

GALATIANS - SERMON 4
GALATIANS 1:10-12 — THE DUTY OF MINISTERS TO PLEASE CHRIST
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INTRODUCTION:

Read Galatians 1:6-12

If Paul has promoted the idea of intolerance with respect to the false teachers, then how can we know who is the true and who is the false teacher? Paul anticipates this inquiry and he sets forth the two marks of the true minister of Christ in verses 10-12.

In verse 10 a true minister is portrayed as one who seeks to please Christ more than please men. The first mark of a true minister of Christ is that he will seek to please Christ before men. Secondly, in verses 11-12 a true minister of Christ is said to be one who obtains his doctrine from God. Paul, in setting himself in contrast to the Judaizers, states that he is one who measures up to the marks of a true minister of Christ. He is one who seeks to please Christ singularly and that he has obtained his doctrine from the *revelation of Jesus Christ*. He states this in such a way as to imply that the false teachers do not measure up to these two standards. He, thereby calls them men-pleasers who have gotten their doctrine from some other source than God.

OUTLINE:

I A TRUE MINISTER OF CHRIST SEEKS TO PLEASE GOD RATHER THAN MEN.

II A TRUE MINISTER OF CHRIST OBTAINS HIS DOCTRINE FROM GOD RATHER THAN FROM MEN

CONCLUSION: QUESTIONING THE MESSAGE: - WHERE DOES THE MESSAGE COME FROM?

I A TRUE MINISTER OF CHRIST SEEKS TO PLEASE GOD RATHER THAN MEN

One of the false charges against Paul from the Judaizers was that he was trying to reduce the gospel in order to make himself and his teaching acceptable and pleasing to the Gentiles. By leaving out the more offensive parts of the gospel Paul would make himself more successful in enlarging the church. This was their charge against Paul. They called Paul's gospel a compromise with the Gentiles.

This charge against Paul was entirely false. There was a reason why Paul did not require circumcision and law-keeping as a ground and basis of salvation among the Gentile converts. That reason was that God Himself did not require such a thing. The very thing the Judaizers accused Paul of, they themselves were guilty of.

Galatians 6:12

As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

The reason the Judaizers required circumcision was that they feared the reprisals of the Jews. The Judaizers were, in fact, the men-pleasers. Paul's insistence upon faith alone in Christ apart from the works of the law as the ground and basis of salvation had actually provoked the fury of the Jews. In Acts 13-20 we have the record of Paul's missionary journeys which included intermittent persecution from the Jews. Acts 21-28 is a record of

complete and persistent persecution from the Jews because of this very doctrine. Paul ultimately suffered martyrdom because he would not dilute the gospel of grace alone.

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.

persuade - this word has the sense of attempting to gain the approval or favor of another person. The inquiry is into the subject of Paul's desire to persuade. Who is he trying to gain the approval or favor of - men or God? The answer is implied. Paul seeks to have the approval of God not man.

please - this word means to gratify, to create a sense of satisfaction on the part of the one you are trying to please. Paul is not trying to gratify people. He knows that his message will be offensive to the heart that is at enmity with God. He knows that his message will be considered foolish to the Greeks. He knows his message will be a stumbling block to the Jews. He knew it would not appeal to men who love darkness more than light (John 3:19).

Paul's resolve did not come without cost. Paul suffered for his insistence upon pleasing God not man.

Galatians 6:17

From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

The *mark of the Lord Jesus* to which Paul refers is not the circumcision of his flesh but the whip marks of persecution which he had suffered for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was clearly no man-pleaser. Paul is, for us, an example of the principle stated by our Lord in His sermon on the mount;

Matthew 6:24

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Paul makes the case stronger still by his words *for if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ* (vs 10). Paul is a servant of Christ demonstrably by the fact that he has not sought to please or persuade men. His loyalty to Christ alone has rendered proof of his servitude to the Lord. The mark of the true servant of the Lord Jesus Christ is that his loyalties are undivided. He will serve Christ with no regard to compromise or deviation. This servant will not pervert the truth for the sake of men's approval. Moreover, the true servant of the Lord Jesus Christ will not omit or disguise any particular truths which might be unappealing or offensive to men. The answer to the question "who do I fear the most to displease" will determine whether or not you are a servant of Christ or of men.

The real question to ask in evaluating a minister of Christ is NOT - does he please me? but does he please Christ? Does He seek to please Christ even at the expense of my approval and comfort. Does he withhold not rebuke or correction for the sake of my approval, but issue such for the glory of Christ and my ultimate benefit? A pastor who walks in the fear

of man is no pastor at all. Such a man becomes a mere weather vane of the opinions of men. He is constantly changing in order to reflect the sentiment of the times. He is truly tossed to and fro upon every wind of doctrine and is such as motivated by his desire to please men.

King Saul is a classic example of a man-pleasing servant. When commissioned to kill King Agag and all the flocks and herds and people, he did not do so. When questioned by the prophet Samuel Saul responded poorly.

1 Samuel 15:24

Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice."

On the other hand we have the good example of the prophet Micaiah. Jehoshaphat and come to assist Ahab. Jehoshaphat had requested a prophet of YHWH. When the false prophet was sent to summon Micaiah he counseled the prophet to speak in accord with the false prophets. Micaiah's response is an example of fearing God more than men.

1 Kings 22:14

And Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, whatever the LORD says to me, that I will speak."

For his boldness this prophet was slapped in the face, thrown into prison, and fed bread and water.

There are other great examples of this principle (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abignego in Daniel 3).

1 Thessalonians 2:3-4

For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. 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.

It is important to remember that at the judgment it is God not man that judges. Paul was aware that he would give an account of his stewardship to God and not to these Judaizers.

In our day, among the Evangelical party, there is a development called the Church Growth Movement. It is a very popular movement. This movement functions in complete contradiction to this principle. This movement formulates its methods and means by the taking of polls and surveys among men. They formulate their churches based upon what the people in their area want and desire. Their parishioners are but customers in their eyes. Because they seek to please the people, they grow in numbers greatly. Popular culture and public opinion become their source of authority and define their ministry and their worship. Thoughtful reflection upon what is the will of God is entirely eclipsed by the tastes and preferences of the people they seek to reach.

This philosophy is a man-pleasing philosophy in the fullest sense of that term. It is seductive. Pastors in these movements receive great adulation and praise, both among their people and in their communities. They become powerful by the support of popular opinion. Praise from a pleased constituency is a powerful narcotic. Any man can fall

under its spell. In the Church Growth Movement the consumer, rather than Christ, becomes the lord. They fail this first mark of a true minister of Christ. They seek to please men not God.

II A TRUE MINISTER OF CHRIST OBTAINS HIS DOCTRINE FROM GOD RATHER THAN FROM MEN

A Paul's doctrinal source

Galatians 1:11-12

But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

In this place Paul is claiming Christ as the direct source of the doctrine he taught. His teaching was not of any human source. His doctrine was not as some doctrine is described as cunningly devised fables.

2 Peter 1:16

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

In Paul's case the doctrine he taught did not even come to him from God through a human teacher. He claims to have received direct divine revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ, *it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

It is readily admitted that Christ appeared to Paul at his conversion. However, this was not the only time the Paul was put in front of the Lord Jesus Christ by way of direct appearance. Paul gives testimony to other such encounters in his address before King Agrippa.

Acts 26:16

'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.'

Christ appeared to Paul subsequent to his conversion in order to give unto Paul the doctrine he was to teach. We are not apprized of where and how many times Christ appeared to him. Paul received the thorn in the flesh in order to preserve him from inordinate self-exaltation because of his immediate encounters with Christ.

Paul was the personal recipient of his teaching from Christ. This is why Paul can speak with such authority concerning the Lord's Supper even though he was not present at the original ordinance (1 Corinthians 11:23- *I have received of the Lord. . .*).

Paul was not a disciple of the other Apostles. He had received his message in the same way as they, from Jesus Christ directly.

B The source of our doctrine:

The office and calling of the apostles is not being given today. There is no more direct revelation granted to man. Nevertheless, the inspired apostles have left to us the inerrant revelation which they did receive by direct revelation. Though these

doctrines come to us through men and not directly from God, they come to us through inspired apostles.

Though we cannot say that our teaching came to us by direct revelation, we are to say that all that we teach comes to us directly from the Word of God. No other source should be admitted. Therefore, our gospel, also, has not come to us from man, but from God because it comes from His Word. As long as we obtain our gospel and preaching from the Word of God soundly, we can then say that we have it from God not man.

In evaluating a minister of Christ, the appropriate question is - where did he get that message? This is how we might discern the true from the false teacher or minister. There are only two possible sources for the doctrine that anyone teaches. It either comes from God or from Satan. There are no other sources. In opposition to the doctrines of God there are also the doctrines of demons delivered to men by false teachers appearing as messengers of light. False teachers are adept at twisting the doctrine of the gospel in order to pervert it into an accord with demonic teaching.

CONCLUSION: QUESTIONING THE MESSAGE: - WHERE DOES THE MESSAGE COME FROM?

- 1 Does the message received come from a careful and responsible exegesis of the Scriptures alone, with an explanation of the words and phrases of the text? Or, does the message arise from human interest stories, psychological theories, or historical philosophy? (An example is given of a false presentation of the gospel taken from Dobson's "Focus on the Family" magazine).
- 2 Is the Bible alone the source of authority? This is not a condemnation of the use of commentaries and confessions of faith. These things can improve one's understanding of the Scriptures. But these things must not alter the Scriptures or have precedence over the Bible. There is no source of authority in a message conveyed by the messenger, but from the Word of God alone. To whatever extent a message measures favorably with the Scriptures that message is reliable.
- 3 Is there a humble willingness to submit human reason to divine revelation even when that revelation seems to contradict what people think to be fair or reasonable? Arminianism balks at this place. The Arminian will reject explicit revelation upon the grounds that it seems unfair to him. It is held in common in every false teaching that it seems fair.
- 4 Is there more concern for the glory of God and His honor than there is for the praise of men and their approval? The nature of men-pleasers is that they are far more interested in their glory and reputation than they are of God's.

1 Corinthians 4:11-13

To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

These are the marks of the true minister of Christ. Many churches purposely look for ministers that they can control and direct according to their passions and interests. These pastors, in the end, are men-pleasers only. Such men are plentiful in our day. May the Lord raise up God-pleasing ministers in His Church.