

Date: June 24, 2012

Subject: Galatians 1:1-6

Beginning this week, we will go through the book of Galatians verse by verse. "Why Galatians?" The reason I picked Galatians is because I find it applies to us today, just as it applied to the church in Galatia hundreds of years ago.

The book of Galatians focuses upon the central issue of the Gospel,

"... that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ,..." Galatians 2:16

When someone enters into religion, and you strip away all the good works: all the tracts you passed out, all the prayers, all the readings, confessions, donations, and every other obedience to the law of God; when you strip this all away - and "dates" too - so that none of these things remain, none of these things left for a man to trust in... one of two things will happen.

A man will become offended and so move on to something else altogether from the true Gospel; or, he will have but one thing remaining - or yet to learn -

faith, "The just shall live by faith." (Gal. 3:11).

This is the essence of ^{the} true ~~Gospel~~ ^{Gospel} because ~~faith~~ faith rests solely upon Jesus Christ, and His works, His atonement, His blood; not an intellectual faith, or assent to truth, but a firm conviction from the heart united to Christ by faith.

The doctrines we have examined recently, were to challenge our faith; is it genuine? Many of us believed the end to be on May or October 21st of last year, and I think we ought to consider this a major test... because the dates, are gone... the tracts, are gone... Many of the ~~doctrines~~ doctrines, are gone... and sadly, Many of the people, are gone. They have returned to the "vomit" of the world, and to the deceitful "pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25).

For some people, to have lost all these things, was to lose everything; and so, they became offended, and fell away. They are like the seed that fell upon a rock,

"They on the rock are they, who, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; and these have no root, who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." Luke 8:13

It seems everyone can tell you what's a false gospel, "That's wrong, that's false... that's a false gospel..." but they never speak of what is the true Gospel; and so, ~~#~~ people spend their whole life spotting counterfeit bills... and never see the true Bill, and so they remain in unbelief, as some Pharisaical gospel cop.

We will develop this more as we work through the Book of Galatians; with that said, let's begin. May God bless our labour in His name. Amen.

"The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians"

Chapter 1

Verse 1 "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead;)"

• "Paul, an apostle," - The believers in Galatia were listening to the false doctrines taught by false apostles. These false apostles were leading the people astray and attempting to discredit anyone who

was bringing the true Gospel, with true doctrines; so to begin his epistle to the Galatians, Paul, as it were, shows his "badge" of his true apostleship and thereby trumps all of the false teachers and all they said.

- "not of men, neither by man," - Paul proves the authenticity of his apostleship by showing that it was "not of men, neither by man." Paul begins many of his epistles showing the authority of his apostleship (see Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; etc.), but this phrase, "not of men, neither by man" is found only here, in the beginning of his letter to the Galatians.

Paul uses this to emphasize that he truly was an apostle, ~~although~~ because this must have been one of the chief arguments of the false apostles against Paul. Paul wasn't of the twelve, Paul didn't follow Christ when He dwelt among us; in fact, Paul was converted after Christ ascended to heaven - all of these were arguments against Paul and his doctrine, and the false apostles were trying to capitalize on this to keep the Galatians away from Paul, and from

his doctrine. After Judas betrayed Jesus, and later killed himself, two men were appointed to fill the office of an apostle; namely, Justus and Matthias; and by casting lots, it was shown that God chose Matthias (Acts 1:23-26; compare Proverbs 16:33).

Paul wasn't ordained into the apostleship like ~~Matthias~~ Matthias; but Jesus came to him by a direct revelation as Paul journeyed to Damascus; therefore, Paul was made an apostle, "not of men, neither by man."

- "but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father," -

By proving there ~~was~~ had been no human appointments, but that Paul's apostleship came directly from God himself, he cuts straight to the heart of the matter and brings ^{with him} as it were, the authority of God himself. Paul was one of Christ's ambassadors beseeching the Galatians to return to God, like he wrote to the Corinthians,

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

-2 Corinthians 5:20

The earnest plea of, "be ye reconciled to God" is as applicable today to some of us, as it was to the Corinthians, and the Galatians hundreds of years ago. The same problems they had then, we are having now.

- "Who raised Him from the dead;)" - When God resurrected Christ on the third day, it demonstrated God's absolute authority and power; Paul intimates that the same absolute authority and power of God, has made him to be an apostle.

Verse 2

"and all the brethren who are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:"

- "and all the brethren who are with me," - Not only does Paul write this epistle to the Galatians with the authority of an apostle, but he brings the company and force of other brothers to bear weight upon his message, and that they may take all the more heed to what he says.

- "unto the churches of Galatia:" - Galatia was a big country where Paul preached the Gospel twice (Acts 16:6; 18:23) and many churches were formed; here, Paul addresses not just one, but all of them.

Verse 3

"Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,"

Even though much of Paul's letter is a rebuke, his love for them is very evident, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend;" (Prov. 27:6).

Humility accompanied by love is the best way to bring correction to others. We should never puff ourselves up, or blast at another as though we are perfect; but always being mindful of our own sinfulness and "count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." (Col. 3:15). We see this by way of example in how ~~Paul~~ even though Paul's desire for the Galatians is for them to repent of their errors and return to Jesus Christ, ^{by faith} yet he brings this message in love and still wishes their, "grace... and peace."

Verse 4

"Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:"

• "Who gave Himself for our sins," - Even though the Galatians were being led astray, Paul doesn't reject them right away as reprobates, but he places

Christ before their minds as Saviour. Notice also how Paul included himself with the Galatians, "our sins... deliver us... our Father" Paul doesn't say, "my sins... delivered me... my Father," because he truly loves them and sincerely desires their spiritual welfare, and esteems it as important as his own.

Jesus said in John 10:14-18

"I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knows Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: then also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice: and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore does My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father."

Christ died willingly for His people; and Paul reminds the Galatians of His tremendous sacrifice. We would do well to remember the same, and to be always filled with holy affections for our Saviour.

• "that He might deliver us from this present evil world," - The death of Christ secured the purchase of His people; therefore His people should behave entirely different than those who are yet unsaved,

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6:20

This is further clarified by the use of the Greek word translated "world" in Galatians 1:4. It is the Greek word "aion", and although it has many nuances of meanings, here the context signifies the sinful behaviour of those who are still under "the power of darkness" (Col. 1:13) and are said to be blinded by "the god of this world" (i.e. Satan),

"In whom [i.e. the unsaved] the god of this world ["aion"] has blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel

"of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. 4:4).

As believers, we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and never be content in sin. We read this in Titus 2:11-12

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ["aion"]:

Even though we must live in this "present world" we are not "of the world" (John 17:14) because we should not live in sin as the unsaved world does. Nobody can ever claim an excuse to sin - even the unsaved - but how much more ~~and~~ ought we as Christians, to depart from the sinful behavior from which Christ died to save us.

"Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows them that are His. And, Let every one that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." - 2 Timothy 2:19

- "according to the will of God and our Father:" Here the Apostle puts forth the doctrine of election, Christ gave Himself to save a people - not because of our will, but "according to the will of God and our Father." We find this truth clearly taught in John 1:12-13

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

It was God's good pleasure to elect a people for Himself.

"according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will," Eph. 1:4-5

It is by this holy doctrine Paul appeals to the Galatians to mend themselves to Christ and to stay

united to Christ by faith, a doctrine which the false apostles rejected. For then, faith wasn't good enough; but they didn't reject the doctrine flat out, but insisted on ~~some~~ work accompanying faith. Therefore people were taught that ~~works~~ works must accompany faith, which is wrong, for we are saved by grace, "not of works" (Eph. 2:8-9); or, what they thought was faith was really unbelief. It is these same errors that we must guard ourselves from today.

• "to Whom be glory forever and ever.
Amen." - Here Paul finishes his introduction and praises God. Thoughts of our purchased redemption by our Saviour Jesus Christ should stir our hearts to live a life praising God, as long as we live.

"I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD." Ps. 104:33-34

God willing, we will continue our study of the book of Galatians, next week.

"Dear Father, may we keep our minds stayed on Thee and on all that Thou hast done to save unworthy sinners as us. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen."

Your servant for Jesus' sake,

Rev. F. W. W. W.

I Will Sing the Wonderful story, by Rowley 1886

I will sing the wonderful story,
of the Christ who died for me,
how He left the realms of glory
for the cross on Calvary.

I was lost: but Jesus found me,
found ~~me~~ the sheep that went astray,
raised me up and gently led me
back into the narrow way.

Faint was I, and fears possessed me,
bruised was I from many a fall;
hope was gone, and shame distressed me:
but His love has pardoned all.

Days of darkness still may meet me,
sorrow's paths I oft may tread;
but His presence still is with me,
by His guiding hand I'm led.

He will keep me still the river ~~rolls~~
rolls its waters at my feet;
then He'll bear me safely over,
made by grace for glory meet.

Yes, I'll sing the wonderful story
of the Christ who died for me,
sing it with the saints in glory,
gathered by the crystal sea.