

Word To The Wise – Gal 1:6-9

(Bridge for 6-7 graders at 9am service in Lower Classroom); Gal 1:6-9

We launched a new ministry year last weekend, with a new study and a new theme –
Jesus first, Jesus last, Jesus always

And having begun our study with the first 5 verses of Galatians, I want to continue with
v6-9; Working our way through this all-important book . . .

That covers one of the most fundamental truths in all the Bible – the gospel

[6] *I am astonished* [Paul says] *that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—*[7] *not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.* [8] *But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.* [9] *As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.*

➤ Having been called unto salvation *in the grace of Christ*, or according to his work on the cross and in our hearts – some of the Galatians were *turning* from it
Turning from God's call on their lives; Deserting him; And resorting to a *different* gospel it says (v6b); One that's false; A *false* means of relating to God

And it happened *so quickly* that Paul was floored; *Astonished* he says
It had only been a few *years* since his last visit

And the message for *us*, is don't go there; Don't be like them
Having heard what's *right*, don't forsake it; Having been *called* according to the truth . .

Stay in the truth (v6)

That's the first point of application from this text

If we're going to glorify God, if we're going to live his way, if we're going to do his work – especially in this increasingly secular, anti-Christian culture . . .
We *have* to stay in the truth; We *have* to stick to it; We *have* to persevere

So let me give you 7 words to the wise in order to do so:

1. Don't be fooled – No matter how smooth the talk, or nice the people in a church or group – don't be fooled; If what they're saying isn't biblical . . .
Or distorts the gospel even a *little*, it's trouble
B/c you can't walk in error, and get away with it forever; Don't be fooled

2. Don't be ridiculous – When it comes to the truth, don't go off the deep end into who knows what, just b/c somebody welcomed you w/ open arms and made you feel good
The world is *littered* with *cults* for that reason; It's not about how you *feel* when it comes to the gospel, it's about the truth; Stay in the truth

3. Don't give up – Forsaking what you know is *right*, b/c you just don't care anymore
You're sick of it; Sick of the struggle, against temptation; Sick of the battle, against sin;
Sick of the backlash, in our culture; And sick of the sacrifice, for things that are good
You're just sick of it; Ever feel that way? And want to quit? Throw in the towel?
If it hasn't happened already, it will; And when it does, don't go there; Don't give up
Fight the good fight, and keep fighting; Resolve now, to stay in the truth

4. Don't go back – Like the Israelites of old who wanted to go back to Egypt
Returning to their *old* ways of living and their *old* ways of thinking, b/c they were more comfortable; Or seemed *better* at the time
Don't do it; Don't go back; The life you left for a life in Christ, is not better

5. Don't drift – Don't fail to think about what's *right*, to keep from doing what's *wrong*
Something that happens so subtly, it's almost imperceptible; And seemingly harmless
Illustrated the world over, by survival stories

Like the men who drifted in the Pacific Ocean back in 1820, after being rammed by a raging whale; The true story that inspired Moby Dick (*In The Heart of the Sea*)
And the men who lasted the longest during those harrowing days and nights, were those who thought about what's *right*, to keep from thinking/doing what's wrong
The men who were *resolute* in their hearts, even though they were adrift in their boats

And the same is true in our walk with Christ; We have to think about what's right, to *keep* from doing what's wrong; To keep from drifting; Don't drift

6. Don't be surprised – Don't be surprised when you're tempted these ways, and don't be surprised when others succumb to them; When they *don't* stay in the truth
B/c the Bible says that *many* will fall away in the last days (Mt 24:10)
Just make sure you're not one of them; As a follower of Jesus Christ, having been *called* according to the truth, having been *called* in the grace of Christ . . .
Stay in it; Stay in the truth

2nd . . .

Beware of false gospels (v6-7)

[7] *Not that there is another one* [as Paul says in v7], *but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ;* As in change it; Tweak it; Alter it
And the same is true in our day; Maybe even more so
Like those who say there *absolutely* is another gospel, another way to God; Or those who preach *variations* on the biblical gospel – emphasizing *parts*, but not the whole

Whatever the case, they're distortions of the *truth*, and therefore false; A *partially* true gospel is still a false gospel; And if we're not *a-aware* of them . . .
And don't *be-aware* of them, we could very easily make shipwreck of our *lives*

So I'm going to highlight 13 of them – 13 false gospels; In hopes of raising your awareness, preventing your demise, and solidifying the truth

Here's the first:

- **The Jewish Gospel** – This is the one the *Galatians* were being subjected to; Which basically says that you can be saved and right with God, by keeping the OT Law
It was prevalent then, and it continues now
With some Jews believing that prayer, repentance, and obedience will do the trick; And others, that the improvement of society is the ticket
To which the Bible says – *A person is not justified by works of the Law, but through faith in Jesus Christ* (Gal 2:16); It's a false gospel
- **The Secular Gospel** – You can be saved by being a good person

Just make sure your good deeds outweigh your bad ones

To which the Bible says – *None is righteous, no, not one* (Rom 3:10); And . . .

We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. (Is 64:6a); You can't be saved by being good; Beware of that

- **The Islamic Gospel** – We're all basically good, but do so much bad, that our lives hang in the balance – good things on one side, and bad on the other
So make sure you do plenty of good; And if you're close, and fortunate, Allah will tip the scales in your favor, and you'll go to paradise
To which Jesus says – *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* (Jn 14:6)
Which makes the Islamic Gospel a false gospel; Beware of that
- **The Ecumenical Gospel** – Faith is all you need; It can be faith in some *one*, some *thing*, or nothing at all; Just nebulous faith; That's all you need
And somehow, it all leads to the same place; B/c God, by any other name, is still God
To which the Bible says – *I am God and there is no other* (Is 46:9); And there's *no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved* (Act 4:12)
Referring to Jesus; It's faith in *Jesus* that saves; And only Jesus; First, last, and always
- **The Fire Insurance Gospel** – Believe in Jesus, and you can live however you want;
B/c you're safe; Safe from the fire of hell
Holiness as a *response* to the gospel, a *response* to your salvation, is up to you
To which the Bible says – *As he who called you is holy, you also be holy* (1 Pet 1:15)
Beware of that false gospel; Whether explicit or implied

Next, and closely related, is . . .

- **The Convenient Gospel** – Jesus can be your Savior but not your Lord; You don't have to follow him; It's all freedom and no responsibility; Eat, drink, and be merry
Take the Savior part, and leave the lordship to somebody else
To which the Bible says – *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."* (Mt 16:24) It's anything *but* convenient
- **The Catholic Gospel** – Which I've so named, not b/c they have a lock on it, but b/c they're honest enough to be explicit about it
Saying that salvation comes to you as a result of both faith *and* works
Believe in Jesus and do the right things – like baptism, penance, confirmation, and communion – and you'll be saved
To which the Bible says – It is by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is *not your own doing* [this saving]; *it is the gift of God, not a result of works* (Eph2:8,9)
Beware of teaching that says otherwise
- **The Precarious Gospel** – You can *lose* your salvation; It's not once saved always saved; It's once saved, you can be un-saved; Un-adopted; No *longer* God's child
To which the Bible says – *Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God* (Rom 8:39)
Are we responsible to persevere in our belief? Absolutely; But that in no way diminishes God's *perseveration* of our souls; The precarious gospel is a false gospel
- **The Atheist Gospel** – There is no gospel b/c there is no God

What you see is what you get; So don't worry about it

To which the Bible says – *His invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world* (Rom 1:20)

There is a God, and there's also a gospel

- **The Prosperity Gospel** – If you just put your faith in Jesus, he'll make you rich; Money cometh; Or at the very least he'll relieve your financial *struggle*
And if he doesn't, you're either low on faith, or aren't saved
To which the Bible says – *A scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."* (Mt 8:19-20)
IOW following Jesus is not the path to riches; God *may* bless you materially, but it's not a given
- **The Poverty Gospel** – If you're really saved, you'll live in poverty; Giving all your money away; And while this isn't nearly as prevalent as the Prosperity Gospel . . . It's equally false and harmful
B/c the Bible says – *Give me neither poverty nor riches . . . lest I be full and deny you, or poor and profane you* (Prov 30:8-9); God's way is the middle way
Not that we shouldn't sacrifice at times, but that doing so doesn't save us, and poverty isn't the goal
- **The Social Gospel** – What's *most* important, is helping people; The gospel isn't so much about forgiveness of sins and life forever, but doing good/benefitting society
To which the Bible says – *You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free* (Jn 8:32); The *truth* will; Not being helped
Faith comes from hearing the word of Christ (Rom 10:17)
- **The Therapeutic Gospel** – If you just believe in Jesus, your life will get better – physically, emotionally, whatever; It's all about you, and he's good therapy
Leaving out all mention of sharing in the *sufferings* of Christ, in order to faithfully represent Christ (Phil 1:29)

It's a gospel arising out of a worldview called *moral therapeutic deism*

A mindset that says God is there to help you, improve you, and fix you – but not change you, transform you, or make you new

To which the Bible says – *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.* (2 Cor 5:17)

And we are to *put off the old self . . . and put on the new self, created after the likeness of God* (Eph 4:21-24); There's nothing therapeutic about it

It's an exchange; A radical transformation (**Summary**)

- Those are some of the "gospels" out there; And we'd do well to beware of them
B/c embracing them gives you false hope and false assurance; Where you're headed toward the rocks when you think it's a port

Beware of false gospels; And then 3rd . . .

Be careful what you teach (v8-9)

[8] *Even if we [Paul says] or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.* [9] *As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one*

you received, let him be accursed.

Accursed, as in damned; Devoted to destruction; Eternally condemned

The point being . . .

- **The consequences of false teaching are severe**

B/c it ignores the truth; It leads people astray; And it harms the church; Not good

And just to make sure we get the point, Paul repeats himself; Verbatim

Leaving no doubt that we need to be careful what we teach

Does that mean there's no room for innocent mistakes? Or that God fails to show mercy when we try our best but miss the point? Not at all

It simply means that the consequences of lazy ignorance or *intentional* subversion, are severe; The consequences of winging it

That's why we go to such great lengths to train our pastors; And try to maintain a consistent method of interpretation in our teaching

And coach our Discipleship Group leaders; And offer Discipleship *classes*; And help parents as they teach their kids

We want to give you every advantage possible when conveying the truth of God's Word

B/c the consequences of false teaching are severe

And . . .

- **No one is exempt**

Not even Paul; Not even *angels*; [8] *Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach* [a false gospel], *let him be accursed* it says

Not that an angel from heaven ever *would*, but that no one is exempt from God's *judgment*, if they do; If they disregard this book

The consequences are severe and no one is exempt; Not even you

So make sure you know the *true* gospel, and be careful to teach it (**Summary**)

Make sure you apply yourself and get *serious* about discipleship – both your own, *and* other's

So as to stay in the truth, avoid what's false, and teach what's right

Prayer – Lord, forgive us for our complacency at times; And help us to discern right from wrong, good from bad, better from best

We love you, and give now of our tithes and offerings; To spread the truth of your gospel in our *church*, and around the world