

Galatians #6**September 1, 2024****Series: Galatians: Treasuring the Gospel of Grace****Today's Message: Paul, A New Purpose: Paul's gospel and ministry confirmed; Galatians 2:1-10**

When Martin Luther stood before the Diet of Worms in 1521, facing the damning charges of heresy, he stood firm and resolute, refusing to recant his views and holding on to his convictions. He stood before a council of powerful men who could demand his execution in an instant. But instead of backing down, Martin Luther, now an enemy of the Roman Catholic Church, uttered words that changed the course of human history and ignited the fire of the Protestant Reformation. In that moment, at the end of a long defense of his position, he declared, "I neither can, nor will I retract anything; for it cannot be either safe or honest for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen."

When Luther left the city of Worms, he was abducted by a group of men sent by Frederick III. Frederick III devised Luther's abduction in order to keep him hidden from assassins who were bent on killing Luther. For two years Luther was tucked safely away in a castle fortress where he spent his time translating the Bible into German. His work was groundbreaking and became the template for Bible translation.

Luther fought for the Truth of the gospel, and it nearly cost him his life.

As we study Galatians we see Paul in a similar situation as Luther. However, as it turns out, his detractors are found by the Jerusalem Council to be in the wrong and Paul's gospel of grace was found to be in complete agreement with the gospel the apostles preached, having also personally received it from the Lord Jesus Christ, just as Paul had claimed and proven in Galatians 1:11-24!

Nevertheless, Paul took a hard stand against the Judaizers, finding at no point any reason to tolerate even one word of their false gospel. We need to think hard about preparing ourselves to stand firm in doctrines of the gospel. Paul wrote these inspiring words to the Corinthian church: "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong, be men of courage! (1 Corinthians 16:13)" There is no time in a Christian's life where compromising the simplicity of the gospel is acceptable.

As we look at Galatians 2:1-10 today a couple things need to be noticed. First, Paul's intention was to prove agreement between himself and his gospel and the other apostles and the gospel they preached. And, second, his intention was to prove that the Judaizers were guilty of preaching a false gospel. So, we could say that Paul's intention was not to secure "peace at all costs," but rather to stand for "truth at all costs." Thankfully, the Council agreed that Paul's gospel was the genuine gospel of grace and needed no additions nor subtractions! Let's take a look.

We will divide Galatians 2:1-10 as follows: 1) The Background and reason for Paul's trip to Jerusalem (2:1-2). And 2) The Outcome of Paul's trip to Jerusalem (2:3-10).

I) **(2:1-2) The Background and reason for Paul's visit to Jerusalem.**

- A) (2:1a) Paul offers a "big picture" background of his trip to Jerusalem.
 - 1) "Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem"
 - (a) That is, 14 years after his first visit to Jerusalem.
 - (i) In Paul's narrative he does not include the background offered by Luke in Acts.
- B) (Acts 14:26- 15:3) Acts records details: Conclusion of the 1st missionary journey (Acts 13:1- 14:27)
 - 1) (Acts 14:27) The great report to the church in Antioch!
 - (a) God opened the door for effective work among the Gentiles (1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3).
 - (i) Faith had come to the Gentiles! (Eph. 2:8-9)
 - (a) The Gospel was rec'd by faith! Gentiles were converted, through faith (Acts 15:3)!

- 2) (Acts 15:1-2a) The sharp dispute erupts in Antioch over the reports of *Gospel success*.
 - (a) Controversy: Men from **Judea** came to Antioch with a contradictory message saying, “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.”
 - 3) (Acts 15:2b-3) The Response of the Church in Antioch:
 - (a) They appointed Paul and Barnabas and Titus (Gal. 2:1) and others to go to Jerusalem.
 - (i) Barnabas was a Jewish believer sent by the Jerusalem church to Antioch to “encourage and teach” the church in Syria Antioch. He was an encourager and Paul’s associate! Years later while Paul was in Tarsus, Barnabas looked for Paul, bringing him back to Antioch to teach the church (Acts 11:25-26). He and Paul went on 1st journey together.
 - (ii) Titus was a Gentile. Came to know Christ through Paul’s ministry (Titus 1:4). He was used as Paul’s test case before the Jerusalem Council. Sent to minister in difficult churches (He was working among the Corinthians (2 Cor. 7:13-16)) (see Titus 1:5).
 - C) (Gal. 2:2) Paul’s compelling reason to go up to Jerusalem.
 - 1) He was compelled by a revelation to go.
 - (a) There is no reason to doubt that it was a revelation/ disclosure from the Lord to go.
 - (b) Similarly, Paul received the gospel by direct revelation from Jesus Christ.
 - 2) The primary issue: the simplicity and truth of the gospel message was at stake.
 - (a) Paul spoke privately with the apostles on the issue of circumcision.
 - (i) If the Council sided with Paul, then that will mean fruitful ministry among the Gentiles.
 - (a) If not, then, though Paul was convinced that his gospel was true, wherever he preached and wherever Gentiles believed there would be friction and controversy.
 1. Not to mention, the body of Christ would be divided! In **Ephesians 2:11-12** it is through the cross of Jesus Christ that the *barrier* was broken down!
 - (b) Titus was Paul’s “Exhibit A”.
 - (i) That Gentiles, like him, clearly, having rec’d the gospel through faith in Christ, had indeed rec’d the Holy Spirit, proving that salvation is by grace through faith alone!
 - (a) Peter had witnessed the work of the Holy Spirit among Gentiles (Acts 10:44-45)
 1. The Jews with Peter were amazed that Gentiles rec’d the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Peter baptized them into the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:46-48)!
 - D) Admonition: Never add to the gospel. It has always been God’s gospel to sinners to be received through faith. So many believers lack assurance when they add to the gospel. For the Judaizers salvation was attained through faith in Christ plus works of the law. For many people today, they have no assurance because they have added some work like baptism, church membership, good feelings, etc. to the gospel, which is all of God, all of grace and none of our own efforts! None! None! None!
- II) **(2:3-10) The Outcome of Paul’s visit to Jerusalem.**
- A) (2:3-5) The Dispute and the Conclusion concerning Titus and circumcision.
 - 1) “Judaizers had infiltrated their ranks”
 - (a) Were these the Judaizers who created the controversy in Antioch (Acts 15:1-2)?
 - (i) Or the Judaizers belonging to the “party of the Pharisees” who rose up during the Council meeting in Jerusalem demanding that “the Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses” (Acts 15:5)?
 - (a) A case could be made for either one, because this was the central issue everywhere Paul preached among the Gentiles. But probably Paul is referring to the Council meeting in Jerusalem.
 - 2) Even so, Titus was not compelled to be circumcised!
 - (a) In another situation involving Timothy, Paul circumcised Timothy because, as we mentioned in another sermon, Timothy was a Jew, and Paul didn’t want the ministry among the Jews to be a stumbling block to the Jews. (Acts 16:1-5; 1 Cor. 9:20)
 - 3) (2:5) Paul and Barnabas and the others *took their stand* and did not compromise the pure gospel!

- (a) To compromise would have thrown the whole Galatian church into confusion.
 - B) (2:6-10) Paul summarizes the outcome of the meeting.
 - 1) (2:6) Nothing was added to Paul's gospel! That's good.
 - 2) (2:7-8) The council recognized Paul's apostolic ministry to the Gentiles, and Peter to the Jews.
 - 3) (2:9) The Apostle's Peter, James and John accepted Paul and Barnabas when they recognized the grace give to Paul.
 - (a) They officially affirmed Paul's ministry to the Gentiles!
 - 4) (2:10) "All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do."
 - (a) In Acts 24:17 Paul testified to his faithfulness to carry out this request and his own desire!
 - (b) This act of caring for the poor is NOT a work unto salvation, but the fruit of faith! James wrote extensively on this matter saying in summary, "Faith without works is dead!"
 - (i) **Works of faith always accompanies saving faith!**
 - C) Important details from the meeting with the Jerusalem Council.
 - 1) Peter spoke first. His key points:
 - (a) (Acts 15:7-11) Peter's experience:
 - (i) He had been the first to preach to the Gentiles and they believed and rec'd the Spirit.
 - (ii) He saw that God made no distinction between Jew and Gentile b/c God purified them by faith, too!
 - (a) Truth: Ephesians 2:11-12 and Gal. 3:28: The cross of Christ destroyed barriers.
 - 1. This itself is a miracle. One act of God at the cross destroyed the separation.
 - a. God brought the Gentiles, who were once far from God to God (Eph.2:13)
 - 2) (Acts 15:12) Paul and Barnabas spoke to the council telling them what God had done!
 - 3) (Acts 15:13-21) James spoke as well. And he agreed with Peter that they should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.
 - (a) Peter called it a "yoke of slavery that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear. (Acts 15:10)"
 - (i) That thought affected Paul. He clearly referenced this in Gal. 5:1: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."
 - (a) The theme of **freedom** runs all through Galatians: **2:4; 4:3,9, 21-31; 5:1,13**
 - 4) The council agreed: One Gospel for both the Jews and Gentiles!
 - (a) They recognized different spheres of ministry.
 - (i) Even so, Paul still ministered to the Jews in every town he entered.
 - 5) Postscript: The Judaizers continued disrupting Paul's preaching wherever he went.
 - (a) Philippians 3:1-3
 - (i) He calls them "dogs, men who do evil."
 - (ii) He calls them "mutilators of the flesh."
 - (b) But Paul could boldly go anywhere in the world with the confidence that he had both the confirmation of divine authority to preach the gospel, and the support of the Council!
 - (i) Paul had a renewed purpose: To preach to the Gentiles. That was his calling by Christ!
- III) **Application: Standing firm in the faith...**
- A) In Philippians 3:3 Paul says, "we are the circumcision" not meaning the circumcision done by the hands of men, but that which is "of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code." Meaning, God, not man performs the circumcision that is acceptable.
 - 1) God performs the required spiritual work on the heart of a person! That is gospel!
 - B) Courage to Stand firm in the faith: Truth is under attack. We need to muster the same courage to "stand for truth" no matter how we might be treated. What hill are you willing to die on for the cause of Christ? What will you do to be prepared to stand for truth? Will you ask God for grace to stand?