

## GALATIANS - SERMON 2

### GALATIANS 1:1-5

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#### INTRODUCTION:

The first five verses of this epistle serve as the introduction to the letter. In it we learn who is the author, to whom the author is writing, and something of the content and subject of the epistle. Paul extends his greetings to his readers. In summary form we have the whole of the subject laid out for us.

Last time we learned that the provocation for writing this letter was the entrance of false teachers into the region of the Galatians churches. These false teachers, called Judaizers, attacked the person of Paul and the content of the gospel.

#### OUTLINE:

- I THE AUTHORITY OF PAUL
  - II THE PARTICIPANTS WITH PAUL
  - III THE PRAYER OF PAUL
- CONCLUSION: APPLICATIONS

#### I THE AUTHORITY OF PAUL

Verse 1 identifies for us the author of this epistle - Paul.

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

Also in this first verse Paul identifies himself as an apostle. He does so because one of the accusations of the Judaizers was that Paul was not a legitimate apostle. Because Paul did not walk with Jesus Christ during His ministry in the flesh on earth, the Judaizers sought to cast doubt upon the acceptability of Paul as a true apostle. Hence Paul lay stress upon the fact that he is an apostle *not from men . . . , but through Jesus Christ and God the Father.*

By disputing the authority of Paul the Judaizers hoped to undermine and overturn the gospel Paul preached. So Paul denies that he is not an apostle because men appointed him or he appointed himself. He states that, like the other apostles, Paul was appointed to the office of apostle by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and in person.

Acts 26:9-20 In this passage Paul is defending himself before the civil magistrate Agrippa.

*"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. While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we all had fallen to the*

*ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.' Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.*

In verse 16 Paul states that Christ had promised to appear at least a second time to him in order to reveal additional material to him, *things which I will yet reveal to you*. Paul was not an apostle from any other authority but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Derived from this fact it is true that to reject the message and ministry of Paul is to reject the One who appointed Him, the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is God's appointed and approved ambassador.

Paul was not puffed up or prideful. He was not promoting himself. He was a humble man who considered himself to be the least of the saints, Ephesians 3:8. Paul was not glorifying himself but he was seeking to defend the truth.

It is worth noting that here in Galatians 1:1 we have a strong testimony to the deity of Jesus Christ.

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

In his statement Paul first sets *Christ* in contrast to *men*. If Jesus Christ was only a man, Paul could not say that his commission was not of man. Paul's commission also comes from the highest of all authority, *God the Father*. All that Christ did came by direction and authority of God the Father. This is especially true of Christ's selection of the apostles. It was only after a night of prayer that the Lord Jesus Christ selected his disciples.

Luke 6:12-16

*Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself. . .*

Christ did not choose His apostles independently of the Father's will, but in obedience to His will. Hence, Paul's implication in Galatians 1:1 that his appointment to the office of apostle came equally from Jesus Christ and God the Father.

This is a very important point for us as believers. If Paul was not legitimately appointed an apostle then over one half of our New Testament is invalidated. Of the 27 books composing the New Testament Paul wrote 13 (at least, 14 if Hebrews is counted). Paul's charge to us as well as to the Galatians was that what he says (writes) is not the word of men, but the word of God.

## 1 Thessalonians 2:13

*For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*

## II THE PARTICIPANTS WITH PAUL verse 2

*and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia:*

Though he was an apostle, Paul did not disrespect or disavow the fellowship of believers. He did not place himself above the need of that fellowship with believers. Paul saw himself in union with other believers. Paul includes these other believers in his concern and rebuke of the Galatian churches. Though this epistle was penned by Paul alone, it had the agreement of *all the brethren* with him.

## III THE PRAYER OF PAUL

- A The recipients of this letter were the churches of the region of Galatia. We are certain of at least four churches (Lystra, Derbe, Pisidia-Antioch, and Iconium). In verses 3 -5 Paul composes his prayer.

### Galatians 1:3-5

*Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 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, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Though the believers in the region of Galatia were actively engaged in turning away from sound religion, from Paul as their apostle, and from the gospel of grace, yet Paul, prays for them, not against them. For us the lesson is that when fellow believers turn away from soundness, or from us we are to engage in praying for their good and not for their destruction. We must long for improvement not punishment. It is not enough to only teach people. People must be prayed for. In Acts 6:2-4 when the widows were being neglected, the apostolic remedy was the appointment of deacons so that the apostles would be free to give themselves over to the ministry of the Word and to prayer. It is just important for a pastor to pray for his people as it is to preach to them. Likewise, in the sphere of every believer's life it is as important to pray for others as it is to instruct and implore them.

Parents must not spank their children without praying for them as well. Both are necessary functions of parental authority and responsibility.

- B Paul prays for two things. The two things he prays for are the two central blessings from God. They are the two reasons Christ came to this earth. One reason Christ came was to bring grace and the other was to bring peace.

- 1 What is grace? Grace is God's unmerited favor which He shows to sinful man in which He freely bestows salvation from sin and its consequences upon those who repent and who believe on Jesus Christ as their Savior. Salvation from sin and the

wrath of God cannot be bought or earned. Salvation is not earned it is bestowed (Ephesians 2:8-9). Our good works will never commend us to God savingly. When we do a good work we have only done what is required of us. The merit of a good work is only associated with the responsibility of that work or responsibility. There is no merit in a good work that can be applied to past failures or sins. However, beyond this is the fact that even our good works fall far short of satisfactory in themselves and for their own occasions, Isaiah 64:6 (they are like filthy rags). Hence, it is by grace we are save and not of works. The merit of Christ is applied to those who believe on Him.

- 2 Paul also prays that the believers of the Galatian churches would have peace in addition to grace. Peace is that which results from having grace. Before we are Christians we are in a state of enmity with God.

We are in warfare against God. Until the war is settled, there can be no peace.

Romans 5:1

*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. . .*

John 14:27

*"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."*

James 1:17

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*

- C How is it that we can have grace and peace from God?

Galatians 1:4 - the answer is in Jesus Christ of which Paul writes

*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. . .*

Christ's death upon the cross makes grace and peace possible. How so?

- 1 By substitution

Verse 4 lays out for us the substitution of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf. He *gave Himself for our sins*. Christ did not hang on the cross for His sins for He had no sin. He hung upon the cross because of our sins.

Isaiah 53:4-6

*Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

It is due to the substitutionary work of Christ that we can enjoy grace and peace.

- 2 Deliverance: What is the result of Christ dying upon the cross for us?

. . . *that He might deliver us from this present evil world. . .*

Deliverance comes to us from the cross. The word deliverance means to rescue or pluck out of a dangerous place.

How will Christ deliver us from the *present evil world*?

- a) First He will transform us so that we no longer participate in the evil of this world.
- b) Secondly, in death He will take us out of this world that we might finally be completely separated from the evil of it.

2 Peter 3:7, 10-13

*But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

*. . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

This present world is an evil world. There is coming world in which righteousness rules. Christ died in order that we might be delivered from this evil one and delivered unto the righteous one to come.

- c) The cause of this deliverance in the will of God, *according to the will of God and our Father.*

Conclusion:

All of this is in stark contradiction to the message of the Judaizers. They believed that grace, peace and deliverance are the result of our works and our conformity to the law of God, not the merit and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf.

The question of application for us is - how can we be sure that we shall be delivered? In whom do you trust for deliverance from this evil world? Those who trust in Christ will be delivered. Those who trust in the quality of their own good works will not be delivered.

Paul is calling upon these Galatian believers to return to their simple and initial faith and trust in Christ for salvation. So must we continually check ourselves to see that we cast all our hope upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the message of the epistle to the Galatians.

Hymn # 598