

**Galatians #4****August 18, 2024****Series: Galatians: Treasuring the Gospel of Grace****Today's Message: Paul, A New Man: A defense of his authenticity and authority; Galatians 1:10**

It was Dietrich Bonhoeffer who made the observation, "When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die." Along with that statement, Bonhoeffer says that the first call which every Christian experiences is the call to abandon the attachments of this world.

He didn't make that up. It was Jesus who taught His disciples in Matthew 18:24,25 this: "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."

That's probably what motivated Bonhoeffer's observation. Do you agree with Him, that is, with Jesus?

Paul certainly did. Paul found the true meaning of life in Christ Jesus. Everything else paled in comparison to knowing Jesus.

After his Damascus Road experience, that is, after Paul encountered the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul was no longer the same man. He was a new man. He calls that new man a *new creation* (2 Cor. 5:17). For Paul his encounter with Christ caused a radical change. He literally was different. The things he once loved he now hated. And the things he once hated he now loved. He once loved his rank in Judaism as a Pharisee of Pharisees. But now, as far as he was concerned that rank was dead to him; it meant nothing. As he wrote in Philippians 3:7-8, "But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ."

Christ Jesus was everything to him. So, dying to himself, taking up his cross daily was how he experienced the reality of the presence and power of the Lord Jesus Christ in his life. He says the same thing in Philippians 3:10-11, "I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection [active in my life today] and the fellowship of His sufferings [today, whether through trials from within me or outside me], becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."

I wanted to have us think about this to give background to the verses we will look at today and next week. The passage we will study today is first and foremost a defense of Paul's authenticity and authority as a minister of the gospel he preached. This gospel he preached was being forfeited for a false gospel. And those false teachers with a false gospel were leveraging rumors which called into question Paul's claim of both his authenticity as an apostle, and his apostolic authority to even have preached to them in the first place!

This is an important part of this letter to the Galatians. Because, if Paul's divine source of his gospel is undermined, and his authenticity as a true apostle is undercut, then his right to preach, as an apostle, is also blunted and undermined. At stake is the integrity of Christ's person and work, as well as the assurance of those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel of grace. So, Paul, in our verse today, sets out to defend his authenticity as a New Man. Following this Paul will defend his new calling and his new and divine purpose, which is to preach and defend the gospel of grace of God to sinners who can only find the righteousness of God through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Once he has successfully argued for his message and apostleship, he can go on correcting the false teaching which threatens these believers.

We will discover the beauty of Paul's defense of his authenticity and authority and apostleship by looking today at Paul, the New Man from Galatians 1:10. Then next week we will continue in Galatians seeing Paul, a new man with a New Calling (1:11-24) and Paul, a new calling with a New Purpose (2:1-10).

I) **(1:10) Paul, a New Man**

A) Paul is disclosing his inner motivation

- 1) "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God?"
  - (a) He is not speaking about the subject matter of his preaching, but about his inner motivation.
    - (i) About a clear conscience before God.
    - (ii) About fidelity to God's gospel doctrine.
      - (a) He is making it clear that his doctrine is sound because he is not crafting his teaching to please men, but rather to please God.

B) Paul is weighing his sincerity in his motivation to please God.

- 1) "Or am I trying to please men?"
  - (a) If he was yielding to a desire to find favor with men he would not have a clear conscience and could not, therefore, stand under the reproach and scrutiny of his opponents.
  - (b) He would have no confidence that he fulfilled his duty to preach the True Gospel. Elsewhere we can see his testimony springing from a clear conscience:
    - (i) Acts 23:1: "Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, 'My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.'"
    - (ii) 2 Corinthians 1:12: "Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace."
  - (c) As you can see, Paul's conscience is clear. Something changed in him—Christ living in him.

C) Paul is a changed man, a new man!

- 1) "If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ! How do we know this?"
  - (a) Before the Damascus Road experience, Paul was all about pleasing men.
    - (i) He was soaring above all the other Pharisees and gaining great approval of men as he zealously persecuted Christians for their testimony about the risen Christ!
      - (a) Galatians 1:14: "I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers."
- 2) He had it made as a zealous Pharisee. But as a servant of Christ, he now suffered for Christ's sake. He was a servant of Christ and had the wounds to prove it!
  - (a) Galatians 6:17: "Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear in my body the marks of Jesus."
  - (b) 2 Corinthians 11:23ff: "Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again."

II) **Application: Living Life as a New Man (As a New Creation in Christ): developing an authentic Christianity.**

A) As a New Creation learn to listen to and employ the teachings of Jesus:

- 1) Follow Jesus. The first thing to do is follow Him.
  - (a) Learn from Him! Lean on Him! Listen to Him!
    - (i) Matthew 11:28-30: "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and your will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
- 2) Learn from Him:
  - (a) His humility: Matthew 23:12: "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."
    - (i) Philippians 2:5: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ..."
    - (ii) Philippians 2:6-8, concerning Jesus: "Who, being in very nature god, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very

nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!”

- (b) Becoming more like Him in service to others:
  - (i) Philippians 2:3-4: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also the interests of others.”
  - (ii) Joyful service: John 15:11-12: “I have told you this so that My joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you!”
  - (iii) Sacrificial service to others: John 15:13: “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”
- 3) Lean on Him: When you lack understanding and don’t know what to do.
  - (a) Proverbs 3:5-6: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”
  - (b) James 1:5: “If anyone of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”
    - (i) It is tempting to react to stress and confusion in our own limited strength and understanding—like the world in unbelief. But an authentic Christian learns to lean on God in Christ, in growing dependence upon the Holy Spirit.
- 4) Listen to Jesus: He speaks to us through the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments.
  - (a) Mark 9:7: “Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud saying, “This is My Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!”
  - (b) John 10:27: “My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me.”
- B) Following Christ and serving Christ will yield fruitfulness for Christ.
  - 1) John 15:4: “Abide in Me, and I will abide in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me.”
    - (a) An authentic Christian learns through trials and tribulation to abide in Him. Let the trials do their work!
      - (i) 2 Corinthians 4:17: “For our light and momentary troubles are producing for us a glory that far outweighs them all.”
- C) An Authentic Christian life will not buckle under the trouble encountered by following Christ.
  - (a) Jesus promised all who follow Him: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart, I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)
- D) An Authentic Christian lives more and more to please God!
  - 1) 2 Corinthians 5:9: “So we make our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.”
  - 2) How does your life give evidence that you are living to please our Lord Jesus Christ?
    - (a) Ephesians 4:22b-24 teaches us to be vigilant in “putting off” the old patterns of behavior and “put on” the new self: “put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”
      - (i) How could you begin doing this in your home with your family? Your conduct when you are with friends? At work? When your driving? What you do with your body? Your thought life?
    - (b) What is keeping you from having clear conscience before God and people? What will you do to develop a clear conscience? Is there a besetting sin that you must forsake for Jesus’ sake?
  - 3) Paul’s sincerity and authenticity was proven by his actions. What do your actions prove? If you are struggling with being sincere and authentic as a Christian, will you pray right now and ask God to transform you? What steps will you take to become an authentic Christian?