

Audience Of One – Gal 1:10-24

Gal 1:10; We're into a new ministry year with a new study and a new theme, working our way through the book of Galatians
And having found last week that Paul lays down the gauntlet regarding false gospels and *false* teachers, he turns to a defense of his *own* teaching

- But before he does, he inserts a thought that's not only vital for him, but for us; Every single one of us; V10
Having just spoken very strongly against those in *opposition* to the Word, he says . . .
For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.
2 rhetorical questions and one very important statement, to basically say that he lives for an audience of One

And by virtue of the fact that he serves as our example, we should do the same

Live for an audience of One (v10)

Was Paul seeking man's approval or God's? Man's endorsement, or God's? Man's support, or God's? Clearly God's
Otherwise he wouldn't have said such strong things *about* other men, in the preceding verses; Saying they're *accursed*

Nor was he trying to *please* men – make them happy; B/c he so explicitly criticizes their distorted *message*

No, Paul lived for an audience of *One*; Capital O; And we should too
Instead of living for others, we should live for God; Instead of trying to please man, we should strive to please the Lord; Bless the Lord; Love the Lord; Serve the Lord
That's what it means to live for an audience of One

- It's a super important, this principle; Not just b/c God is God and he deserves it, but . . .

- **Because you can't live for God and man at the same time**

Can't; V10b – *If I were still trying to please man* [Paul says], *I would not be a servant of Christ*. The Greek word is *bondservant*; Describing someone . . .

Who was constrained to live and work on behalf of their *master*, and their master alone;
Their lord

Illustrating the point, that you can't serve God and man at the same time; It's either/or

If you live for one, you can't and won't live for the other

If you live for the other, you can't and won't live for One

Following Jesus, living for God, is a singular endeavor; You're either *following* him, or you're not; Following *him*, or someone else

- **Nor can you live for God and yourself at the same time**

No one can serve two masters [Jesus said], *for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.* (Mt 6:24);

Whether one of those is money, power, sex, or yourself; You can't live for both at the same time

Not only will God not *share* his glory, but you can't follow your heart in opposite directions; It doesn't work

If I were still trying to please man [Paul says; including himself], *I would not be a servant of Christ*. They're mutually exclusive; You can't have it both ways

And if you think you can, or that's how you're living, you're fooling yourself

You can't live for God and man, you can't live for God and yourself, at the same time

- Like when your *convictions* are counter to the culture; Think Daniel in Babylon
He had a choice to make; Serve and honor the Lord, or serve and honor the King; Do what *God* wants, or do what *he* wants; Live for One, or live for him
It was either/or; And still is

Or how about when your friends are pushing the envelope of *holiness*? And want you to join them; Are you going to live for an audience of One, or an audience of many?

What about speaking the truth, when those listening don't want to hear it?

Are you going to live for One, or live in fear?

And how about the times when you're tempted to sin, in private? When nobody's looking
Are you going to live for an audience of One, or act like he doesn't see?

The choice is yours; But make no mistake – you can't have it both ways; It's either live in the freedom of serving God, or the bondage of serving man
Choose God; And live for an audience of One; That's v10 (**Summary**)

- In v11 then, he picks up his flow of thought from v6; Where he said . . .
I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel
[11] *For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel*. That seems to be the flow of thought

He was astonished, not only b/c they were turning to a *different* gospel, but b/c the one they were rejecting is out of this world; It comes from God
And therefore *worthy* of our trust; That's the point; That we would . . .

Trust the gospel (v11-24)

Trust it; Not only b/c Paul's *position* was God-ordained, like we saw in v1, but b/c his *message* was God-ordained

V11-12 – *The gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel* [Paul says]. [12] *For I did not receive it from any man* [v12], *nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ*.

The gospel Paul received, and preached, and preserved – came directly from Jesus himself
It didn't *originate* in the heart of man, and it wasn't even passed on by another man – taught to Paul by somebody who received it from somebody else

- **It came from God (v12)**

It *originated* with him, and it *came* from him

And not just to Paul, but to the *other* apostles as well; They too received it from Jesus
The *delivery* looked a bit different, as they walked with him and *talked* with him for 3 years during his ministry; But the message and origin was the same
Which means we can trust it; And should

➤ And as clear as that is, that's not where Paul leaves it; He goes on to explain *how* he received it
Which is important, b/c anybody who knew anything, knew that Paul wasn't one of Christ's followers; In fact, he was just the opposite; He was a hater
So it begs for an explanation if he's going to claim firsthand *delivery* of the gospel, via direct revelation; And that's exactly what he gives in v13-16

[13] *For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.*
Or as Luke says it in Acts 8 – [He] was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. (3)
Not great; He was a hater

[14] *And I was advancing in Judaism [he says in v14] beyond many of my own age among my people [the Jews], so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.*
He was not only a hater, but a zealot (**Phil 3:5-6**); Describing himself 15 yrs later as . . .
Circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; [6] as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.
He was a hater, he was a zealot, and he was arrogant; High on himself and low on the church*****

[15] *But [v15] when he who had set me apart before I was born [referring to God and his election of Paul unto salvation], and who called me by his grace [his crazy love and favor], [16] [when he] was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone*

Paul knew, that the churches of Galatia knew, of his former life
So he sets out to explain how in the world he got from *there* to here – from persecutor to advocate; And does so, to bolster our *trust* in his message
B/c it not only came from God, but . . .

- **It comes with grace (v15)**

Trust the gospel, b/c unlike any other religious message in the world, it's *full* of grace, and *comes* with grace; Grace that's greater than all our sin
Even the sin of a sinner like Paul – a murderer, and persecutor; Someone who didn't *deserve* to be saved; Didn't *deserve* to be called unto salvation (15)

And yet that's *exactly* what God did; Extending grace upon grace, he revealed his Son and saved his soul; Setting him apart to preach the *same* gospel of grace, to us

The point being, if it can happen with Paul, if the grace of the gospel is sufficient for *his* sin, it's sufficient for ours; That much is *apparent* from v15-16

➤ What's not, are the *details* of Paul's conversion; And I'd like for you to see them for yourself, so as to bolster your trust all the more . . .
In the grace and sufficiency of the gospel
So keep your finger in Gal 1, and turn with me to Acts 9

The year was ~34AD, and the gospel was spreading

[9:1] *But Saul [Paul's original name], still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest [located in Jerusalem] [2] and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. (Map, ESV Study, 2099)*

Just so you have a mental picture, Damascus was a city to the north and east of the Sea of Galilee, in southern Syria; Right where it sits today
About 135 miles from Jerusalem, and a 6 day journey by foot

[3] *Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. [4] And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" [5] And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" [He may not have known who it was, but he sure knew the power, and his need to submit]*
"Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. [6] But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." [7] The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. [8] Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. [Those are the details of v15-16 in Gal 1; The details of his conversion]

➤ Meanwhile, God spoke to a man named Ananias who was in Damascus, and told him to go lay hands on Paul, and essentially *commission* him to the work of ministry*****

[17] *So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." [18] And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; [19] and taking food, he was strengthened.*
For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. [20] And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." [21] And all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?" [22] But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.
(Acts 9:17-22)

Those are the *details* of God's *grace*; His grace to call him and reveal his Son to him, against all odds, that he *might preach him among the Gentiles* (16)
Details that would have been easily verified or refuted by those who witnessed it, when Paul *wrote* Galatians 15 years later
Serving to bolster our trust that much more, in the *gospel* of grace that he received
If it's sufficient for him, it's sufficient for us

And then 3rd . . .

- **It changes lives (v23)**

Trust the gospel b/c it came from God, it comes with grace, and it changes lives
The man who *hated* Jesus was now *preaching* Jesus; B/c that's what the gospel does; It changes lives; Bolstering our trust all the more

➤ But that's not the end of the story; Turn back to Gal 1

Paul says in v16b, after being confronted by the risen Christ . . .

I did not immediately consult with anyone; [17] nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

Arabia is the land directly to the east of Damascus, and though we don't know how long

Paul spent there, we can assume it was for the purpose of spreading the gospel . . .

And maybe even preparing himself to do so on a *greater* scale

Whatever the case, what he *didn't* do, was consult with others – further driving home the point that the gospel he received was from God and God alone

Nor did he go to Jerusalem as he says in v17, and posture for recognition or jockey for *position* among the apostles; Saying he was now one of *them*; He didn't do that
He returned to Damascus and presumably preached the gospel; A changed man

➤ [18] *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [the Apostle Peter] and remained with him fifteen days. [19] But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. [20] (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!)*

Once again, he was defending the divine *origin* and *transmission*, of the gospel he preached

It wasn't *his* invention, it wasn't someone *else's*, and he didn't *receive* it from men

It was from God; Period

[21] *Then [after those 15 days in Jerusalem] I went into the regions (Map) of Syria and Cilicia.* Syria over here, and Cilicia just around the corner

[22] *And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.*

[Indicating that his visit was short and localized] [23] *They only were hearing it said,*

“He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”

[24] *And they glorified God because of me.*

They glorified God b/c of the amazing transformation they saw in Paul's life*****

Just like we glorify God for those he saves in *our* day; And changes in *our* day; Including us, every *single* day (**Summary**)

Bolstering our trust all the more in the gospel of grace, and encouraging us to *live* all the more, for the One for gave it

Live for an audience of One, and trust the gospel

Prayer – Lord, would you increase our wonder, and awe, and love for the gospel? The good news of your Son, Jesus; And remind us often of whose we are, and for whom we live; We give now of our tithes and offerings, and ask that you would use them for your glory