

Galatians 1:1-10

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[0 : 00] So turn with me to the book of Galatians, Galatians chapter 1. Galatians chapter 1. We're going to be going, I think, through much prayer and understanding, and I was really torn between a couple of places.

I thought the Lord may be leading us, and Galatians was laid on my heart, so we're going to go through the book of Galatians. Again, the writings of Paul are very near and dear to me, but I think it also helps us balance out these truths.

On Sunday nights, we are going through the Old Testament. Wednesday nights right now, currently we're going through the book of Nehemiah, and now we're going to go through the book of Galatians. So Galatians chapter 1 this morning will be in the first 10 verses, Galatians 1 verses 1 through 10.

And if we preach this one message and the Lord tells me next Sunday to go somewhere else, we'll go somewhere else. But as of this Sunday, we're starting in Galatians chapter 1. If you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God found in the book of Galatians.

Galatians chapter 1. You look in Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians. Galatians chapter 1, starting in verse 1 and reading down to verse 10.

[1 : 09] Galatians chapter 1, starting in verse 1 says, Amen. Amen. Amen. the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead, and all the brethren who are with me to the churches of Galatia. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins so that he might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever. Amen. I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel, which is really not another, only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed. For am I now seeking the favor of men or of God? Or am I striving to please men?

If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day, and God, we rejoice in this opportunity you've given us.

Lord, we thank you that we've had the chance to praise you in song. Lord, we've had the opportunity to worship you in our giving. Lord, we've had the opportunity to fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ.

And Lord, now as we come to the time of the hearing and the reading of your word, we pray that your word would be opened up to us. We pray that we would understand it as it is, not as we would have it to be. But Lord, that your word would search us out, that it would show us the truth of not only you, but also the truth of ourselves, that we may be conformed more to your glory and more to your image.

And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Each time we start a new book, it is always beneficial to look at why that book was written. We understand in particular that the majority of the New Testament was letters written to particular churches or to a group of churches in a particular region.

[3 : 23] The 1st and 2nd Corinthians were written to the church at Corinth. There is a third letter to the church at Corinth that was lost. We don't know where it was at, but there was a letter that preceded 1st Corinthians. And then Paul wrote 1st Corinthians and then 2nd Corinthians to the church at Corinth.

The book of Romans was written to the church at Rome, which was actually not just one church, but it was multiple churches to be circulated throughout this region of Rome. The book of Galatians is written to the churches, as Paul introduces here, to the churches at Galatia.

And they are a group of churches, not just one in particular, because sometimes we hear this and we think, oh, there's one local church, and Paul is picking on this one local church, or he's addressing an issue in this one local church.

But this is a church that was in multiple locations in one region. Galatia has been defined in history as two different places. Okay, there was the city of Galatia, which was a place in particular, and then there was the Roman province of Galatia.

Just to be honest with you, Bible scholars do not know which one Paul was writing to. Okay, depending on which one he was writing to would date the book for you, because the Roman province of Galatia was founded after the city.

[4 : 37] If he was writing to the city, it would have been a particular earlier date. If he was writing to the region, it would have been possibly a later date. But none of these things really matter, because we understand he is writing to what would be Asia Minor area and the churches in that region.

He is writing to churches not like the church at Rome. He is writing to the churches which he himself planted. He is writing to churches which he knew, churches which he helped get started in his missionary travels.

And he is writing, as is the case with most of his writings, to address an issue. He is writing to address a concern. See, Paul himself said, who can bear the weight of this ministry?

Because he said that he carried the burden of all of the churches. Paul was a man who not only was concerned about the region he was at, but rather he was concerned about the church in general.

He was concerned about every church, every gospel-believing, Bible-preaching, if you will, church. And he bore the burden to know that the church should be on the right task. This is what makes Paul so influential in New Testament Christianity.

[5 : 47] And we read his letters, and in his letters, really, we get the major doctrines of the church. If it was not for the letters which Paul wrote to churches in particular, addressing issues, then we wouldn't know today the doctrinal issues that we should hold to, the big rocks, if you will, the main stuff.

There are some little minor details when it comes to Christianity which we can disagree on and still have fellowship around. But there are major doctrinal issues which are really immovable.

They have to be in place. And these are the things that Paul continues to address, and these are the things that he raises up, and we see them over and over. So as we go into it, just like in the church at Rome, where he was writing the book of Romans, Paul was writing to lay forth the major doctrine of salvation, how one is saved.

And all throughout that book, you get this big doctrinal issue of salvation. We need to understand, and kind of take the first week to do this, and really we see it into introduction that Paul gives us, of why he is writing to the church at Galatia.

We see, as we go through it, and we'll understand, and I titled Galatians, the book, A Defense of the True Gospel. As a book, it is just really a defense of the true gospel.

[7 : 10] Paul knew they had heard the gospel. Paul knew they had received the gospel. Paul knew they had believed the gospel. Why? Because Paul himself had declared to them the gospel. But Paul also knew that after he had departed from that region, that other people had come in, and the gospel had been distorted, or twisted, or manipulated a little bit.

And now he is writing to defend the true gospel. We'll see it by way of introduction in the first ten verses, and then we'll see it worked out, because as is common to Paul, and I know a lot of this, you say this is just minor details, and it is, but it helps us to understand the truthfulness of Scripture.

Paul always introduces what he's going to say before he says it. So he usually takes about the first eight to ten verses of every letter, introducing this is what I'm about to say, and then he tells you throughout the letter, and then at the end of the letter he says, this is what I told you, okay?

Paul is always trying to get his point across. But we see here in this introduction of why Paul needs to defend it, okay? So this morning, as we're looking at Galatians as a whole, a defense of the true gospel, and in these particular, these ten verses in particular, a reason for the defense.

Now that's the introduction of it. I want you to think about it as you open up the book of Galatians, and as you study the book of Galatians, as I know you will in preparation for the sermons that will come up, right?

[8 : 32] You'll be checking to make sure I'm telling you what is right, that you'll understand that this entire book is really a defense of the true gospel. My friend, listen to me. I want you to just kind of stop right here, and you'll see it as we make our way through this sermon this morning.

This is a big rock issue. You have to have the gospel right. It's a big rock issue.

There are other things we don't have to have right, and hopefully you'll see by the time we get through this morning why it is a big rock issue. This is something that has rippled throughout church history, that has went throughout church history, the defense of the gospel, defense of the gospel, defense of the gospel.

This is why we need to know the gospel, and the only way to know the gospel is to open up the Bible and to see the gospel as it's presented in Scripture, okay? So we start here with a reason for the defense, and we're seeing Paul introduce this.

Number one, we start in these first ten verses, the commission of Paul, Paul's commission to preach. Paul begins his defense of the gospel by first stating his commissioning service or how he was sent forth or who he was sent from because the power and the authority that an individual possesses is directly tied to the one who sent him.

[9 : 53] Right? If someone came in here this morning and said they were from, and it's no disrespect, it's no disregard, if someone came in this morning and said, the mayor of Wartre sent me and I have a message for you, we say, okay.

And then someone came in after that and said, hey, the mayor of such and such city, a little bit larger, sent me, or the governor of Tennessee sent me, okay, and they had a message they wanted to send.

And then say the last individual came in and said, the president of the United States, don't talk to me about what you think about him, we're not here to argue that, okay, but the president of the United States sent me with a message to tell you.

Each one that came through the door would bear authority, but not each one would have equal authority. Right? Because the authority of the messenger is directly tied to the individual that sent the message.

And we have that in the political realm. We have that in the civil world. We have it in our workplaces, right? If you're, I remember when I was still working with the phone company and I was there, and at times I would get a message from the first level supervisor.

[10 : 56] Well, the first level supervisor tells me something, that's great. But if the second level tells me something that the first level didn't tell me, now all of a sudden the second level has greater authority than the first level, so I need to do what he said.

But then if the third level decided they wanted to say something that might even contradict with what the first and the second told me, then you better listen to the third. I always thought it was fun because I was what was craft, so I could just put them all against one another, right?

So you would always go by the one with the most authority. And Paul starts his argument with his commissioning. He wants the people to understand he has the authority or even the prerogative to defend the truthfulness of the gospel.

And he stands it here and he says, Paul, an apostle. Now the word apostle means one that is sent forth. We know in scripture that this is one who is sent forth from the presence of Christ, presence of Christ.

Jesus in his earthly ministry and was therefore sent. There is a big difference between being a disciple and being an apostle. A disciple is someone who's set under the teaching of an authority.

[12 : 02] You can be a disciple by sitting under the teaching of Christ. Christ had thousands of disciples, people who would gather around him and listen to him. He only had 12 apostles. That would be someone that not just sat under the teaching, but sat under the teaching for an extended period of time and then was sent forth from the teacher to go declare that teaching to someone else.

That's what an apostle is. Paul calls himself an apostle born out of due time. Why does he call himself that? All of this matters because Paul was not one of the original 12. We're not getting into the argument of should Matthias be one of the 12 and the drawing of the straws and all those things found in the book of Acts.

But Paul himself spent time with Christ on the earth. You say, where? Where did he do that? Paul says, I was taught of Christ. In that three-year period of silence in the ministry of Paul, when he was in the desert in Arabia, he was taught of Christ.

He went to the school of Jesus. He hung out in the desert with the risen Savior, post-resurrection appearance, hanging out, listening to Christ. And it's a pretty amazing thing, where he came back with some authority now.

And it says, Paul, an apostle, one who was sent forth, look at this, not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead.

[13 : 21] Here Paul is telling us his commission to declare, his commission to preach. This is important because at this time, he'll get to it in just a little bit, there were people who came into Galatia and they said, oh, Paul came and told you this.

Well, all Paul is doing is telling you what Peter wants you to know. Or all Paul is doing is telling you what James and John wants you to know. Peter, James and John, you understand them, right? Paul is just repeating what he heard from Peter, or Paul is repeating what he heard from James, or Paul is repeating what he heard from John.

And these people came in and they said, but we have the real truth. We want to tell you what we know. Would you rather listen to this rag muffin group of 12 apostles and the people who follow them, or would you rather listen to this big group of people who existed in this setting, the Jewish people, who had existed for a number of years and we have the truth of it all?

See, the people that were coming in behind Paul said, all Paul did was what Peter wanted him to do. Paul starts with his commissioning and said, Peter didn't send me. The apostles didn't send me. The church at Jerusalem didn't send me.

The church at Antioch didn't send me. No, Jesus himself and God the Father sent me. He came with the commissioning of the risen Savior and the Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament, and he comes with the authority to proclaim the message.

[14 : 43] See, the argument was, all Paul is doing is repeating what he heard from others. And by the way, my friend, that is dangerous. I don't care how good of a preacher, pastor they are, just repeating what we hear from others is dangerous.

One of the greatest dangers, and it's been going on for a number of years, and it breaks my heart, and I don't mind saying it from the pulpit, and one of the greatest dangers that I have ever seen in the ministry is what is called books of sermons, and now they're online, and it's just a great danger where pastors take these great sermons that were preached by these great men, and then they re-preached them, and they're just hearing what these men had to say.

One of the best stories I've ever heard on this. Ever heard of R.G. Lee? R.G. Lee used to pastor where Adrian Rogers pastored in Memphis, Bellevue. He used to pastor there, but R.G. Lee, some of you are old enough to remember this, and I don't remember this, had a great sermon called Payday Someday, and if you've never heard it, you need to look up Payday Someday.

It's a great sermon, okay? R.G. Lee's Payday Someday. But that sermon, everywhere R.G. Lee would go, he'd be invited to preach, he would preach Payday Someday. Well, one day, R.G. Lee and his wife were on vacation, and while they were going, you probably see where this is going, right?

They were on vacation, and they were out in the country somewhere, and they went to some small country church, and they walked into the church, and they sat in the back of the church, and when they sat down, the pastor stood up and preached Payday Someday, with R.G. Lee sitting in the audience.

[16 : 10] Because he didn't recognize him, he had only heard it. He preached the man's sermon. And R.G. Lee's wife looked at him and said, he preached it better than you did. But the danger in that is, this pastor had heard R.G. Lee, but had he heard from the Lord?

Now, I've grown a lot from reading other sermons, and I've grown a lot from listening to other sermons, and I have books of sermons, and you would run me out of here if I ever opened up Charles Spurgeon's sermons and began to preach those two hour long sermons.

You would say, we don't need any of that. But there's great beneficial to those things. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones would not let anyone print his sermons verbatim, because he said, a sermon is always meant to be preached, it's never meant to be read.

I'm not writing a manuscript, I'm preaching a message. And you'll never find a book of D. Martin Lloyd-Jones sermons, you may be able to hear them, but they do not, now some of you are going to go research that, and you may prove me wrong, but if you do, it was against his will, okay, it was against his desire.

But what we see here is these people were accusing Paul of doing that. Paul has spent time with Peter, Paul has spent time with James and John, and all Paul is doing is coming and telling you what Peter, James, and John have said.

[17 : 24] Paul says, no, I was not sent by Peter, I was not, and he'll get to that later in this book, I was not sent by James and John, I was not sent by any establishment, any agency of man, rather, Jesus himself has sent me, and now all of a sudden, the authority to declare the gospel is true.

My friend, listen to me, you say, well, what application does that have for me? Hear me out. When you look at the gospel, make sure you're looking at what Jesus says is the gospel, not what any man says is the gospel.

Make sure that the gospel you adhere to is an accurate, right out of the mouth of Jesus, from God the Father gospel, not an opinion or an interpretation of Peter, or James, or John, or Paul gospel.

Because even Paul will show us in this letter that there were times when Peter was wrong, even after his renewed vigor for the gospel.

So we see here the commissioning that Paul had to preach. Number two, we see in these opening verses not only Paul's commission to preach, Paul's conviction of the gospel. He came to them with an argument and he wanted to argue the truthfulness and the sincerity of the gospel because he had an absolute conviction about the gospel.

[18 : 43] And this is where we get into the meat of it all. He says in verse three, grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Just stop right there. I love how Paul writes and he's always extending grace and peace and love.

And he's writing with an argument, but he's writing in love, right? There is a way to disagree, but to disagree in love. There is a way to argue, but to argue with love.

He says grace to you and peace. Now, grace and peace are something that the world is constantly seeking after. Everyone in the world would love a little bit of grace. That means you're not going to give me what I deserve, but you're going to give me what I do not deserve.

Some have called grace God's riches at Christ's expense, which means the riches of God are going to pour out upon me. I want God's favor. Anything God does for me in his favor is grace.

What he doesn't do to me is mercy, right? Because I deserve to bear in me the weight of my sin. I deserve to bear the penalty of my sin. I deserve to bear the marks of my sin.

[19 : 41] And since I do not have that, that's mercy. I do not deserve his favor. I do not deserve his joy. I do not deserve his grace. I do not deserve, I mean, his peace.

I do not deserve those things, and that is grace. What he gives me that I do not deserve is grace. What he does not give me, what I do deserve, is mercy. I know it's kind of confusing, but that's the crux of it.

And the world would love grace, which means give me something I don't deserve. You have a hard time asking anybody else in the world, would you mind something you don't deserve if it's good? No, I'd love to have that. That's grace, right?

Everybody wants grace, and he says grace and peace to you. Everybody wants peace. This world longs for peace. This world desires peace, but Paul lays out for us, this is a great conviction he has, grace to you and peace, and here it is, the only source and the only avenue to receive those is from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason why so many in the world are seeking for these two things but lacking these two things is because they're seeking them everywhere but the only place they're available. The only place you're ever going to find grace and the only place you're ever going to find peace is from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[20 : 50] And here we start with his conviction. Who gave himself for our sins so that he might rescue us from this present evil age according to the will of our God and Father to whom be the glory forever.

Amen. Here's the conviction he has of the gospel. Now he's just kind of introducing it to us here. He's going to flesh it out in the book to come so we're looking at it by way of introduction but it's also good for us because there's true application here.

Here is the conviction that Paul has of the gospel. He says grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins. First conviction he has of the gospel is the gospel is all about what Jesus gave.

Jesus gave himself for our sins. The first conviction is the gospel is really about what Jesus gave has nothing to do about what you give. And he's going to flesh it out.

The gospel has nothing to do about what you do, how you act, how you behave, what you give up, what you start to do, the behavior you put to it. The first conviction he has is that Jesus gave himself for our sins.

[21 : 54] It doesn't say anything in here about Jesus gave himself plus we did our part. No, there's none of that. Jesus gave himself for our sins. Second conviction we see here is that he might rescue us from the present evil age.

Now when I start speaking of the gospel, immediately people go to heaven. Oh yes, we need to accept the gospel so we can spend eternity in heaven with God the Father and we need to accept so that we can spend eternity in heaven with all of our friends.

And yes, we need to accept the gospel so that we can spend eternity in heaven and we can have those streets of gold and those mansions that he's built for us and all those things. Well, friend, listen to me. You know, the scripture speaks of heaven, yes, but the gospel's focus is never on heaven.

Heaven is a direct result of the life lived that has been redeemed by the gospel. Look at this. Paul's conviction is that he gave himself for your sins, not so that you could spend eternity in heaven, but so that he could rescue you from this present evil age.

See, the force of the gospel is that it not only secures your future, but it delivers and rescues you in your present. For you, that he might rescue you today.

[23 : 08] And you being rescued today will be ensured of what will come in the future eternity. So many people want a gospel that secures eternity but does not affect time.

And that gospel is not biblical. I know that sounds harsh, but it's not. A gospel that takes care of heaven and forgets about life is not a biblical gospel.

That is, I want the rewards, but I don't want the relationship. I want heaven. Jesus, I want it when I die, but you give me my life until then.

I'll give it to you when I die, and then I want you to take care of me because I really don't want to go to that place with flames. I'd rather go to that place with gold. And if you don't ever think that's right, if you think I'm wrong in that, then challenge somebody.

Say, well, what if there's not a mansion in heaven? What if you're living in a broom closet? Because a little wording there is, and I know the King James says he's going to prepare a mansion for you, and that's great. I love the beauty of that, and I know that we sing that one time.

[24 : 08] While I was in the pulpit, somebody from the congregation, not here, okay, don't look around and ask who it was, wasn't here, argued with me and told me I was wrong about this because I know, well, we sing that hymn that he's going to prepare a mansion for me, and when we all get to heaven, we all have these mansions, and I said, what if we don't?

What if you really don't have a mansion? Because the literal word there in John is many dwelling places. Man saw dwelling places and decided to put mansion there because mansion sounds a little bit more appealing than dwelling place, right?

Some of us are living in dwelling places, and some of us are living in what the rest of the world would call mansions. A dwelling place can be a broom closet, right? And when you start talking about that, people start getting upset.

[25 : 19] You don't have to have any sleep. It says we're going to be gathered around His throne. Why do I want a big old mansion sitting empty when I'm gathered around His throne at the worship service? You know, why do I want that? It says I'll be going in and out.

[illegible]

Thank you.

[28 : 30] Thank you.