

## “Free,” A Study in Galatians: INTRO 1-12

Beginning this morning, we’re launching into a study of the epistle to the Galatians by the great apostle Paul. This is a powerful, clear proclamation of **the gospel of Jesus** and its implications. So, *let’s dig right in by reading...*

**Galatians 1:1-6a NKJV**, *“Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,*

I was not chosen to be an Apostle by men or through men. Jesus Christ and God the Father called me to this apostleship.

Paul was an **apostle** (*sent out one by or through Jesus directly as ambassadors*). **EXPLAIN:** 12/13? There were the 12 (**tribes** - Judas office to Matthias - Psalm), all recognized 12 in Jerusalem. **Paul 13 to the gentiles.**

Paul was an apostle selected by Jesus and God who raised Him and sent with **a message – the Gospel...** Good news...teachings of Jesus...Not some man made doctrinal bent on what Jesus said.

**Galatians 1:11-12 NKJV**, *“But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is **not according to man**. For I neither **received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.**”*

The message (good news or gospel) I preach, like my apostleship wasn’t given to me by men either. It was given and revealed to me through Jesus.

And then the following 6 chapters written in approximately 48AD, just prior to the Jerusalem Council described in Acts 15, were written to shed light on both what the **Gospel IS** and what **it IS NOT**.

In light of his calling and the source of his message, he marveled at how quickly people had turned from following the Gospel (**good news or message**) of Jesus to the gospel (*good news*) of someone else.

**Galatians 1:6-7 NKJV**, *“I marvel that you are **turning away so soon** from Him who called you in the **grace of Christ**, to a **different gospel**, which is **not another**; but there are some who **trouble you and want to pervert the gospel** of Christ.”*

*What is it about people? Why do we so easily follow what others say about Jesus or the Bible, instead of just following what Jesus and the Bible says? Why do we feel the need to follow men? Why do we like to label ourselves after men and their interpretations of the Gospel.*

Paul speaks about the importance in his introduction to Galatians of the gospel he preached as not being from men or according to men. We must not to become followers of men or their movements; who have by definition put their **unique twist on the true gospel**.

*Did you get that?* He says, it **isn't even** that what some people are turning to is a **different gospel**, it is that some people like to create trouble and put their **twist the true gospel a bit** so that you turn away from Christ's message to their version of His message. CAREFUL!

*This little book is attributed with being the **catalyst behind the reformation**. Re-formation, interesting word. The re-formation of what?*

**Martin Luther**, a German Roman Catholic priest, theologian, author, hymnwriter, professor, and Augustinian friar, was scrutinizing *the doctrine of the Catholic church against the doctrine or teachings of scripture*. So, in 1517, in an attempt to address areas in question, he took a list of 95 issues and nailed it to the castle church doors. **The main topics of that list were about indulgences paid for absolution, penance, the role of priests as mediators between God and men, works based salvation, and supreme authority of the Bible over the Pope's authority.**

After studying this little book (*His spiritual Katherine*), **Luther** began teaching that **salvation and eternal life**, were not **earned by good deeds**; rather, they are received only as **the free gift of God's grace through** the believer's **faith in Jesus Christ, the redeemer from sin**. That revelation, changed him.

**Wonderful!** Now, people who shared these views and Luther's wider teachings, called themselves **Lutherans**, even though **Luther insisted** that the **only acceptable** names for those who professed Christ were **Christian or Evangelical** (evangelisch/evangelion/“goodnews”).

How ironic that is, given that Paul starts by clearly stating the importance of clarifying whose message, he was sent to preach...**the gospel of Jesus!**

*When I get up here, I do not come up here with Discover Church doctrine, or Catholic doctrine, or Baptist doctrine, or Pentecostal doctrine, or Reform doctrine or Arminian doctrine or Wesleyan doctrine.*

NO, my job is to preach **the Gospel of Jesus Christ** (Good News of Jesus – **Jesus doctrine**). The teachings Jesus revealed to His Apostles & Prophets.

Admittedly, I've read a lot of really good stuff penned by many of these theologians, **but** I am very careful about whose doctrine or what gospel I preach in this pulpit. I may reference theologians at times, but the bulk of my quotes come from Jesus and His apostles and prophets.

Look, it is fine and good to listen to what others say or what they have written. But studying another person's study about God is always a **third-hand** experience. **Go to the source!** Read what God told Paul to write or Peter to write (**it's second-hand** experience), but let the **Holy Spirit open your mind and heart** to the truth He has for you in God's word (and that's **first-hand**).

Commentators can be very helpful, but they can also misdirect people from the unmodified truth. Study for yourself what God has revealed in His word.

**In Paul's day**, this little book shook the foundations of the early churches infiltrated by **Pharisaic Judaism** – work and law keeping **based faith**.

**In the 1500's**, the teachings of this little book shook the foundations of unbiblical views held by the church: works-based salvation, penance driven punishments, indulgences; all of which fueled the Spanish, French and German inquisitions. Yes, a German one too.

See, as wonderful as some of these great theologians were; as real and amazing as their faith conversions were, and the depth of understanding God gave them when it comes to the faith mentioned in Galatians and Romans and Hebrews, – they were men – **flawed vessels like us**.

**One of them out of hate for the Jews**, proposed *burning their schools and synagogues; transferring them to community settlements; confiscating all their literature; prohibiting rabbis to teach on pain of death; appropriating their wealth to support Christian converts; and assigned Jews to manual labor as a form of penance* – though he fought vehemently against penance before.

**Another reformer**, empowered and participated in an **inquisition** that excommunicated and executed heretics by burning them at the stake.

Look, don't blindly follow us thinkers, us preachers. We're flawed too! Follow Jesus; follow His teachings, dig into the word and discover the truth yourself!

**Acts 17:11 NIV**, *“Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”*

Don't focus on church doctrine, focus on Bible doctrine. Make sure the church you attend is in-line with Bible doctrine.

Don't let any other doctrine or teaching or **good news turn you away from God** who called you to Himself through Jesus. There are plenty of people out there trying to teach **their form or twist on the gospel**.

**Galatians 1:11-12 NKJV**, *“But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is **not according to man**. For I neither **received it** from man, nor was I **taught it**, but it **came through the revelation of Jesus Christ**.”*

Now, be clear here, Paul wasn't an apostle appointed by men, and what Paul was preaching wasn't a man's gospel or twist on it – it wasn't even Paul's gospel. He received this gospel, it was revealed to him through Jesus.

*What exactly **is the gospel of Christ**, the **good news message of Christ**?*

First, listen to how Paul answers that question in his letter to the Corinthians.

**1 Corinthians 15:1-4**, *“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, **by which also you are saved**, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—**unless you believed in vain**. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that **Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, and that **He was buried**, and that **He rose again** the third day according to the Scriptures.”*

Back to **Galatians 1:1-6a NKJV**, *“Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who **raised Him from the dead**), and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: **Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ**,*

who **gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver** us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in **the grace** (gift or undeserved unearned favor) **of Christ**, to a different gospel.”

**So, we know what the gospel is!**

It is the grace God calls people to. *What is that grace?* **It is the grace of Christ**, the undeserved gift of Jesus, offered to you.

It is a gift that some turned away from too soon. That means it was a gift they initially turned toward. **This turning is also called repentance!**

A turning toward Jesus who provides the remedy for our sin. “He freely gave Himself (free grace) **FOR OUR SINS, HE DIED FOR OUR SINS** (1 Cor 15), He **gave** Himself for our sins (Galatians).

**John 3:16 NIV**, *“For God so loved the world that **he gave** his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”*

God **gave us** Jesus. Jesus **gave** Himself. He is the gift of grace God gave!”

**Galatians 1:6 NKJV**, *“I marvel that you are **turning away so soon** from Him who called you in **the grace of Christ**.”*

This gift was given out of love, out of God’s favor and kindness for the world, even before we deserved it, He decided to give this gift. Jesus, His death as the free solution for our sins.

**Romans 5:8 NKJV**, *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

The gift is provided and offered freely to whoever believes in Him.

The key to enjoying this gift is receiving it in faith. Believing. This is the truth that resulted in Martin Luther’s salvation and the reformation! **3 Places...**

**Galatians 3:11 NKJV**, *“The just shall live by faith.”*

**Hebrews 10:38 NKJV**, *“Now the just shall live by faith.”*

**Romans 1:16-17 NKJV**, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel [c]of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first*

*and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”*

It is these three texts, the response necessary for receiving this free gift of Grace, this Gospel of Grace, this Grace of Christ – is contrite faith.

**Acts 3:19 ESV**, *“Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out.”* (Through Jesus who Gave Himself.)

**Acts 16:31 ESV**, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”*

**1 Corinthians 1:21 ESV**, *“For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.”*

**Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV**, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

Salvation is not by works, it's not by merit, it's **by grace through faith alone**; the **just lives by faith**, and the **righteousness of God/Jesus is credited to the believing sinner**. We don't earn it or deserve it. Our boast is in Jesus and His work! And let me be clear here. Faith isn't a work – it is a **response and our response to God determines our fate!**

Look, the issue of **the gospel wasn't** settled 500 years ago, it was settled over **2,000 years ago** in the book of **Galatians, Romans, and all Scripture**.

*How can a person be right with God? Find salvation? By the righteousness of God given to them by faith in Christ. **How non-negotiable is this gospel?***

If you have accepted a different gospel or a distorted gospel (verse 6-7), listen to what Paul concludes in...

**Galatians 1:8-10 ESV**, *“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. 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. 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.”*

This was on the apostle Paul's mind in the **2 Corinthians 11:2-4 ESV**, *"For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. **For if someone comes** and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough."*

What an accusation. Somebody comes with a different Jesus, a different Holy Spirit, and a different gospel, and you put up with it so easily.

You welcome them. This is frightening. Whatever form of twisted gospel – the gospel of works, gospel of natural theology, the gospel of universal mercy, the limited and selective gospel, whatever you want to call it – another gospel must never be easily accepted or given pulpit time.

Those twists in the gospel are to be declared accursed - damned.

With all that said, let me close by having us look at the gospel *that's being celebrated in heaven! It isn't a gospel of works or human merit?*

**Revelation 5:6-14 NKJV**, *"Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, ... He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. **Now when He** had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation..."*

We were redeemed, bought back, rescued, through the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf. PERIOD. That is the substitutionary blood atonement of Christ.

**By that, He has** *"...made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." Then I [John] looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,*

saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" **And every creature** which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever."

All of heaven's worship goes toward the Lamb who shed His blood. **That is the only gospel celebrated in heaven.** That is the **gospel that Paul proclaims** and defends. The grace of God, the grace of Christ offered to all. And if you want Heaven, if you want to know forgiveness, peace, and love that surpasses human understanding – accept this gift in faith.

**John 3:16 NKJV,** "For God so loved the world that [He demonstrated it] He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes** in Him should not perish but have **everlasting life.**"

**Romans 1:16-17 NKJV,** "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation **for everyone who believes,** for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live **by faith.**"

**PRAYER:** Father, we are so grateful that You by your grace have demonstrated your love for us in such a powerful way - by giving to us the gift of your son Jesus, who voluntarily gave up His life to pay the penalty of our sins. We're so very thankful, Lord, thankful that You granted us this glorious unmerited and undeserved salvation by grace through faith in you alone Jesus. Thank You for going to the cross willingly out of love for us. Thank You for your sacrifice, and for the gift of eternal life.

O Lord, I pray that there would be no one who walks out of this room today who would turn their backs on grace and forgiveness and joy and peace and everlasting love and salvation that comes to those who turn from their sin to you. I pray that they would embrace Your grace by putting their trust in Your Son, the only Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.