

July 1, 2018

Galatians: The True Gospel of Christ

Paul wrote the letter to the Christians in Galatia very early in his ministry. It was likely the first letter he wrote that became canonized in scripture. Paul was provoked to write the letter for several reasons:

- 1) He started the Galatian church on his first missionary journey
 - Paul spent months teaching; visited on each missionary trip
- 2) He wanted to protect the true Gospel & church from heresy
 - Gospel:** gift of right-standing with God b/c of who/what JC
- 3) Jewish “converts” were disrupting the church with legalism
 - Legalism:** attempts to earn God’s favor by self-effort/works (*keeping Mosaic law, or insisting on circumcision, etc*)

So, the purpose of his writing is to combat the heresy of mixing faith and law (*known as legalism*), to call Christians to faith and freedom, and to defend his own apostleship and the true gospel.

The Galatian letter is different from Paul’s other writings because it starts with a chronological account of his personal calling & apostleship, & details his early experiences with the churches. Like his other writings, Galatians also includes explanations of the basis & purpose of salvation, theological & doctrinal teaching, a definition of the true Gospel, & godly confrontation & correction. But Paul spends most of his time *disconnecting law from faith* because that was the threat posed by the Judaizers (*Jewish Christians Paul calls “false-brethren”*)

So, let’s read a few key passages of Paul’s letter to get a feel for his purpose: **READ: 1:6,7, 2:4, 2:16, 3:21, 2:21**

The real problem when we turn back to the 10 Com. or any other of the first models represented in the OT and misused to affirm our salvation or righteousness with God (*ie: circumcision, baptism, worship offerings, etc*) –

it makes Christ’s death meaningless!

I hear Christians all the time who want to use the 10 C’s as a guideline for living the Christian life: but when they do, they deny Jesus as it’s fulfiller, the NT thru His cross, and return to the chains of guilt & condemnation for sin! ***In the NT, we have much more than mere guidelines...we have the very Life-Presence of God Himself*** – the Holy Spirit who dwells in us to live Christ’s life thru us! **READ: Galatians 3:2-5 (CEV)**

2) I want to know only one thing. How were you given God's Spirit? Was it by obeying the Law of Moses or by hearing about Christ and having faith in him? 3) How can you be so stupid? Do you think that by yourself you can complete what God's Spirit started in you? ...5) God gives you his Spirit and works miracles in you. But does he do this because you obey the Law of Moses or because you have heard about Christ and have faith in him?

This reminds us of what the true gospel is: ***it is an exchanged life!*** More than forgiveness; more than permanent right-standing; it is a new, divine life – Christ’s life! Thru faith in Christ, we surrender the life we’re born with (*fleshly life disconnected from God by our dead spirit-nature and sold into slavery to sin, death & hell*) and accept God’s gift of Eternal Life, thru repentance and rebirth to a new life – the very life of Jesus Christ!

But only Jesus can live His life successfully on earth... and the gospel is the good news that He does it in/thru us by the power & wisdom of His indwelling Holy Spirit. The true gospel is the reality that we join the Trinity

in divine life as children His vessels who know and do His will His way on earth!

-Galatians 2:20

INVITATION TO RESPOND PERSONALLY:

- 1) Are you trying to earn God's favor, or receiving it in Christ?
- 2) Is there more to *your* salvation than Christ's "Cross-work"?
- 3) Do you realize God enjoys your company, not your efforts?

WORSHIP WITH CHILDREN:

Hands over ears!

Parents have a right to tell their children how to live. God put parents in charge because children belong to them; parents have authority because they are more experienced, wiser, & know a lot more than children. Parents rule the roost because they feed, bath, teach & love their children. That's the reason children should obey – because God put parents in charge!

How many of your parents make you brush your teeth before bedtime or in the mornings? Do you do it? Why?

What if someone else told you that you did not need to brush your teeth, or that it wasn't a good thing to do before bed or in the morning? Would you stop brushing your teeth? Why?

That's what was happening to the Christians in Galatia: Paul had taught them about trusting in Jesus for salvation – he was their spiritual "parent!" But some other pretend Christians came along and told them that Paul was wrong & that believing in Jesus didn't save anyone until they kept the 10 C's first! The Galatian Christians were confused!

Who do you think they should listen to – Paul or the other teachers? Why? Because Paul is their spiritual parent & God always wants us to listen to our parents! Sometimes, when

other people tell us things that don't agree with what our parents say, we have to cover our ears and stop listening!

A Synopsis of the Galatian's Letter

1:6,7 I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God who called you to Himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News, but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ.

2:4 Even that question came up only because of some so-called Christians there – false ones, really – who were secretly brought in. they sneaked in to spy on us and take away the freedom we have in Christ Jesus.

2:16 Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.

3:21 Is there a conflict, then, between God's law and God's promises? Absolutely not! If the law could give us new life, we could be made right with God by obeying it.

2:21 *I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.*