

PASSAGE – Galatians 1:6-10 NIV

⁶I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel -- ⁷which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! ⁹ As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you the gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse! ¹⁰ Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

OUTLINE:

Paul, after explaining his authority in the first verses, jumps into the deep stuff quickly. He calls out the churches of Galatia because they have changed their beliefs about the gospel. This new gospel that they are choosing to believe in isn't the one true gospel as taught by the apostles. They have started listening to people called the Judaizers who believe in adding the requirements of the law to the life of grace under Christ. Paul understood the gravity of the gospel and points out that if anyone ever changes the essential teachings of the gospel - that we are saved by faith alone through grace alone - then they would be condemned for leading people astray.

START (the group):

Icebreaker Question: What was your nickname as a kid?

Follow up with your group regarding their applications from last week. Ask them how they did in applying last week's text.

STUDY (the passage):

Galatians 1:6-10

Have everyone look back over the text. (Encourage everyone to be looking for something that sticks out to them, something they have a question about, and something God may be telling them to do.)

Ask questions about the text:

1. What sticks out to you from the passage? (Everyone answer)
2. What questions do you have from the text?

3. What is the gospel?
3. Why is it so essential that the gospel remain true to its original teachings?
4. How does the gospel interact with people? (Reference vs 10)
5. How is seeking the approval of God different from seeking the approval of men?

APPLY:

5. In what ways or situations do you seek the approval of man? How can you change the way you approach that situation so that you are seeking to please God?
6. What is one thing God is asking you to do in response to this passage? (One measurable goal)

PRAY AS A GROUP**Extra Materials:**

- v. 6 — The gospel concerns “the grace of Christ.” Two aspects of the gospel (used in two senses): 1. Facts — death, burial, resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). 2. Interpretation of facts — received by faith plus nothing (Galatians 2:16). The facts were not challenged by the Judaizers, but they sought to add law to grace (faith + law).
- v. 7 — There is only one gospel — one in fact and interpretation. “Pervert” (Greek: *metastrepho*) is a strong word, as in “sun...turned into darkness” (Acts 2:20); “laughter...turned to mourning” (James 4:9). Attempting to change the gospel has the effect of making it the very opposite of what it really is.
- v. 8 — If an angel dared to declare any other message than the gospel, he would be dismissed with a strong invective.
- v. 9 — If any message is received other than the gospel, it is spurious and counterfeit. “Accursed” (Greek: *anathema*) is “be damned.” The gospel shuts out all works. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. (Romans 4:5) God saves only one class of humanity — the ungodly. The reason is that this is the only class — even the righteousness of man is as filthy rags in God’s sight. Law condemns us and it must make us speechless before grace can save us. Now we know that whatever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. (Romans 3:19) The real difficulty is not that people should be “good enough” to be saved, but that they are not “bad enough” to be saved. Humanity refuses to recognize its lost condition before God. This is the human predicament. The Judaizers did not deny the facts of the gospel; they perverted it and therefore were anathema. The “gospel” of law plus grace is a mixture that has no power, no growth, no victory. It robs grace of its blessing, beauty and glory; It robs the Law of its majesty and authority.

v. 10 — “Persuade” (KJV) is “to make a friend of.” The New Scofield Bible translates it “seek the favor of.” In 1 Thessalonians 2:4 and 4:1 it is “please God” in contrast to self or others. The preaching of the gospel is not pleasing to lost man. No man can please both God and man.

Galatians is God’s polemic against legalism of every and any description. The Law is not discredited, despised, or disregarded. Its majesty, perfection, demands, fullness, and purpose are maintained. Yet these very qualities make it utterly impossible for man to come this route to God. Another way is opened — which entirely bypasses law — for man to be justified before God. The new route is by faith. Justification by faith is the theme, with the emphasis upon faith. Three epistles in the New Testament quote Habakkuk 2:4, “The just shall live by his faith.”

Romans 1:17 emphasizes the just;

Hebrews 10:38 emphasizes shall live;

Galatians 3:11 emphasizes by faith.

In Romans, the emphasis is upon the fact that man apart from the Law is justified before God. In Galatians, Paul is defending the gospel from those who would add law to justification by faith. Faith plus law was the thrust of Judaism; Faith plus nothing was the answer of Paul. The Judaizers questioned Paul’s authority as an apostle and his teaching that simple faith was adequate for salvation. Paul defends his apostleship and demonstrates the sufficiency of the gospel of grace to save.

Overview of Galatians

1. It is a stern, severe, and solemn message (Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1-5). It does not correct conduct, as the Corinthian letters do, but it is corrective — the Galatian believers were in grave peril. Because the foundations were being attacked, everything was threatened. The epistle contains no word of commendation, praise, or thanksgiving. There is no request for prayer, and there is no mention of their standing in Christ. No one with him is mentioned by name (Galatians 1:2). Compare this with the other epistles of Paul.

2. The heart of Paul the apostle is laid bare, there is deep emotion and strong feeling. This is his fighting epistle — he has on his war paint. He has no toleration for legalism. Someone has said that Romans comes from the head of Paul while Galatians comes from his heart. “Galatians takes up controversially what Romans puts systematically.”

3. It is the declaration of emancipation from legalism of any type. This was Martin Luther’s favorite epistle, and it was on the masthead of the Reformation. It has been called the Magna Charta of the early church, the manifesto of Christian liberty, the impregnable citadel, and a veritable Gibraltar against any attack on the heart of the gospel. “Immortal victory is set upon its brow.”

4. It is the strongest declaration and defense of the doctrine of justification by faith in or out of Scripture. It is God's polemic on behalf of the most vital truth of the Christian faith against any attack. Not only is a sinner saved by grace through faith, but the saved sinner lives by grace. Grace is a way to life and a way of life.