesh but in accordance with the Spirit». And in 1 Cor 7.19 he can make the astonishing assertion that «Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything». The assertion is astonishing because, of course, circumcision is one of God's commandments in the Old Testament. Here it becomes obvious that Paul was able to differentiate within the law. He maintains that some laws, here the law of circumcision, no longer counted for anything. But in the same breath he reasserts the importance of keeping the laws of God.

57. See DUNN, *Theology of Paul* ##6, 14, 23; and DUNN, *New Perspective on Paul* ch. 1.

Does this not remind us of Jesus? For Paul emphasizes, in effect, that the law can be understood in a too surface way and applied in a too superficial way—what he refers to as *gramma*, the visible, outward letter.⁵⁸ What he had in mind was the contrast with the Spirit working in the heart.⁵⁹ As already suggested, Paul evidently had in mind the promises of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, for the law to be written in the heart, and no longer merely on tablets of stone (Jer 31.33), for the Spirit to be given to enable the law to be kept properly.⁶⁰ This is an emphasis which echoes, does it not, Jesus' teaching on the commandments against murder and adultery and the real causes of impurity. And was Paul unaware of that aspect of Jesus' teaching? I doubt it.

The most striking evidence of the influence of Jesus' teaching on Paul is Paul's reference to the love command. In both Romans and Galatians, he makes the same point—the same point that Jesus made! All the commandments are «summed up in this word, in the command, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself”» (Rom 13.9). «The whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the well-known, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself”» (Gal 5.14).⁶¹ Where did Paul get this from? We have already noted that no other teacher known to us in Second Temple Judaism had extracted this commandment from the sequence of rulings in Lev 19. So how was it «well-known»? Paul can only be referring to the fact that Jesus' teaching on the love command was well known among the Christian communities. Paul drew his attitude to the law from Jesus. No other explanation makes such sense of the evidence available to us. It was Jesus' teaching and example which showed him that «In Christ neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but faith operating effectively through love» (Gal 5.6). And it was no doubt this teaching and that example which Paul had in mind when he spoke of «the law of Christ» (Gal 6.2).

In short, nowhere is the line of continuity and influence from Jesus to Paul clearer than in the case of the love command. In summary, we may say, Jesus taught that the love command is the second greatest commandment of the law, and he lived by that command in his mission. So Paul followed in his train and summed up the whole law in that same command and, like Jesus, used the criterion it gave him to discern the commandments that really mattered in directing the relationship between God and his people and between the individual members of his people.

58. Rom 2.28; 2Cor 3.6-7.

59. Rom 2.29; 2Cor 3.3, 6, 8.

60. Ezek 11.19-20; 36.26-27.

61. Literally «in the “You shall love your neighbour as yourself”», so the reference is clearly to something familiar, as in Rom 13.8-9, written to a church Paul had never previously visited.

CONCLUSION

Should we then speak of a gulf between Jesus and Paul? No! Should we deduce that Paul departed from or corrupted the good news which Jesus brought? No! Should we conclude that Paul transformed Jesus' message into something Jesus himself would not have recognized? No!

Of course there is much more to be discussed than we can deal with in one lecture. But enough has been said, I hope, to show that those who have answered Yes to such questions as these were too hasty, ignored too much that was of relevance, assumed too quickly that traditional perspectives gave a view of the whole.

In fact, however, Jesus' good news of God's kingly rule as active in and through his ministry was a close antecedent of Paul's message of grace for the ungodly here and now. Jesus' good news for sinners in Israel was the direct precedent and perhaps the direct inspiration for Paul's gospel for Gentile sinners. Jesus' good news for the poor was reflected in the same priority which Paul gave to his churches' care for the poor.

So too Paul's maintenance of the uncomfortable tension between the already and the not yet in the process of salvation is a fairly clear mirror of Jesus' maintenance of the tension between God's kingdom already in action in the present and God's kingdom still to come. And Paul's understanding of the Spirit as both the sign of fulfilled hope and as the first installment of the still richer inheritance yet to come equally mirrors, if less clearly, Jesus' own claim to have been anointed by the Spirit for his mission.

And not least, Jesus' discriminating attitude to the law and his selection of the love command as the primary rule to govern human relationships is a clear precedent to Paul's similarly discriminating attitude to the law and his similar insistence that the whole law is best summed up and fulfilled by loving one's neighbor as oneself.

Paul who may never have heard or seen Jesus for himself nevertheless can be characterized as one of the truest disciples of Jesus —not simply of the exalted Lord Jesus Christ, but also of Jesus of Nazareth.

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Sumari

La bona notícia de Jesús sobre el regnat de Déu com a realitat activa en i a través del seu ministeri va ser el preàmbul del missatge paulí de la gràcia per als impius aquí i ara. La bona notícia de Jesús per als pecadors a Israel va ser el precedent directe i potser la inspiració directa per a l'Evangelí de Pau per als pecadors gentils. La bona notícia de Jesús per als pobres es reflectia en la mateixa prioritat que Pau va donar a les seves esglésies de tenir cura dels pobres.

El fet mateix que Pau mantingui la incòmoda tensió entre el ja i l'encara no en el procés de la salvació és un reflex força clar del manteniment que va fer Jesús de la tensió entre el Regne de Déu ja en acció en el present i el Regne de Déu encara per venir. I la comprensió paulina de l'Esperit com a signe de l'esperança realitzada i com a primer termini de l'herència encara més rica que vindrà reflecteix igualment, tot i que menys clarament, l'afirmació pròpia de Jesús d'haver estat ungit per l'Esperit per a la seva missió.

I, finalment, la postura discriminatòria de Jesús pel que fa a la llei i la seva elecció del manament de l'amor com a norma primària per regir les relacions humanes és un clar precedent de l'actitud discriminatòria de Pau pel que fa a la llei i la seva insistència en el fet que tota la llei queda resumida i complerta estimant el proïsme com a un mateix.

Pau, que possiblement mai no va escoltar ni veure Jesús personalment, tanmateix pot ser definit com un dels més veritables deixebles de Jesús, no només del Senyor Jesucrist enaltit, sinó també de Jesús de Natzaret.