



Date: January 28, 2025

Galatians Section: Galatians 1:1-9

Key Text: Galatians 1:6-8

Main Idea: There is One Gospel

Genre: Letter

Author: Paul

Audience: The Church in Galatia (Specifically Gentiles)

Setting: Between 47 and 55 A.D.

Quotes of the Week:

"There is one Gospel to which I cling
All else I count as loss
For there, where justice and mercy meet
He saved me on the cross
No more I boast in what I can bring
No more I carry the weight of sin
For He has brought me from death to life
I stand in the Gospel of Jesus Christ." - CityAlight

Galatians Preview:

Highlight:

The Book of Galatians is a New Testament epistle written by the Apostle Paul to the churches in Galatia. This letter serves as a passionate defense of the gospel of grace, addressing the critical issue of justification by faith apart from works of the law. Paul confronts false teachings that insist on adherence to Jewish customs for salvation, affirming that believers are made right with God solely through faith in Jesus Christ. Themes of freedom in Christ, the role of the law, and the transformative power of the Spirit are central to the letter. Paul also emphasizes the unity of all believers, declaring that in Christ there is no distinction of race, social status, or gender. Galatians culminates in a call to live by the Spirit, producing the fruit of godly character, and to use this freedom to serve one another in love. The book is a foundational statement of the Christian faith, underscoring the sufficiency of Christ's work and the freedom it brings.

Focus of Galatians:

- **Topic/Themes for Galatians:**

- Freedom in Christ Alone
- The Gospel of Grace—No Additions Required
- Justification by Faith, Not Works of the Law
- The Spirit Empowers, Not the Flesh
- **The Cross Defines Our Identity and Freedom**

- Our response to this Truth:

- Believe in the True Gospel - Walk by Faith - Stand Firm in Freedom - Live by the Spirit - Love and Serve One Another

Galatians 1:1-9: There is One Gospel

Opening Introduction/Defining the Gospel (v. 1-5)

- **What did we learn last week? What is Galatians about (quick summary + theme) and why did Paul write this?**

- Before we dive into the text, the tone that Paul uses is one of urgency. As we mentioned last week, he is writing to a beloved friend, not for encouragement but because he is concerned for their salvation. In light of this, this introduction is unique compared to Paul's other letters. Often, Paul introduces the letter with brief thanks, acknowledgment, and joy in the common shared between the church and Paul. In this letter, we do not see this. Paul is strictly business; he does not dance around what he wants to say and briefly introduces himself before confronting them in verse 6.
- **Paul's Defense (v. 1-2)**
 - Paul as an apostle:
 - NOT of man.
 - FROM God.
- **Specifically, in this context, why is it important that Paul leads with this defense?**

- **Paul Defining the Gospel (v. 3-5)**
 - Before Paul begins the message of his letter, he briefly gives a rundown of the major elements of the gospel.
 - "Grace and Peace"(v. 3)
 - Grace - God's unconditional goodwill towards humanity ,which is decisively expressed in the saving work of Christ.

- In verse 4, when he mentions the present evil age, what is this age, and what does he mean by this?

- Closing Doxology (v. 5)
 - Another unique thing about this introduction, as compared to Paul's other letters, is that he closes his introduction with a doxology.
 - At face value, he is bringing the focus on the glory of God, pointing towards our salvation, Jesus' death on the cross, the second coming, and everything in between being solely for God's glory. But, why Paul only uses this doxology in Galatians is not clear.

Getting the Gospel Right (v. 6-9)

- This defining of the Gospel in verses 3-5 takes us into Paul's immediate exhortation and warning towards the people of Galatia (verses 6-9).
- Paul is very blunt with the people; he does not beat around the bush at all.
 - Verse 6 of the introduction he starts out with, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel."
- When we recognize our own finiteness and the reality of our eventual physical death, we come to realize that the central issue of all Scripture—and of life itself—is understanding God rightly. In order to do this, we must also get the Gospel right... Unfortunately, the people in Galatia clearly were having an issue with this.
 - Paul's paragraph here in verses 6-9 gives us the reason as to why Paul wrote Galatians.
 - There was a distortion of the gospel of grace in Christ and a desertion of the truth as the people paraded into falsehood and error. Paul would have nothing to do with this.
 - Paul clearly establishes that the Gospel he preaches is one of grace, so for him to call these people out obviously means they are rejecting this idea of grace.
 - **Why might these people be rejecting this gospel of grace for some other gospel? (Proved later on in Galatians)**



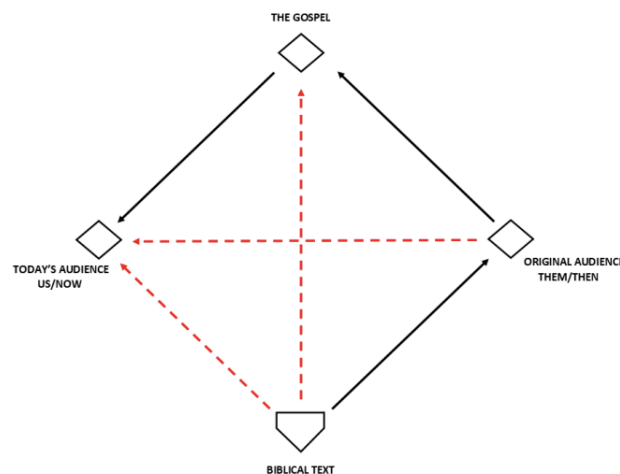
- Here in Galatians 1:6-9, Paul is calling out these people for doing 2 BIG things:
 - **Deserting the Gospel:**
 - “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel.” (Verse 6)
 - **Distorting the Gospel:**
 - “There are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.” (Verse 7)
 - False teachers were disturbing the Gospel and thus distorting this gospel.
- In doing so, the Galatians were trading the sufficiency of Christ for the inability of man. (Not the best deal!)
 - They were trying to trade the greatest gift we can ever receive [Christ] for something that we try every day to get rid of [our sin nature].
 - They were forgetting Christ's sufficiency. Seemingly forgetting that in salvation, we have exchanged what we are for what He is.
 - The difference between the two is indescribable and insurmountable. It is impossible for our finite minds to lay hold of this incredible imputation [trade].
 - In salvation, we receive all the benefits that Christ’s perfect life and sacrificial death earned, and we do none of the work for it.
- **Why is it problematic to think that we can add anything to our standing before God and somehow contribute to our salvation?**

- Our view of Christ often becomes far too low (low Christology), and our view of man becomes far too high (high anthropology).
 - We like to think that we are decent people who just sometimes need to be nudged in the right direction... but that is not what the Bible says at all.
 - Romans 3:10-12:
 - "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."
 - Jeremiah 17:9:
 - "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"
 - Genesis 6:5:
 - "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."
 - Ephesians 2:1-3:
 - "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind."
(And many more verses)
 - We are desperately sick and wicked people who, without Christ, have no righteousness to stand upon.
 - All righteousness we have is His. His righteousness gifted to us produces good works, but those are certainly not the standing of our position before God.
- Paul is outraged at this audience and rightfully so!
 - Our righteous acts are but filthy rag,s and therefore we are unable to merit divine favor, but God stepped in and graced us.
 - He sent His Son to die for our sins and to deliver us from our own self-righteousness and to give us the very righteousness of Christ. Now we want to go back by trading His righteousness for our own?
 - We see this in Christianity today as well, it's pervasive! Can we not, like Paul, be appalled at such a scandalous attack on the very grace of Christ?
- Paul is saying that this deserting (whether momentary or recurring) is occurring because someone is bringing them a different gospel (which, news flash, there is no other gospel), these false teachers (much like those we saw in American Gospel) are distorting the very central message of Christianity, and are leading this church in Galatia astray.
- Moving forward and looking specifically again at verse 8, we see:
 - Paul, in the clearest language possible, wants us to understand that if anyone changes the gospel of grace, they are cursed and should be treated as such.

- Paul is making clear that it is the message and not the messenger that takes precedence in this matter.
 - Paul includes himself and angels in this statement, essentially saying that the truth outranks anyone's credentials.
 - He doesn't care who says it, every teacher or preacher must be evaluated on the basis of **what he says, not who he is.**
- The same needs to be understood for us, never simply just believe a word I say or your pastor says because you trust me/them, believe what the Bible says. Take everything back to scripture, as that word is never changing.
 - (Hopefully, your pastor and I are accurately aligning with the scriptures, and I trust that they are, but they should never be taken for granted)
- Paul then, in verse 9, says that condemnation is upon the heads of those who pervert the gospel of grace.
 - Those who abandon grace for works or distort grace by adding works are perverting grace and thus perverting the gospel. Such people are condemned with the strongest language possible.
 - No crime is worse, and no judgment is heavier.
- The Greek word used here is anathema (let him be accursed), which means let him be cursed, condemned, and under God's full judgment; this is quite literally the harshest language Paul could use.
 - I think it is fair to say Paul's not kidding; he is not playing around when it comes to the gospel.
 - We try to stand on the same hill as Paul here. This is why we take the gospel so seriously every week and we need to be reminded of it every week (minute).
 - We have but one Gospel, one that is of grace, we must guard and protect it with our lives, because in all honesty without it, we would have no life worth living.
- We live in a world that turns - **what is done** - into - **what must I do** -.
 - When we turn the Gospel (which is done) into law (which is do) we lose the gospel completely. It ceases to be good news.

ANOTHER WAY TO GO ABOUT THIS IDEA: THINK BASEBALL

- When preparing and studying scripture our focus is to always stay true to the scripture.
 - In order to best do this we use a method called the Simeon Trust method, which simply lays out a process to faithfully discern the Bible.
- FIRST:
 - Understanding who the text was written to. (The Audience)
 - Understanding why the text was written. (The Purpose)
 - Understanding the structure, genre, context, emphasis, and melodic line of the text.
 - In a nutshell: The first step focuses on understanding what the text meant to its original audience.
- SECOND:
 - Once we have done this, we must filter it through the Gospel.
 - This means understanding when and why this text was written in reference to the cross. → Is it pointing to the coming of Christ (OT), is it pointing to Christ and what Christ has already done (NT), is the text speaking of law, is it speaking of the Gospel, etc?
- THIRD:
 - Once we've understood the text's original meaning/audience, and have filtered it through the Gospel lens, we are able to determine what it means to us now. Without this process, proper application of the Bible is essentially impossible.
- COMING HOME:
 - Once we understand the appropriate application of the text, our leg work essentially stops and we become fully reliant on the Holy Spirit to work in us.



The Gospel: *We Can't, God Can, Jesus Did!*

- **Sin.** None of us can escape it. Because of sin, we are enslaved and burdened under the weight of the law. We are trapped in a cycle of guilt and condemnation, unable to achieve the righteousness God requires. God's standard is perfection, and no amount of good works, rule-following, or religious activity can justify us. The law has revealed our sin, but in our brokenness we need someone to us from it.
 - “**10** For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” **11** Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” **12** But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” (Galatians 3:10-12)
- **Christ Redeems.** These two words are at the heart of the gospel. In His mercy, God provided the only way for our salvation—through Jesus Christ. Christ redeemed us by becoming a curse for us, bearing the full weight of our sins on the cross. Through His sacrifice, we are delivered from the curse of the law, declared righteous through faith, and granted the promised Spirit.
 - “**13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— **14** so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.” (Galatians 3:13-14)
- **Crucified with Christ.** Being crucified with Christ, our old self is put to death, and we are raised to new life in Him. This life is not earned by our efforts but is lived by faith in the completed work of Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us. It is only through Christ that we are made alive and can live a life pleasing to God.
 - “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)