

Gal ch 1 Vs 1-5

He gave Himself for our sins

Vs1

The 1st thing I want to draw your attention to is the call on the apostles' life and who it came from. Because as you study Paul's life, you find out that the disciples and other apostles had received him, endorsed him, and acknowledged his good standing in their eyes. But when Paul was writing or addressing a group of people he didn't call upon his human credentials or education. But rather he says, "*Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man), but through Jesus Christ and God the Father*", Paul was sent of God the Father and of God the Son and empowered by God the Spirit.

We can take note of the fact that by mentioning Jesus Christ as his authority and the one who sent Him in the same breath as that of God the Father only continues to affirm the deity and equality of Jesus Christ with that of the Father. And if you're looking for a higher commission than that then you're just not going to find it. and Let me just tell you that being sent out by anything less than the divine commission would be nothing more than a labor of man. and We want to be those who are sent out and commissioned by God the Father and the Son and empowered by the Holy Spirit into the ministry, or not sent out or commissioned at all. and Let me tell you this to, if you're not commissioned by the triune God into the ministry, then your not called, because God never acknowledges the approved of man if they're not approved unto Him 1st.

So if you can't say that you've been called of the Father, the Son and empowered by the Spirit than you need to get out of ministry, because you're not called. and As for Paul he's quick to flash that badge of authority and as for anyone in ministry there's no higher appeal than this, I'm a servant of Jesus Christ I have no higher appeal, where do I get my authority; I'm just a servant of God, if that's not enough for you, then you've got a problem that's bigger than that. Paul says, my apostleship doesn't come from men, nor through men, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, and notice what he says right here even at the very forefront of his letter. "*Who raised Him from the dead*" Paul is so consumed with Christ that he can't even give this opening salutation with out his heart bursting out the message that God has commended Him to. This message burned so deep in the heart of the apostle Paul that like Jeremiah when he said, "*For when I spoke, I cried out; I shouted, "Violence and plunder!" Because the word of the LORD was made to me A reproach and a derision daily. Then I said, "I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name." But His word was in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, And I could not.*"

The message of the risen Christ was in the heart of Paul the apostle like a burning fire and he couldn't hold it back. Paul served a God of resurrection and preached a risen Lord, 1 Cor 15:1-4 Paul writing said this, "*Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the*

Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

In Acts ch 13, in one of Paul’s earliest recorded sermons we read in vs 28-30 “*And though they found no cause for death in Him, (that is in Jesus) they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead.”*

That was typical of Paul’s message; he lived in the power of the risen Christ and preached about the risen Christ. and That’s to be our message as well and our hope; our *message*, the risen Christ, and our hope, our authority and our power lies in the power of the resurrection and a resurrected God behind us. Jesus said, "*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*"

What’s the ministry of the church, to teach people about Jesus, and as we do that Jesus Christ Himself with all the authority in heaven and on earth with the power of the resurrection is backing us up, and Paul taught Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and As for me I’ve tried to learn from that example when it comes to sharing the word of God, I try and have it purposed on my heart to determine to know *nothing* among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified even as Paul said in 1st Cor 2:2. “*who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*” Rom 4:25 We serve a God of resurrection, so again (read vs 1).

Vs2

So it’s not as if he’s all alone concerning his message, you can study his life and find that he had a staggering base of accountability. and That’s something else I would encourage you with, there are no “loners” in ministry, we need each other, we all need an accountability base.

Vs3-5

So he’s writing to the *churches* in Galatia, now this is Paul’s only letter that’s addressed to a group or churches. The others would be like “*To all who are in Rome*” or “*To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi*” or it may be to a single church body, such as, “*To the church of God which is at Corinth.*” But this is his only letter addressed to a group of churches, but these were churches he had a personal hand in planting (not that these were the only churches he planted), but he labored extensively in this region nonetheless. So he had an affectionate tie there and was concerned for their spiritual well being even as a father might be for his son, these were spiritual sons and daughters of his. and So hearing of things being out of order there, this is his response, and in vs 3 we read what might be considered by many as the typical “Pauline” salutation or greeting, he says.

Vs3

“Grace to you and peace” and when you study the scriptures you’ll always find these words in that order. Grace 1st and then peace, there’s no coincidence in the order of the words because you can’t experience the peace of God with out 1st experiencing the grace of God. One commentator says that it’s grace that releases us from sin and it’s peace that quiets our conscience and he says these are the 2 fiends that torment us, our sin and our conscience.

You see, It’s impossible to have peace in our conscience unless our debt of sin has been released, and there’s no way to merit that forgiveness, forgiveness only comes by grace through faith in Jesus Christ So we have to experience the grace of God, before we can experience the peace of God, really in any area of our lives.

This word grace means “unmerited favor”, there are 3 words that are sort of linked together when we talk about grace. Justice, mercy, and grace, justice being that which we deserve, when I come before God I don’t cry out for justice. Because my just reward is hell, in all of my best efforts laid out before God, seeking to earn His favor by the means of justice will get me nothing but condemnation. Because my righteousness is as filthy rags before Him and so I want mercy, mercy is not getting what I do deserve. I deserve hell, but out of His mercy I don’t get that, and grace is giving me what I don’t deserve, everlasting life. That’s unmerited favor, there’s nothing I’ve done to deserve eternal life God’s just given me that favor on the basis of His grace because I’ve received His Son as my personal Lord and Savior. and with out the grace of God at work in my life, it’s impossible for me to know true peace, God’s peace, and this word peace is the same word that Jesus used when He said, *“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”*

That peace that passes all understanding and that peace can only be imputed to you after God’s grace has been experienced in you life. and Until that’s happened you won’t know true peace, be it with other people, or even in your own heart and life, if you don’t know Jesus Christ, you don’t know true peace. Instead you lie awake at night and you think and you worry and you wonder what life is really all about and why am I here and all these questions are constantly plaguing you in the midst of this vast emptiness in your heart. and That’s not true peace, the peace that pacifies all those questions and concerns only comes through grace, the grace that comes from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

We could easily take this opening salutation of Paul’s and say this is just a typical, cultural greeting to get into a letter, (and we would be right) but I think we would miss the whole point of it in doing that. Because as we talked about last week we’re not just speaking here of common human literature, we’re talking about scripture which is all inspired by God. It’s all God breathed, every single word of it. and If it wasn’t on God’s heart to say this to

people He'd of picked something that was just sort of culturally counter distinctive and the bible is full of things that just cut across every culture in the world.

Why then is grace and peace such a typical salutation in the scriptures? Because when you look at the big picture, recognizing God as the author, you begin to realize that this is the message that's on God's heart that He desires to communicate to mankind. He's a God of grace, He's the Prince of peace and He wants to bring people grace and peace. and So we read (read vs 3)

To be one who can forgive sins, by means of Grace, thereby granting everlasting life, imputing godly righteousness, and giving peace to the heart and mind, you have to be divine in nature. What I mean by that is that no created thing has the power to forgive sins, or to dispense grace and peace to the heart and soul of Man. I can't *give* grace to anyone, I can *show* you grace, but I can't impart grace to you as unto salvation. and Since the grace and peace that Paul is speaking of comes not only from God the Father, but also our Lord Jesus Christ we can again note another reference to the deity and the God-hood of Jesus Christ Him being heralded as equal to the Father.

Vs4

So Paul begins now to concentrate on Jesus who gave Himself, why, for what? For our sins, in reference to the cross, the cross is a major theme throughout the book of Galatians Paul writes in Gal 2:20 "*I have been crucified with Christ;*" in Gal 3:1 we read "*O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?" Gal 3:13 "*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree")* a picture of Jesus Christ becoming a curse for us as He hung on the cross. Gal 5:11 "*And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.*"*

What is he talking about there, what is one of the offenses of the cross? That the work of the cross is sufficient to cover the sin or problems of man, apart from works, be it circumcision, or any other detail of the law in practice. That's part of the offense of the cross to those who are religious, there's many aspects of the offense of the cross, that being 1 of them. You mean I can't do anything to acquire a righteous standing before God, but I have to trust in someone else (dying at that) because I'm not good enough for God! That's offensive to the religious man who prides himself in his list of things that he does to ensure he has favor with God, and elevates himself over the common man. But in reality he's only deceiving himself because nothing elevates any of us above another, we are all co equals in Christ. and There is no work that can ensure you any standing whatsoever in the sight of God Apart from cross.

That's why the message of the cross is an offense to man. Because that cross is God's estimation of the best efforts of all of mankind through out all of history and where it should end up. You mean the best I could ever do on my own, if God were to evaluate it and say this is what you deserve, to die on a cross alienated and separated from Me forever, that's about how far your righteousness gets you with God. Oooh that's offensive to the natural man and the religious man, but it's the truth and *to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

Listen, the bible says that, *"the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."* It's good news, why, because it alleviates all the pressure and responsibility from me to try and earn God's favor, and it places that responsibility to provide my righteousness all on God as I simply believe on Jesus Christ in the deepest recess of my heart. The message of the cross is such good news. And finally as far as this major theme of the cross goes in the book of Galatians we read in Gal 6:14 *"God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."*

Everybody has a desire to boast, but for most of us it takes a lifetime to learn what to boast in, but God forbid that we boast in anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because that's the means of escape from the penalty of our sin, and that's why He gave Himself, not because we're such a great lovable group of people. Not because one day God was sitting there thinking you know I could get so much more done if I had Jeff on My team, but that whole sin thing is a problem. So I know I'll come to the earth take on the form of a man suffer and die the most gruesome and painful death that man can contrive and shed My blood for the remission of that sin, because Jeff is just too great of a catch to let go. I've just got to have him on My team.

He didn't give Himself for the fact that we would be such benefits to His kingdom because that's not the fact. The fact is that He gave Himself for our sins simply because He loves us so much that He desires to have fellowship with you, to be your best friend and He was willing to die to make that possible, that's a love unfathomable. Because He doesn't need us, He's perfectly content with in Himself; there's no void in God's heart for us, the void lies in our heart longing for a relationship with Him. It just took some of us years to figure that out (the purpose of that void), that void in the heart of every man is like a honing device and God put it there that we might seek Him out.

Until we fill it with a personal relationship with Him it just keeps growing and growing and the more we try to fill it, the bigger it seems to get. But God's heart doesn't have that problem, He's content with in Himself, but He loves us so much that He was willing to give Himself for our sins so that He by Himself might bridge that gap between Himself and man

created by sin. So that we might be spared the penalty of our sin (that being everlasting separation from Him in torment and outer-darkness) and become friends of God.

Man wasn't reaching out to God and so God felt sorry for man and did something about it, man was in rebellion to God, seeking to distance himself from God. Rom 3:10-11 tells us "*There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.*" But God in His great love for us sought us out, and the bible tells us that "*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" He gave Himself for our sins, why, let's read on (read to comma).

Now what we have in view here is the purpose of Christ's death, it wasn't just forgiveness of sins, but also that we might be delivered from this present evil age. From the bondage of this world, John tells us that all that is in the world is-the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. 1 John 2:16

Jesus gave Himself so that He might deliver us from the snares of this world, this present evil age. Jesus told us that we are not of the world, because He chose us out of the world. Because this world is under the sway and the rule of the wicked one (for now) people are always questioning how a God of love could allow such tragedies to happen, that's because the god of this world isn't a god of love, the bible says that Satan is the prince or the ruler of this world. and He couldn't care less about any tragedy that befell any human being, and that's why this present age is evil.

You recall when Satan was tempting Jesus we read in Luke's gospel ch 4:5-6 that "*the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish."* Did you catch that, the devil told Jesus that all the kingdoms of the world and their glory belonged to him, in other words they're all subservient to me and I rule over them all. Now Jesus didn't argue with him, He didn't say, "you don't have a clue you liar, they're not yours at all," He didn't say that did He? and In not defying him in that aspect He was basically consenting to that fact.

That's why Jesus came, to redeem the world back to Himself, and the day will come when He will stake that claim because He's paid the price in full and it won't be long before He stakes claim to the title deed. But presently, the age in which we live is evil, and He gave Himself for our sins, why? So that He might redeem us from this present evil age. Titus 2:13-14 says, "*Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*"

So the giving of Himself for us was a 2-fold work, the message of the gospel isn't *just* forgiveness of sins by the grace of God, but it also grants us the power to lead sanctified lives through dependence upon the Holy Spirit. You see Jesus didn't die just to forgive our sins, but

rather He died to redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

Again 1 Peter 2:24 in regards to the work of Christ on the cross says, “*who Himself (that is Jesus) bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness.*” Jesus didn’t die on the cross just to get us *out* of sin, but also to get us *into* a life of righteousness, and purity zealous for good works. Eph 2:10 “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*”

You say wait a minute Jeff, I thought you were just emphasizing salvation by grace alone? I was, then what’s with this whole zealous for good works thing? We’re not saved *as a result* of our good works; we’re saved *as unto* a life of good works. In other words, our good works are only a testimony or a witness of the fact that I am saved. I don’t do good things to try and *gain* God’s favor or God’s love, I do good things because I *have* God’s favor, and because I am loved of God, (not because of anything I’ve done) but purely out of His grace, His unmerited favor towards me.

You see the difference, one is working to try and gain salvation, and it’s blasphemy to the cross of Jesus Christ as it seeks to purport that it doesn’t need the cross or can perfect that work. The other simply out of an overflow of my love for God, (because I’ve caught just a glimmer of what it is that He’s done for me) causes me to just want to do what ever I can, that I might be pleasing in His sight. Doing those things that will hopefully reflect His love, and His goodness, and His mercy and His grace to other’s around me so that they might be drawn to Him. Now I don’t do those things to be seen by men, but as men see the things we do, we desire that it be a witness and a testimony to Him and that it bring glory to the Father. Jesus put it like this. Matt 5:16 “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*”

You may be the only bible that people ever read, what is the message that you’re sending? There are those who will never pick up a bible, but you can be sure they’re reading your life from cover to cover, are they getting the message of the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ as they read your life? If people never notice any difference between you and a heathen by the way you lead your life, then its time for a fresh evaluation.

Paul speaking in Romans was speaking on the subject of grace and how where sin abounded grace abounded more and he wrote, “*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin (that is through Jesus Christ) live any longer in it?*” Because he gave Himself, not only for our sins, but also that He might deliver us from this present evil age, and notice the last part of the vs (read) That’s the will of God for every life that’s ever walked the face of this earth, God isn’t the one who’s causing all of these horrible things to happen, it’s His will that everyone be delivered out of those things and from those things.

But the problem comes in, in the fact that He won't violate the free will of man, God has a will, and He can do what ever He wants. and In creating man in His likeness He's given you a will and you can do whatever you want, and He has chosen to allow you to do whatever you want and not to violate your will and your choice to accept or reject Him. It's the will of God to deliver you from the chains and bondage and emptiness of this world; Peter tells us that God is, *"not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."* 2 Peter 3:9 Jesus told us *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."* God loves you with a fervency that's unparalleled, Jesus said *"no greater love has any man than this, than to lay down his life for his friends."*

Jesus laid down His life, not only for those who were His friends, but for those who were spitting in His face and pulling out His beard. Those of us who were in essence rejecting Him year after year, God couldn't have demonstrated any higher expression of Love than what He did by giving His own Son on our behalf.

Now His part is finished, Jesus said as He hung on the cross, His blood having been shed, His body having been broken, *"it is finished."* What was finished, the work of redemption, He had done all that He possibly could, His part was finished. He had bridged that gap between sinful man and a Holy and Righteous God, and in doing so He basically through the ball in the court of mankind and said now what are you going to do about it. Are you going to respond to My love and Grace, or are you going to reject it and so now all of mankind of which you and I are apart of have a choice to make. We can believe in Jesus Christ, receive Him as our personal Lord and Savior, or we can reject Him (many here have received Him, and there are those of you who haven't) and that choice is up to you.

It's God's will to deliver you out of this present evil age, but you have to take the next step, there's 2 parts to this whole thing, God's initiative and human responsibility. God initiated a relationship with you and extended Himself to you 2,000 yrs ago by the means of His Son and His sacrifice for you on the altar of the cross. Now it's your responsibility to choose whether or not you want to respond to that initiative by coming to Jesus or not. and Since God's not willing that any should perish and He's done everything He could just short of violating your free will, He made it even one step easier when He said. *"The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out."*

You say but Jeff you don't know where I've been or what I've done, I don't have to, God does, and He loves you and He said the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out, that means we all qualify. We may reject Jesus Christ when He comes to us, but He will never reject anyone who comes to Him. Jesus said, *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”*

In other words you will experience intimate fellowship with Me and I'll be your best friend. and The same goes for believers, it's a daily decision to fellowship with Jesus, and it may be that you find Jesus knocking on the door of your heart saying hey, I'm not sure what happened here but I want back in. Or better yet I know exactly what happened here and I still want back in if you'll have Me. Because it's for those sins that He gave Himself and it's His desire to deliver us from (finish vs 4-5) In and through the whole process, the result is that the Father will be glorified through out all time and eternity, forever and ever and so be it.