



*Paul's Letter to The*

# GALATIANS

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

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

Paul identifies himself as the author of this book. He immediately states that he was not appointed to his position by man but by God. God is the one who places people within the fivefold ministry (Eph 4:11). It is not up to us to pick and choose how and where the Lord uses us. Matthias was chosen by men when he replaced Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:26). Apostle in Greek is apostolos and means he that is sent.

The apostle Paul is stating that he did come on his own authority but was commissioned by God. He is stating this because many times people want to discredit the message, they will first discredit the messenger.

The first statement makes it very clear that salvation is dependent on Jesus raising from the dead and is based off His finished works and not our own (Rom 10:9-10, 2 Tim 1:9). If Jesus did not raise from the dead then the payment for sin was not made and we are still dead in our sins.

***Galatians 1:2 and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:***

Galatia was a region in Asia that consisted of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. The book of Ephesians was a letter written to one church. This letter was written to several churches in the region of Galatia that was founded by Paul.

***Galatians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,***

Grace is from God and legalism at its source is always from the devil. Grace is what God does for man independent of their own works and performance. Legalisms focus is always on man and their own self effort or ability to appease an angry God.

Grace came through the person of Jesus (Jn 1:17).

***Galatians 1:4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,***

This verse not only tells us that Jesus came and gave Himself for our sins but tells us why He came. That reason is so that He would rescue or deliver us from this present evil age.

The word deliver in Greek is *exaireo* and means to pluck out or rescue. The moment we put faith in Jesus' work on the cross and believe on Him we instantly change kingdoms and become citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20). Many people believe when they die, they will receive all of God's benefits in heaven but we are a part of God's kingdom now. All of heaven's resources are at our disposal. God cares about us now and the provision for anything we would ever need in this life was provided 2,000 years ago.

Many people think Jesus gave Himself for our sins for us to simply get to heaven when we die but this verse says to deliver us out of this fallen world and all of sins consequences now. God raised us to sit with Jesus the moment we believe on Him (Eph 2:6). If we fail to get a revelation that we are already there, we will never release heaven here.

***Galatians 1:5 to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.***

All glory goes to Jesus. The only person that could rescue us from the hopeless state we were in was Jesus. The previous verse describes Jesus giving Himself to pluck out or rescue us from the condition we were in.

We were in an impossible position and could not get to God so God had to come down to us (John 6:38). Romans chapter five says that we were God's enemies, sinners, ungodly, and powerless but while we were in this position; He died for us.

***Galatians 1:6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,***

Paul normally opens his letters with thanksgiving but this letter has a different tone than many of Paul's others. This letter is an attack on legalism. The Galatians were a church that Paul established and were people who had put total faith in Jesus' finished works but there were Judaizers coming in and saying yes, Jesus paid for your sin but you also must adhere to the Old Testament law, including the act of circumcision. The Judaizers were a group of Jewish Christians who believed the Jewish customs and the Mosaic Law were still binding on all believers.

Paul is saying the Galatians were once standing in grace but within a short amount of time were turning to something else. When we turn from grace we are turning from Jesus. Jesus offers grace to us free as a gift.

The gospel is not about how good you can do and then God will accept you. In high school the students will volunteer in all types of organizations in result to have their college application filled for the University to see how well and hard they worked to accept them. This is not the way God's kingdom works. Your resume can be filled with every organization offered but you will only have a perfect resume by putting faith in Jesus.

***Galatians 1:7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.***

The Greek word for pervert is *metastrepho* and means to corrupt or turn. A perversion of something is harder to detect than an evident lie. A perversion has some form of truth in it so it comes as a subtle deception. The perversion that the Galatians were hearing was that Jesus paid it all (which was true) but that they still had to offer their own acts of righteousness to be accepted by God (which was false).

It would be easier to hear someone say Jesus is not real and He did not die on our behalf and recognize that as a lie. This perversion still exists in the church today and people are preaching that Jesus died for your sins but you must confess your sins, serve on the church team, and attend church every Sunday service to be accepted by God. These actions are not bad, but they should be a byproduct of justification not that source of it.

A believer is in right standing with God (2 Cor 5:21), therefore they desire to go to church (Rom 6:2). Religion says if you go to church then you'll be right with God, this is backwards. The gospel is that you are right with God and that is what compels us to attend church.

***Galatians 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.***

The Greek word for accursed is *anathema* and means doomed for destruction.

This seems like a pretty harsh statement Paul is making but why is he so serious in saying if someone preaches anything other than the gospel; which is Jesus paid it all, that they should be accursed? God's grace is a gift and should be received. Anytime we try to earn or work to please God, it actually puts us at distance from God and that was never the goal of the cross.

The goal of the cross was to bring us into relationship with God (Jn 17:3) not to create space and keep us away from Him. Legalism and religion will always demand holiness while grace supplies it.

It is impossible to have a healthy relationship with someone you feel obligated to. Anytime we feel obligated or that we owe someone things we eventually will begin to hate and despise the person. The intention of religion is to have a born-again believer thinking they need to get right with God and when they miss the mark, they ultimately run from Him versus running to Him. This is completely opposite of the gospel. We should be running to our Father when we need help not from Him (Heb 4:16).

***Galatians 1:9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.***

There is only one gospel and the word gospel can also be referred to as good news. Just in case someone thought Paul may not have meant what he said, he states it again.

If you are not preaching grace, then you are not preaching the gospel.

***Galatians 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.***

Paul said that he must obey God rather than human beings (Acts 5:29). Paul spoke of preaching justification by faith in Christ solely and that is the only way to be right with God regardless if anyone received it or not, that did not void God's means of salvation (Rom 3:3).

***Galatians 1:11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.***

Paul did not receive this message by any of the other disciples.

***Galatians 1:12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.***

This message came by revelation through the resurrected Jesus (Eph 3:3) and was not something he went to school for or learned from the other apostles. On the day of Pentecost 3,000 men were saved but they were taught by man.

Paul learned the law from Gamaliel a teacher of the law (Acts 5:34) but he learned grace from Jesus. It is not hard for the natural man to understand law. Law is if I do good, I get good or if I do bad, I get bad. When someone comes in and preaches grace; you get good because Jesus did good, it takes revelation from the Holy Spirit to reveal this to us. The Holy Spirit will bear witness that God's goodness is not based off our performance but Jesus (Rom 8:16).

***Galatians 1:13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.***

Paul's former ways were in direct opposition to the gospel. Paul was a Pharisee of the Pharisees and once trusted in his own goodness and holiness to be right with God (Phil 3:5-8). He tried to please God through his own human acts which is what most of the church is still teaching today. Many people of Paul's day were preaching Jewish law, rituals, feast days that a believer needed to adhere to which was totally contrary to all that Jesus taught Paul. When God rescued Israel from Egypt, He gave civil and ceremonial laws for the purpose of setting the Israelites apart, not for justification.

Legalism will always persecute grace. A picture of this in the Old Testament is when Ishmael persecuted Isaac. The main persecution a believer will experience will be from their own family. Those trying to earn right standing with God will always oppose those who relate to Him based off Jesus' obedience and not their own.

Paul's trust before receiving the gospel was once in ancestry, the law, and circumcision but had now forsaken his many achievements because his were of filthy rags (Is 64:6). Paul did

however obtain mercy because he acted in ignorance and thought he was doing God a service (1 Tim 1:13).

How could God use a man like Paul to write two thirds of the New Testament? It is because God looks at the heart and Paul had a heart for God and persecuted the church in ignorance (1 Samuel 16:7).

The word persecuted in Greek is diōkō and means to seek after eagerly. Paul sought after believers binding both men and women (Acts 22:4)

***Galatians 1:14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.***

Paul was zealous for the things of God but it was without knowledge (Rom 10:2). To the natural mind it would make sense that we are sinners and that we should strive and offer good acts for God to accept us. It takes divine revelation through the Holy Spirit to believe that God would become a man, die, and go to hell on our behalf then offer His righteousness to us free as gift. Paul once had zeal in the law and zeal is good but it needs to be in the right thing (Gal 4:18, Acts 21:20).

The Greek word for profit is prokoptō and means to advance. Paul was advancing in religion more than anyone during his time but anyone advancing in religion is headed down a dark path.

***Galatians 1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,***

Paul was called and separated from his mother's womb. There is always a period between when we are called and then separated before we start our ministry. The word separated in Greek is aphorizō and means to set apart for some purpose. Jesus was the Son of God from birth but sat in the temple listening and asking questions to the teachers (Lk 2:46). He then started His ministry around the age of 30 (Lk 3:23).

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he provides imagery of soldiers that become separated from the affairs of this world. When a soldier is enlisted he becomes separated from his home, family, and even his hair. The call of God on our life does not mean we should be isolated but there is a separation.

The Greek word for called is kaleō and means to invite. God has sent an invitation to all but not all accept the invite.

Paul also stated in Romans that he was called and separated to the gospel of God (Rom 1:1).

***Galatians 1:16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,***

Paul says here to reveal His Son **in** him. The mystery that was hidden in the Old Covenant that is revealed now is Christ in us (Col 1:27). God has now made every believer His permanent dwelling place (Jn 14:23, 2 Cor 6:16-18). It says all throughout the epistles that it is Him we preach (Col 1:28). The person of Jesus was preached in the early church in the book of Acts and that is where we see the power of God at work (Acts 8).

Paul was sent specifically to minister to the Gentiles (Rom 11:13) and when the gospel of grace was revealed to him, he did not ask for confirmation or get man's opinion. Before Paul's conversion he had a Jewish name that distinguished him with the Jews but after his conversion he was called specifically to the Gentiles, he was given a non-Jewish name to identify him with the Gentiles; Paul.

A key to victorious living is to find out the will of God, confer with man no longer if you can or can't, and lastly get it done at all cost.

***Galatians 1:17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.***

Paul did not go to Jerusalem to speak to Peter, James, and John to see if what was revealed to Him was accurate. These were the pillars of the church that walked with Jesus during His earthly ministry. Paul could have very well consulted with them, but he did not.

Paul went to the desert in Arabia. Many times, throughout the Bible when God called someone there were instances that before they fulfilled the call God had on their life they were in a desert or wilderness first. Moses and Jesus both were in a desert before their ministry began. Times in the desert is where we learn to rely on God and become more sensitive to Him. We learn to disconnect from our own effort and work to rely on His grace. Jesus was totally dependent on His Father when He was tempted by the devil (Mt 4:1-4).

It is likely that during Paul's time in the desert He was receiving revelation on justification apart from man's performance but through faith in Christ (Gal 2:16). Paul possibly went through a period of sorting out legalism versus grace and the true intention of the law during this time.

Mount Sinai is where the law was given and is in Arabia.

***Galatians 1:18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.***

Later Paul went to Jerusalem and stayed with Peter.

***Galatians 1:19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.***

James was Jesus' brother. James and Jesus had the same mother, Mary.

***Galatians 1:20 (Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)***

The message Paul preached which is Jesus paid it all and we pay nothing is offensive to religious people. Legalistic people are judgmental and will compare their works to others and will always look down on others. The legalistic Jews of Paul's day were coming in a preaching Jesus plus you and Paul is saying here what I am preaching is no lie.

**Galatians 1:21 *Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.***

Syria and Cilicia were regions in Asia.

**Galatians 1:22 *And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ.***

Paul is stating this to confirm again that no one taught him this message other than Jesus. He was not in the region of Judea long enough for them to be familiarized with him by face.

**Galatians 1:23 *But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy."***

Paul himself said that he persecuted the church of God, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women and causing havoc for the church entering homes and dragging men and women off (Acts 9:1-2, 22:3-4). Paul who once persecuted the church was now preaching to the church.

It is not how we start but how we finish. Paul's encounter with the Lord on the way to Damascus rerouted his entire life. One encounter with Jesus will change the entire course of our life. We should never get to a place where we feel we have gone too far and God can no longer use us.

Abraham, Moses, David, and Peter all had shortcomings. If you're not perfect then you qualify for God to use you.

**Galatians 1:24 *And they glorified God in me.***

The saints saw God in Paul who completely turned around and was no longer working against God through his own self effort but now allowing God to work through him and spread the good news that God's acceptance is not based on man's performance but faith in Jesus.

The apostle Paul said to imitate him as he imitated Christ (1 Cor 11:1). Jesus said that if we've seen Him, we've seen the Father (Jn 14:9).