

Galatians #2

August 4, 2024

Series: Galatians: Treasuring the Gospel of Grace

Today's Message: Resetting The Foundation of the Gospel of Grace; Galatians 1:1-5

When you read Galatians, it soon becomes apparent that something is wrong in the churches in the Roman Province of southern Galatia. There are no soft and heartfelt greetings extended to these believers. Paul is severe in his approach to these believers because he knows that they are truly leaning toward apostasy. Apostasy is the departure from the foundational principles of the faith of Jesus Christ. In other words, they are abandoning the true Gospel and exchanging it for a false gospel.

Indeed, this is a real and present danger for these Galatians and is readily apparent throughout the letter. He expresses his dismay in 1:6 by confronting their ease in “deserting the One who called [them] by the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel—that is no gospel at all.” In 3:1 he accuses them of being “bewitched” by false teachers, as if they have had a magic spell cast upon them. He even goes on to warn them that they are in danger of becoming accursed because they are abdicating their security in the grace of God and trading it for the lie of reliance upon the law for their right standing with God (3:3,10).

Paul is committed to the True Gospel of grace, and he is committed to them and their well being in Christ. It is Paul's deep love of the gospel of Christ that fuels his boldness in writing this letter. I know of no other churches that received more of Paul's time and ardent love than the Galatian churches. I have to think that Paul became as a father in the faith to the people in the towns of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe as early as Acts 9:30 after the Church in Jerusalem sent him to Tarsus, which was not too far from these towns. Perhaps it was during this time that these churches were founded. Who knows. It's just a thought. But in the subsequent chapters we see Paul visit and revisit these churches on each of his three main missionary journeys (Acts 13-14; Acts 15: 36- 16:6; and 18:23). So, his love and concern for them is inarguable.

Somewhere along the line Paul wrote this letter to the churches in Galatia. It is likely that he wrote the letter while on his second journey while he was in Corinth for “a year and half, teaching them the word of God.” It wouldn't surprise me that while in Corinth, having time to pray, and think about the Galatian churches, and probably having heard reports of the trouble that had descended upon the churches through the Judaizers (Paul's constant detractors) that he wrote this letter. The letter would have been written sometime between AD 50-52. Then, shortly after the letter had been sent to the churches, Paul once more returned to Galatia following a brief respite in Antioch (Acts 18:23).

So, let's begin our study of this most important and relevant letter written to these at-risk churches in Galatia, remembering how dear these believers were to Paul.

Today we will cover Galatians 1:1-5 and join Paul in 1) Resetting the foundation of his apostleship; 2) resetting the foundation of the Source of grace and peace, which they had received; and 3) Resetting the foundation of the gospel of grace.

I) (1:1-2) Resetting the Foundation of His Apostleship

A) Paul

1) Now a new man! Was Saul. From Saul to Paul

(a) Acts 13:9: mentions that Saul (Hebrew name) was also called Paul (Roman name).

(i) Throughout Paul's ministry he often referred to himself as having died and no longer living for himself, but Christ living him, giving him a new identity! (**see Gal. 2:20**)

(a) For example, it is not unusual for converts in other countries to replace their given name with a biblical name such as John, or Paul, or Joseph to reflect their new identity as a new man in Christ Jesus.

- B) An apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father...
- 1) Defense of his apostleship. An apostle was one who spoke with divine authority.
 - 2) The enemies of Paul constantly were bringing his claim to apostleship to task.
 - (a) You can find this throughout his epistles, especially in Galatians and 2 Corinthians.
 - (i) Galatians 1:10-15; Gal. 6:12,17; 1 Corinthians 1:1, etc.
 - (ii) In Acts 9, Ananias is told by Jesus that “Paul” is his chosen instrument.
 - (iii) And in Galatians 1:15-16 we learn that Paul was set apart by God from birth.
 - (b) As the Judaizers eroded Paul’s apostolic authority they effectively eroded Paul’s ministry.
 - 3) But Paul’s ministry was a ministry of Life and Freedom in Christ, not of death and bondage.
 - (a) **Galatians 5:1: “It is for freedom that Christ set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”**
 - 4) Apostles were heralds of Christ preaching the authoritative Gospel of Grace.
 - (a) Called and sent by Jesus Christ and God the Father. (A divine calling and authority.)
 - (i) A good example of divine authority is found in 1 Corinthians 7:10: “To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband...[etc.]”
 - (ii) Another: 2 Peter 3:15-16. Here Peter reminds believers that God gave Paul wisdom, and that Paul’s writings and preaching is Scripture (The word of God!).
- C) Summary: Paul had to reset the foundation of his apostleship b/c his God-given authority had been undermined by the false teachers who had poisoned the minds of the believers in Galatia.

II) (1:3) Resetting the Foundation of the Source of Grace and Peace

- A) The source of grace and peace bestowed upon the Galatian churches is God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1) Grace: Their position in Christ comes from God the Father through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - 2) Peace: The practical, or experiential removal of the enmity between sinners and of God, and the implementation of peace with God is the direct result of the saving grace of God, which comes through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - (a) Grace from God comes through faith before peace with God is gained and experienced.
 - (i) Ephesians 2:8-9: “It is by grace you are saved (justified) through faith (in Christ)...”
 - (ii) Romans 5:1: “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”
- B) The issue of the source of grace and peace had everything to do with their salvation. Whereas the Judaizers were preaching “another gospel—which was no gospel at all,” and this false gospel was rooted in law keeping for righteousness, Paul was adamantly warning that this heresy would render the gospel of grace as useless—salvation, therefore would no longer be of grace, and righteousness would no longer be of God, which is the very foundation of the Gospel of grace preached by Paul.
- 1) This doctrine of the source of grace and peace to the believer was foundational to Paul’s preaching.
 - (a) Romans 4:4-5: “Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.”
 - (b) He drove the point home in Galatians 2:21: “I do not set aside the grace of God (in my teaching and preaching), for if righteousness could be gained through the law (of works), Christ died for nothing.”
 - (i) The entire letter to the Galatians hinges on the source of “grace and peace”. Paul asserts clearly that grace and peace come from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is in total opposition to the teachings of the false teachers!
 - (a) In this letter we will see Paul on the offensive like a “bear robbed of its cubs!”
 1. For example, Paul “opposed [Peter] to his face because he was clearly in the wrong.” Paul would oppose anyone who denied the grace of God to the Gentiles!

- C) Summary: The source of grace and peace is God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and is received by faith as gift from God through Jesus Christ. There is no other source of grace and peace but God!

III) (1:3-5) Resetting the Foundation of the Gospel of Grace

- A) Paul had such concern for the Galatian churches. He expresses throughout this letter the very heart of love for them as did Christ when He warned the church in Ephesus that they have “forsaken [their] first love! (Revelation 2:4)”
- 1) This was happening to these Galatians, and it happens among Christians today!
 - 2) How do we keep the fires of love for Christ alive? How do we prevent the **fossilization** of faith?
 - 3) Paul shows us how in these verses!
- B) He resets the foundation of the Gospel. The Gospel they first believed and received with joy!
- 1) Having reminded them of the source of grace and peace, he now reminds them of the work of Christ on their behalf!
 - (a) “...the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins...”
 - (i) He gave Himself
 - (a) As a gift, from both the Father and the Son.
 1. The ransom paid on our behalf (Matthew 20:28)
 2. “He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all...” (Rom.8:32)
 - (ii) Paul treasured the “gift of Christ” as was baffled why they would choose works over grace.
 - (a) The law of works demands “works to **do**” or else suffer the wages of death.
 - (b) The Gospel proclaims a “work **done**” for the eternal salvation of all who believe!
 - 2) Paul reminds them that the work of Christ for our salvation was a “rescue operation” by God!
 - (a) “...to **rescue** us...”
 - (i) Paul treasured the Truth that Jesus Christ was the ONLY POSSIBLE means for our salvation.
 - (a) One of the important themes concerning “salvation” is packed in the word “freedom.” We were rescued!
 1. From our bondage/ slavery to sin.
 - a. Galatians 5:1: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.” (see also **Rom. 6:6,17,18,20,22;** **Rom. 7:14;** **Rom. 8:2** etc.)
 - (ii) Christ **bought** us!
 - (a) Colossians 1:14: “...in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”
 - 3) We are reminded that this great “rescue” was absolutely the working of the will of God the Father.
 - (a) John 1:12-13: “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed on His Name, He gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but **born of God.**” Not born of obedience to the law of works!

C) (1:5) Paul rests in doxology!

 - 1) His highest praise, his greatest expression of his feelings concerning the treasure of the gospel of grace erupts from his heart: “...to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”
 - (a) Glory words unto God from who comes our eternal salvation!

D) Our response: We must strain daily against the world, the flesh and the devil to exalt in the gift of our eternal salvation. We become forgetful. But let us never forget.

 - 1) France has not forgotten when America liberated them from Nazi Germany. The youth of France are reminded everyday in school how America liberated them. They honor the American soldier.