

## Galatians ch 1 vs 11-24

Paul has been thoroughly exhorting the churches of Galatia in even these 1<sup>st</sup> 10 vs of this 1<sup>st</sup> ch of the book of Galatians. He's laid out the gospel, given the "credentials" of his authority and has began to lay into them in regards to how quickly they've begun to turn from the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ to a different gospel. and The fact that he was staggered over it, astonished, he couldn't even believe what he was hearing, that they were so soon turning away from the grace of God and in reality the person of Jesus Christ Himself to a system and a religious set of do's and don'ts. Which in reality isn't a gospel at all, because as we dwelt so emphatically on the point last week, anything purported as necessary for salvation other than simple trust and belief in Jesus Christ is not the gospel, but rather it's a perversion of it. and These people were being troubled by those who were perverting the gospel, and by subjecting Paul's integrity and authority to question they were able to persuade the Galatians to come under their religious system.

Let me just tell you that troubling people by perverting the gospel; the scriptures come down on that just about as hard as any other thing in the word of God. The only other thing that may get just as harsh a treatment, if not maybe a little harder is religious hypocrisy, drawing near to God with your mouth and honoring with your lips, all the while your heart is far from Him. God hates that; it's pharasytical in nature, and Jesus said to them you hypocrites, you white washed tombs, you look real good on the outside, appear to be all holy and have your act together, but inside, in your heart where God is searching, you're full of dead men's bones. You're just a big pile of decaying flesh and it stinks, that's God's estimation of religious hypocrisy, it's of the flesh, it's dead and it stinks.

That's pretty hard-core, and so is what Paul has to say concerning those who trouble you by perverting the gospel, which is to alter it in any way no matter how small or how spiritual your addition or subtraction may seem. Attempts to bring a different message, and call it the gospel does nothing but trouble people, it confuses them, it brings them under bondage and legalism, it stirs doubt and perplexity, it's nothing but trouble. Christ plus anything is trouble, and there is consequence for troubling people with a legal message. Gal 5:10 *"I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is."*

God does not appreciate those who seek to undermine the riches of His Grace and bring people into a legal bondage to merit favor or even salvation from God. As a matter of fact their judgment awaits, because that is to contradict the very message of the cross, if you could merit God's favor or salvation by any other means then the cross of Jesus Christ then Jesus died in vain. As we stated last week, Gal 2:21 *"I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, (which is to say any effort of the flesh no matter how pious it may be) then Christ died in vain."* (Vs8-9)

He's saying you've received the truth of the gospel and the word of God in its fullness, don't be persuaded into any other doctrine no matter how it may appear. It's so important that once we've received the pure milk of the word of God, that we not be persuaded by some other doctrine of man, it's hazardous to your health, spiritually speaking. In 1<sup>st</sup> kings ch 13 a young prophet breaks out on the scene, the Lord having told him to go from Judah to Bethel. and He found Jeroboam standing by an altar ready to burn incense and we read in vs 2-3 of that ch, that *"he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, "O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you. " And he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This is the sign which the LORD has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out."*

When Jeroboam heard this it made him mad and it says that he stretched out his hand to have that prophet seized and when he did his arm was paralyzed. and Then as soon as his arm was paralyzed the altar was split and ashes poured out of it. and So the king cried out to the prophet, repented and asked him to pray for him, and so the prophet did and his arm was immediately restored. and Jeroboam obviously thankful said come with me and let me reward you, let me feed you and refresh you and give you a reward. But it says in vs 8-9 *"But the man of God said to the king, "If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you; nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place. For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.'*

On his way home he was met by an older prophet who had heard what happened, and he said to the young prophet hey come on over to dinner and we'll talk about what's happened, {sorry can't do it} God told me to deliver His word and go straight home. But the older prophet argued with the younger one and said in vs 18 *"I too am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water."*

But it says (He was lying to him) but upon hearing that he went off with the older prophet and when they were eating the older prophet began to cry and the young prophet said what's wrong? The other prophet said you're going to die, he said why? and He said because you should've obey the word of God that was given to you instead of listening to me, now the word of the Lord to you is that you're not going to make it home now, but rather you'll die. and We read that on the way home a lion met him on the way and killed him and stood by his corpse.

What's my point in all this, when you've been given the word of God, received the gospel of Jesus Christ But then through the persuasion of someone maybe a little older, seemingly a little wiser who says something contrary to the word of God or adds to that which you've received and steers you from the gospel of grace. Then like this young prophet it's only a matter of time before you're consumed by your adversary the devil who walks about like a roaring lion, *seeking whom he may devour*. That's why with such a passion Paul in writing to Timothy said, "*O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge— (why, because) by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.*"

We'll get to the text I promise, but I feel as though it's necessary to really be clear on this point because there's a lot of things that go on in this day and age. People, who will suggest certain practices or rituals, or customs that may seem real spiritual, but aren't at all scriptural. I don't care if people laugh hysterically or run up and down through the isles or flop around on the floor, or bark like dogs or whatever in the name of Christianity. If it's not founded in the word of God, if it's not sound doctrine, then it to be vehemently and emphatically rejected.

A good rule of thumb for those of you who are interested in how we establish what we would consider "sound doctrine". #1 Do we see Jesus teach it, did Jesus say and these signs will follow those who believe, they'll roll on floors and bark like dogs and laugh uncontrollably? Jesus didn't say that, the 2<sup>nd</sup> thing we need to look for is, is it lived out practically or demonstrated in the book of Acts, and then 3<sup>rdly</sup> is it reinforced in the epistles? If the things you teach or suggest can't be supported thoroughly in the scriptures then it's not sound doctrine, and it's a different gospel and Paul said let that man be accursed.

Vs10

The bible is full of rhetorical questions, this being one of them, what do you think? He says, am I seeking to please man or God, with comments like if anyone alters the gospel of grace let them be accursed, I don't think that's too much of a man pleasing type of a comment. and What he's inferring is that those who seek to alter the gospel are man pleasers, desiring to win the favor of man, wanting to boast in their flesh and the efforts of their flesh and give other people the ability to join in on that with them. and He says here that if he did those things he couldn't be a bondservant of Christ.

True servants of the Lord always have their sights set of pleasing God, not pleasing man. Not compromising the truth for the sake of unity, if you want to make sure that everybody is always happy and that everyone is always pleased that's one thing that I can guarantee in your life, compromise. But if you're seeking to please the Lord, those who should be pleased will be, and those who shouldn't be pleased, won't. They'll be stirred or provoked and convicted and Lord willing cut to the heart and repentant 2 scriptures in regards to pleasing God and not making it our aim to be man pleasers and then we'll move on. 2 Cor 5:9-10 *"Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. (Why) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.*

The bible says that the fear of man brings a snare, fear God and make it your aim to be pleasing to Him, because He's the One who will require an account of all you've done and every idle word you and I have spoke. and Finally, 1 Thess 2:4 *"But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts."* This mornings primary text doesn't hold anything that we're going to spend an overly extended period of time on so we'll be able to finish up ch 1.

But this section reminds us of the danger of traditions obscuring God's truth, and this section also shows us the power of a transformed life in bringing glory to God.

Vs11-12

So even as Paul was emphatic in assuring the Galatians of his apostolic authority, how he wasn't sent out or called of man, nor did his commission come through man but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead. Even so the gospel that he preached and the message that taught wasn't from man either, he didn't receive the gospel from man. It isn't something that was derived of human origin or thought out by mankind and then passed on to him. It wasn't a human religious message of which there are several today, and we could spend much time (of which we won't) examining various religions which are totally humanist is their origin. Not that even the quote unquote "church" hasn't been inundated with the message and influence of man as well, but Paul says here, *"that they gospel that was preached by me is not according to man."* (Vs12 to the /)

You see there it is, what Paul taught he didn't get from other human teachers, he didn't receive the fullness of the gospel of the grace of God in cemetery, I mean seminary. Not that furthering your education in the word of God isn't a wise and honorable thing, (because I know that there are several of you here that go to bible college) and you desire to be further equipped for the work of the ministry and I think that's right on.

Be careful to guard against the poison of the doctrines of men being taught as the commandments of God. Or the teaching as doctrine the commandments of men, because all that will do is hinder the work of God in your life and the bible warns against that. Paul didn't receive the gospel that way, as through men or even the other apostles, but rather it came through the direct revelation of Jesus Christ he was educated by God Himself.

That word "revelation" there in vs 12 is the word "apokalupsis" from where we get our word apocalypse which simply means to unveil or reveal. It's the same word that John used in the last book in our bibles when he said, "the revelation of Jesus Christ" or the unveiling of Jesus Christ The gospel of grace was unveiled or revealed to Paul directly by Jesus Christ even as it was for the original 12 apostles, they were taught the gospel by Jesus Himself. and So even though Paul was ministered to by the Lord after the physical presence of Jesus had ascended to heaven and was no longer present on the earth, he still received the message of the gospel the same way the others did.

That's why Paul referred to himself as "*one born out of due time.*" Because he received the message from Jesus, but it was after He had ascended and had finished His work on the cross. and You recall that Paul was evangelized in a very direct way as well, the Lord Himself met him on the road to Damascus and knocked him off his high horse, so to speak. and Then the Lord trained him as well by way of revelation, and so what he is saying by this statement is that the message he preaches isn't his message, it's God's message. But prior to that (his training in the gospel by Jesus Himself) Paul had no real working knowledge of the gospel according to Jesus Christ, nor was he even looking for it, he was trying to destroy it. and That's what he begins to get into next, a little bit of his personal testimony.

#### Vs13-14

Now this was the Saul of Tarsus in his BC years, before Paul the apostle came to know Jesus Christ he was a vehement legalistic enemy of grace. and Believe me when I tell you that you'd have never guessed in a million yrs that he would become the foremost defender of the gospel of the grace of God. He's basically telling the Galatians, hey I know where these guys who are troubling you, where their head is at with this whole legalistic approach, I've been there done that. with the exception that I wanted nothing to do with the person of Jesus Christ to the contrary I wouldn't compromise an inch. and So I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and even tried to destroy it. Not just discredit it, disturb it, or even devastate it, but he wanted to destroy it.

So he went well above and beyond the call of duty in trying to stamp out Christianity, he persecuted the church beyond measure. He was a vicious, malicious and relentless attacker of the early church. and The scriptures speak quite a lot about Saul, or Paul's opposition to the church prior to his conversion, both in his letters by his own testimony and particularly in the book of Acts. I'll give just a few references in regards to that so that you can get just a hint of the type of man that Paul was before he met Jesus and how zealous he was concerning his convictions toward the law and the traditions of the elders.

Now in Acts ch 7 we see the death of Stephen and we read that the people who were stoning him were laying their coats down at the feet of a young man named Saul, who later become Paul and in ch 8:1-3 we read, "*Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.*" He was doing everything he could to drive them under and snuff them out; any house that he had suspicion of that there might be a follower of Jesus of Nazareth at. He'd bust into it and drag them off to be interrogated, and incarcerated and if they came up on trial he'd cast his vote in on seeing them put to death. Acts 9:1-2 "Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."

He wasn't content only persecuting the Christians in Jerusalem, he wanted to take a pretty good journey up to Damascus to kill those that were there as well, and he didn't care if you were a man or woman, if you were of the "Way" which is what they called Christians before they were called Christians. Because Jesus said, "I am the Way the Truth and the life, and no man comes to the Father but by Me." So followers of Jesus were called followers of the Way, the way of the Lord. But if you were of the "Way" you would be bound and dragged back to Jerusalem and more than likely killed, and Saul would do everything he could to make that happen.

There's many more references but for times sake we can't look at them all, but Paul was an avowed enemy of the church of Jesus Christ and his reputation of that preceded him in regards to that, people knew what he was about, he tried to destroy the church. Paul said of himself in Acts 22:4 "*I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.*"

Again in Acts 26:9-11 *“Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities”*

This guy was ruthless, not only was he seeking to have them put to death, but to throw salt in the wound before they died he tried to compel them, which means to persuade by force, to blaspheme. and The methods that he used to do that who knows, be it torture or threats or whatever, we’re not told, but he was ruthless to say the least, or as he put it exceedingly enraged against them. and So not only did he try to destroy the church, but he excelled on top of that in Judaism beyond many of his contemporaries, which is probably an understatement. When you read Phil 3:5-6 you see that he *was “circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, (from which came the 1<sup>st</sup> king of Israel) a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; (who were the most meticulous of those who observed the law) concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”*

If you were to go through the volumes of books concerning the law to try and find fault with Paul’s life as far as the physical outward requirements were concerned, you couldn’t do it. He was blameless, because he was more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of his fathers. and There’s so much more that we could say about this man, Saul of Tarsus, who would later become Paul the apostle but for times sake we just can’t. But lets just say that Paul was exceedingly serious about, and very, very successful in his religious pursuits, but it turns out that was all they were, religious pursuits. All the while he though he was doing God a service, trying to crush these seemingly disregards of the law, all the while coming whole-heartedly against the fullest measure of the work of God.

That just goes to show that you can be so sincere in your pursuits to please God, and if you’re not found in Christ, you’re unfortunately nothing more than sincerely wrong and God will not receive it. He makes no exceptions, no man comes to Him but by grace through faith in His Son Jesus Christ you can not merit salvation, and it doesn’t matter how zealous and sincere you may be. So these are the things he did, who he was, couldn’t be farther off base in his pursuit of God, and now in sharp contrast he leaves the topic of himself to focus on what God has done.

Vs15-17

So who was Paul, a destroyer of the church, a blasphemer, one who excelled in his *religious* pursuits, zealous for tradition. But it was God who set him apart, called him by His grace and revealed His Son in Him. What do we see here, that God is in the business of changing lives, I tell ya, when I met Jesus Christ my life was changed. and It doesn't matter where you've been or what you've done, God loves you and wants to change your life. Take you from emptiness, hurts, possibly even your religious pursuits, and set you on fire for Him, give you a new life, make you whole and use your life as testimony of His grace.

When people that I went to school with find out that I'm a pastor it blows their minds, "man, they must let anyone in the pulpit these days" no way, God's changed my life and now my life is consumed with wanting to know God more intimately and to make Him known to others. Because I know what He can do for you, and once you come into contact with the true and Living God your life will never be the same, it can't be.

Once you've spent time with God your life will be changed, and we see in Paul the apostle a staggering example of an exchanged life. Here's my life God, a wreck, full of hatred, bitterness, jealousy, envy, covetousness and sin, wretchedness and poverty. God says thanks I've been wanting you to give those things for a long time, now in exchange for that, here's a life of peace, full of love, encouragement, righteousness, rich and full of blessing. Oh you don't deserve it, but because now when I look at you all I see is My own Son, you are a joint heir of the inheritance, and a king and priest of My kingdom. Enter in to the joy of your Lord.

Paul lived the exchanged life, you see the apostle isn't who he was, the Pharisee is who he was. The apostle is what Jesus Christ was in him or through him, it was an exchanged life, rags for riches. God was equipping him his whole life and then when it pleased God, he called Paul and revealed His Son in him. When it pleased God, God has perfect timing, and He operates according to a divine timetable, there are no coincidences in the kingdom of God.

It's no coincidence that you're here this morning, God purposed from before the foundations of the world that you would be here this morning that He might speak to your heart. You just figured you got out of bed got around and came to church, but you're here by divine appointment, and God has ordained this time before you were ever separated from your mother's womb and it's pleased God to bring you here this morning.

Notice that Paul is giving all the glory to God, he says when it pleased Him (God) Paul had nothing to do with it, he wasn't looking for a personal relationship with Jesus, but Jesus was looking for a personal relationship with Paul. and That's the way it works, Jesus said you didn't choose Me, I chose you, that's God's part and when Jesus laid down His life on the cross, God was in essence initiating a relationship with all of mankind by bridging the gap between sinful people and a holy God. and By doing that He said now whosoever will may come, now the ball is in your court and it's your responsibility to accept that invitation or reject it.

Paul said (read vs16 up until womb) this reminds us of Jeremiah's experience *Jer 1:4-5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."* God knew you before you were ever formed in the womb, what a mind blowing thought. and He's got a plan for your life, if you'll only give yourself whole-heartedly to Him.

How does God call you and ordain you, and sanctify you, is it based on the fact of how good you are and how much of a benefit you'll be to His kingdom, no way vs15 through His grace. and That word call means even to call by name, God through His grace has a specific plan for your life personally. God's calling is through grace, in order to reveal His Son in you, why so that you might sit around taking life easy because after all now you know Jesus and your eternity is secure, as long you'll abide in Him. That's not what my bible says, *That I might preach Him among the gentiles.* So that we might preach Jesus, that we might lay hold of that for which he laid hold of us. To know Him and make Him known, if you know Jesus Christ in a personal way what are you doing about it, are you ashamed of the gospel, or do you share the love and grace of Jesus as He opens those doors in your life?

Paul says that Jesus Christ was revealed in him so that he might preach or proclaim Him so that he might reveal Him to others, but when this happened (back to the point he's making) (finish vs16-17)

What Paul is doing here is giving an emphatic disclaimer of any contact with earlier believers and leaders in order to make it clear that he didn't receive his understanding of the Gospel message from any sinful or fallible man. So that it can't be said that he just misunderstood the message that these other teachers were trying to convey to him, Paul is saying I didn't have any teachers, what I learned came by way of revelation by Jesus Christ Himself personally. Paul didn't make human contact immediately, but rather spent a few yrs in the desert, and then a few yrs even after that so in vs 18

Vs18

Notice he went to see Peter not learn from Peter no doubt just getting validation and confirmation from them, securing the fact that their hearts were indeed knit together of one accord. and After a couple of weeks it was obvious and so he split, had work to do people to share the love of Jesus with.

Vs19-24

Why, because he was such a tremendous example of the grace of God, perfectly fitted to testify of the grace of God that's found in Jesus Christ 1 Tim 1:15-17 Paul writes, *"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. (There is nothing that you've done that's so bad that God can't forgive you if you'll only come to Him, and then Paul gives a little benediction) Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."*