

Galatians: Freedom through Christ – Part 1

No Other Gospel – Galatians 1:1-10

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Sept. 14, 2025

INTRODUCTION

- The book of Galatians is a crucial and foundational part of our theological framework. It serves as part of the bedrock we rely on and build our lives upon. In many ways, it is Christianity 101.
- It deeply troubles me to know that many people who claim to be Christians are unaware of or have forgotten the core truths of their faith that are found in this book. There are people who attend church every week but still do not know these truths or have neglected them.
- It is vital for you to understand, review, remember, and live out the truths presented in this book. Grasping what is written here will strengthen your theology and promote spiritual maturity, preventing you from being swayed by false doctrines or philosophies that seek to topple you and pull you away from Christ and His kingdom into darkness, confusion, bondage, and destruction. Some doctrines are taught by deceivers, who are often deceived themselves, and who pass off lies as truth (see 1 Tim 4:1-2).
- Paul the apostle, who first brought the gospel to Galatia, later wrote this letter in response to troubling reports about the church in that region. His goal was to remind, rebuke, and pull the believers back from teachings that contradict God's truth and Christ's message.
- As you read these words, you can sense Paul's deep love for God and Christ, as well as his shepherd's heart of love and concern for God's people, the body and bride of Christ. Read this letter with those perspectives in mind, and may you also hear and feel God's pastoral heart as we walk through this letter together.

THE BIBLE CONTAINS GOD'S WORDS (THIS IS THE AUTHORITY)

Galatians 1:1-2 NIV (Page 1001)

Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— 2 and all the brothers and sisters with me, To the churches in Galatia:

- First off, Paul introduces himself so the people receiving this letter know who it's from and who he is. He is indeed Paul, the one who first brought them the message of the gospel, who is truly an apostle (a messenger with a message), sent not from men nor by a man.
- Okay, full stop. Why did he say this, and why is it important? He wanted them, and wants us, to understand that the message the apostles communicated did not come from the hearts and minds of men, not even from their own thoughts.
- He was sent as a messenger to deliver the truth from Jesus Christ Himself and God the Father, who raised Christ from the dead. God was using Paul as a messenger to communicate His words. Paul thanks God for the people who recognized and received his words, not as mere man's words, but as the Word of God (see 1 Thess 2:13-14).
- The apostle Peter also explained that the Word of God was never made by the will of man, "but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21). Knowing that the Bible is not a man-made book" makes this book the authority over every person because God is over every person as our creator.
- This means that the Bible is above and beyond any other book. It is the first and the last word; what it proclaims is true, and what it promises will be fulfilled, because it is the revelation of

God and not human speculation. As Rich Mullins put it in his song *Creed*, “It is the very truth of God and not the invention of any man.”

- Pay attention to what is written in this book. Honor what is written in this book. Hold firmly to what is written in this book. Study it and let it study you. **“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb 4:12 ESV).**
- The further you stray from the foundational truth and faithful path of this book, the deeper you sink into trouble and darkness until you become completely lost, tangled, and ensnared.
- The first foundational stone in this letter is this: The Bible contains God’s word, which is the authority for faith and life. This is a foundational and fundamental Christian doctrine. The second thing we discover is this: God rescues us through Christ. This is the gospel.

GOD RESCUES US THROUGH CHRIST (THIS IS THE GOSPEL)

Galatians 1:3-5 NIV

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- Now let this good news sink into the soil of your soul like falling rain. God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ offer us grace and peace—grace to cover our sins and peace to fill our hearts and minds, knowing that we are right with God and that He will make all things right in the end.
- Here is how this grace and peace were obtained and can be offered to us: The Lord Jesus Christ, who is before all things, created all things for Himself, and holds all things together (Col 1:16-17), gave Himself out of God's will and love for our sins. He took our punishment on Himself, becoming sin, though He knew no sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21). Jesus rescued us from the present evil age (from the fall to the recreation, the age of the curse of sin and death).
- God rescues us through Christ; this is the gospel. This is how you and I receive grace and peace and are saved from the present evil age. May you believe this, and may you be rescued by Christ by putting your faith in Him. This is the good news. This is the grace we receive. This is the peace in our hearts. May all glory be to God the Father forever and ever.
- God rescues us through Christ; this is the gospel, and this is the second fundamental and foundational truth from this chapter that Christians rely on.
- Now, after establishing these core truths, Paul shifts to address the change of direction the Galatians had taken, from clinging to Christ and the truth of the gospel to quickly abandoning Christ and rejecting His grace. They and we must recognize that we are in a truth war, a battle for the truth, and the stakes could not be higher, for eternal life depends on our reliance on Christ and His grace for us for our salvation.

YOU ARE IN A TRUTH WAR (THIS IS THE BATTLE)

Galatians 1:6-7 NIV

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 which is really no gospel at all.

Evidently, some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

- Paul was astonished, exceedingly disturbed, deeply grieved at the fact that the Christians in Galatia, after believing the gospel message and receiving the grace of God, had quickly walked away from God and His gift and turned to a different “gospel.” In this case in particular, they believed that following Christ *plus* observing the Jewish law and customs led to salvation. Christ “plus” is still a thing even today and here in this city.
- We still live in a world of different “gospels.” The “gospel” of self-improvement. The “gospel” of politics. The “gospel” of morality. The “gospel” of prosperity. The “gospel” of tolerance that says “just be sincere, and you’ll be fine.” The “gospel” of pluralism, that all roads lead to God. Paul says: No. These are not the gospel. They are chains. They cannot save you, they cannot justify you, and they cannot raise you from the dead.
- Think about this: Paul equates turning to another teaching with deserting Christ himself. To abandon the gospel is not just to make a theological error; it is to walk away from a person. It’s personal betrayal. It’s treason against the King who died to save you. It is rejecting the grace of God. This is why Paul is shocked, and why he writes with emotion and strength.
- Do you feel the seriousness? This is eternal life and eternal death at stake. If you change the gospel, you lose the gospel. And without the gospel of grace, there is no salvation.
- What was written in the book of Galatians was the primary spark that started the Protestant Reformation of the Roman Catholic Church, 500 years ago. The Roman Catholic “church” was and is teaching that the church’s doctrine had authority over Scripture, that salvation was earned by your “good deeds,” that forgiveness of sin could be bought through indulgences, that the “church” was exalted even over Christ, among other heresies that they still teach today.
- That is why in recapturing the truth of this book, reformers cried the five solas (which means “alone”) of the reformation: scripture alone, Christ alone, faith alone, grace alone, and glory to God alone. Because if you add anything—circumcision, sacraments, works, rituals, your own performance—you destroy grace. *Christ plus anything equals nothing. But Christ plus nothing equals everything.*
- There have been people throughout the ages up to this very day who teach a “gospel” other than the one taught by Scripture. Paul uses the harshest language for these people.

Galatians 1:8-9 NIV

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God’s curse! 9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God’s curse!

- This is one kind of evil that seeks to take your life. It is another layer of evil that turns people away from eternal life, the true gospel, and the grace of God. That’s why Paul uses the strongest language possible for those who do this: that they would be cursed by God. He does not excuse anyone from this, including himself, angels, or anyone who preaches a “gospel” other than the one he has laid out.
- The biblical gospel is sacred. It is essential. It is fundamental. It is unchanging, and it is true. Hold on to it. Treasure Jesus and the message of the gospel above all things, and be aware of any other gospel that adds something to the grace of God through Christ for salvation. Do not be dragged away and deceived.

- We must all choose who we will serve, and whose approval we desire. Will you and I choose to live to please God, or will we choose to live to please people? It is one or the other. And Scripture counsels us to live to please God; let this be your goal.

LIVE TO PLEASE GOD (THIS IS THE GOAL)

Galatians 1:10 NIV

Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

- Biblical truth does not always align with popular opinion or the desires of men. For example, the exclusivity of Jesus as the only way to the Father, or sexual ethics, or materialism do not align with the gospel. Even our desire to deserve salvation through earning or contributing to it doesn't fit.
- Our passage today ends in a similar way to the passage in Joshua from last week: Who will you choose to serve? . . . As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
- In doing so, you more than likely will find yourself swimming against the current of popular opinion. It may cost you financially, it may cost you relationally, and it may even cost you your life. The cross will not win you popularity points. But it will win you Christ. And He is worth it.

CONCLUSION

- Paul's words in Galatians 1 are not dusty history lessons; they are living truth for us today. The Galatians were in danger of wandering from Christ because they shifted from grace alone to a Christ-plus gospel. We are no different. Every generation must fight to hold the one true gospel, because our hearts are prone to drift and deceivers continue to deceive.
- So here is the call: Anchor yourself in the gospel. Refuse counterfeits. Live for the smile of God, not the approval of people.
- The Bible is the authority, so read it, believe it, and submit to it.
- The gospel is Christ's rescue, so trust Him. Rest your eternity not on your works, your rituals, or your resumes, but on Christ alone.
- The world is full of lies, so guard your soul. Test everything you hear against the Scriptures.
- Your life has an audience, so ask, "Am I living to please Christ, or just to please people?"
- Church, there is no other gospel. Don't exchange life for chains. Don't add to what Christ has finished. Stand in His grace. Delight in His peace. And live to make much of Him, no matter the cost. Because at the end of the day, and at the end of your life, the only thing that will matter is this: Did you cling to Christ alone? Did you treasure His gospel above everything else?
- Let us not be a people quick to desert Him, but a people who hold fast. *Christ plus nothing equals everything. And with Him, we have all we need.*

Our prayer team is available to pray with you after the service near the "prayer" sign at the front of the sanctuary and also in the prayer room, next to the offices.

QUESTIONS FOR GROWTH GROUPS

1. Why is it critical that Paul begins Galatians by establishing that his message comes directly from God and not from man? What does this say about the authority of Scripture in our lives?
2. Paul equates turning to another gospel with deserting Christ himself. How does that make the abandonment of truth feel more personal and relational rather than just theological?
3. What are some “different gospels” that are present in our culture today? Which of these tempt you personally the most?
4. How do we practically live in the tension of being in a “truth war” while still loving and serving people who disagree with us?
5. Paul uses extremely strong language about anyone who preaches a false gospel. How should that shape the way we evaluate teaching, books, or spiritual influencers today?
6. Galatians 1:10 challenges us with the question of whom we are trying to please. In which areas of your life are you most tempted to live for the approval of people rather than God?
7. What does it look like this week, in practical terms, to live as if Christ plus nothing equals everything?