



2016: Week 14

Sunday, April 3rd 2016

"The Precious Gospel"

Galatians 1:3-4

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave Himself for our sins, so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father..." (NASB).

We began a new sermon series this past Sunday in the book of *Galatians*. *Galatians* is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to the different churches within a region known as Galatia (modern Turkey). Throughout this letter, Paul lays forth the foundational elements of the Gospel– that salvation is based solely upon God's grace through faith in what Jesus accomplished at the cross. Salvation has nothing to do with doing "good works" before God or fulfilling requirements within the Mosaic Law. Salvation is a gift of God made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

1. **READ Galatians 1:1-10**

From the very get-go of this letter, Paul passionately defends the purity of the Gospel. The message of the Gospel is precious, and it must not be altered. If one adds anything to it or takes anything away from it, it is no longer the Gospel. John entitled his sermon on Sunday, "Contending for the Gospel." Paul was clear in confronting the Galatian churches for "abandoning" the gospel (v. 6). Paul was also bold in expounding upon the consequences for altering the gospel: being "accursed" (used twice in v. 8, 9). Paul doesn't pull any punches in contending for the Gospel.

- Do you feel as if you are prepared to "contend for the Gospel" if need be?
If yes, why? If no, why not?

- If someone were to ask you, "What are the basics of the Gospel and Christianity," what would you say?

- Why is it so important that the message of the Gospel remain pure, untainted, and unaltered?

- How is it possible that a person might unintentionally distort the message Gospel while trying to follow God and keep His commandments?

2. In his book, *The Reason for God*, Timothy Keller expounds on the tragic approach of a person following Jesus as teacher and model without trusting Him as Savior. Keller's comments to that person are as follows:

You are trusting in your own goodness rather than trusting in Jesus for your standing with God. You are trying to save yourself by following Jesus. That ironically is a rejection of the Gospel of Jesus. It is a Christianized form of religion. It is possible to avoid Jesus as Savior as much by keeping all the Biblical rules as by breaking them. Both 'religion' in which you build your own identity on your moral achievements, and 'irreligion' in which you build your identity on some other secular pursuit or relationship are ultimately spiritually identical courses to take– Both are sin.

FAMILY PRAYER: Thank God for the precious Gospel of Jesus. Ask God to help you remind each other of His grace and your identity as His own child (if you have trusted in Him for your salvation).