

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

So, by the grace of God we finished the book of Joshua – and now we move on to the Epistle of The epistle to the Galatians is one of the most powerful epistles that Paul ever wrote.

Martin Luther, the father of reformation, credits this epistle to his spiritual awakening.

He called Galatians his “Catherine von Bora” after his wife, because he said he was married to it.

It has been called the Christian Declaration of Independence / The Magna Carta of Christian Liberties.

And the reason that this epistle is so powerful is because it deals with the dangers of legalism and undermines the true meaning of salvation which is by grace through faith.

Let's pray...

Read Galatians 1:1-10

Introduction

After the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, He spends forty days with His disciples continuing to pour into them with the message/the gospel that they were supposed to bring to the world.

Turn with me to the book of Acts 1,

[Act 1:4-8 NKJV] 4 And being assembled together with [them], He commanded them not to depart from

Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," [He said], "you have heard from Me; 5 "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Upon receiving the Holy Spirit, in chapter two, we see the apostles begin the work of delivering the message to the world.

I asked you to underline the last portion of verse 8, because we see the order that the apostles were to do it in.

First in Jerusalem, then in Judea and then throughout the world.

So, for the first 10 chapters in the book of Acts, we see the gospel proclaimed and the church begins to grow.

However, up to chapter 10 – the gospel had been only proclaimed to the Jews.

It wasn't until the Lord gave Peter a vision in chapter 10 – with Cornelius and his family - that the gospel was proclaimed to the gentiles.

When Paul is called to ministry in chapter 13, he goes out and brings the message to both Jews and gentiles as he preached from city to city.

The problem that was occurring was that Jews did not associate with gentiles.

As they were deemed unclean –

So, there was a group in the early church called the Judaizers, that started to say “It is good that you believe that Jesus Christ died for your sins, but we feel that you still have to follow the laws of the Jews”

You still can't have bacon in the morning.

You still have to be circumcised.

And this became a big problem in the early church.

So, Paul writes this letter to a group of churches in the Galatia region to admonish them as to why have they allowed these legalist within the church to promote and deviate from the true message of grace.

Now, let's look at our text more closely.

[Gal 1:1-10 NKJV] 1 Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),

Paul opens up this letter by letting the reader not only know who is writing the letter but also, he is providing the reader with his credentials.

You see, the Judaizers, as they were going from church to church promoting their legalism – one of the things that they started to do was argue that Paul was a lesser apostle because he didn't walk with Jesus. They argued that his message was therefore inferior and inadequate. They argued that his ministry didn't originate in Jerusalem – therefore, it was inferior.

Paul combats this by reminding the churches - who commissioned him in the first place.

Turn with me to Acts 13,

[Act 13:1-4 NKJV] 1 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent [them] away. 4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

Who commissioned Paul? – The Holy Spirit!

Who sent him out? – The Holy Spirit!

Church, we need to realize that everything that we do for God has to be led by the Spirit or else it will not be fruitful.

Where God leads, God provides.

Paul is not doing it to brag, he is doing it to try to reassure them that the words that he has spoken to them are the words of God.

This is contrary to what the Judaizers were speaking as they were simply attempting to continue traditions and rules made by men.

2 and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:

This is the only epistle that is not written to one church.

The book of First and Second Thessalonians was written for the church in Thessalonica.

The book of Ephesians was written to the church in Ephesus.

Galatia was not a church;

Galatia was a region in the area where Turkey sits today.

This letter is addressed to the churches in that particular region.

3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,

I asked you to underline the words grace and peace,

because this was Paul's familiar greeting as he draws from

the traditional greetings of both the Greek Culture and the Jewish Culture.

Grace was the traditional greeting of the Greeks

Peace (Shalom) the traditional greeting of the Jews.

And Paul uses this greeting five other times in the New Testament.

And we always have the same order – grace always comes before peace.

And the reason behind it is that man will never know peace until he understands grace

Let's examine those two words.

Grace!

Now what is grace???

I think many times we mistaken grace and mercy – so I will try to explain them.

Mercy is not getting what one deserves – you commit a crime and the law states that you could face up to 10 years in prison and the judge gives you 8 months. That is mercy.

Grace is getting what one does not deserve.

My neighbor's teenage son takes my car for a joyride and a tow truck shows up a few hours later with my car totaled because he decided to go rock climbing and flipped it into a wash.

Mercy would be me not pressing charges against him. He is not getting what he deserves.

Grace would be me inviting him to a nice lobster dinner that same night. He is getting what he does not deserve.

That is how our salvation works.

It is all based on grace – we have the means of salvation but it is not based upon anything that we have done or anything that we need to do.

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

Jesus gave the greatest gift that anyone can give – Himself!!!

Grace is unmerited, undeserved, unearned favor.

Now, the other word is peace – Shalom.

And the Greek word that Paul uses here for peace – **it**
means to join together something that is broken.

And let us not forget that is exactly what Jesus Christ did when He died on the cross for you and me – as His death resulted in our ability to come/ to join/ to have a relationship with God.

And the only way we can have that peace is by understanding the grace of God.

If we are still under the burden of rules and regulations – we don't have the peace of God because we don't understand His grace.

Paul makes this clear to the churches in Galatia later on in chapter 5.

[Gal 5:4 NKJV] 4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who [attempt to] be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

The phrase you have fallen from grace doesn't mean that if a believer sins, he falls from grace and therefore loses his salvation. If a believer is repentant, there is a sense that when we sin we actually fall into grace and not out of grace. To have fallen from grace – or more literally, you have fallen out of grace, as seen by this context, is to choose legalism and therefore relinquishing grace as the principle by which one desires to be related to God.

Back to chapter 1,

**4 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,**

Paul is still in the midst of his salutation and we see him start to address the issues that were apparent in the churches in Galatia.

He starts to address the issue of legalism and where our salvation comes from.

You see, our salvation isn't based upon our works – it's based on God's works.

Turn with me to the Titus

[Tit 3:3-7 NKJV] 3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and

pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, **5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,** 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been **justified by His grace** we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Back in verse four of chapter one, I also asked you to note where it says that He might deliver us from this present evil age.

The idea behind the word deliver that is used here in verse 4 is not the deliverance from the presence of something –

We all know that we will not be delivered from the presence of this present evil age until we go to be with Jesus.

The deliverance that is spoken of here is the deliverance from the power of something.

And that is something that we can experience now as believers as we put our faith and trust in Him.

You see church, we live in a very evil world.

It is “present”, all around us.

And Jesus’ death on the cross not only was to pay for our sins, but was to deliver us from the power of the world around us.

He loves you just as you are, but He also loves you so much that He doesn't want you to stay like you are.

It is God's desire, it is God's "will" that you trust in Jesus and be delivered from the evil around us.

5 to whom [be] glory forever and ever. Amen.

Turn with me to the book of Ephesians 2,

[Eph 2:8-9 NKJV] 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Salvation was given to us by grace so that only He will receive all the glory.

There will be no one who will be able to proclaim that they made it into heaven based upon how good they were or how

many sacraments they did – it will able only be attributed to His amazing grace and love for us.

6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,

The word that Paul uses here for marvel in the Greek is one of astonishment. He is shocked of what is currently taken place in the churches in Galatia.

The word for turning away that Paul uses here - is one that is used to transpose, to substitute, to replace something with another.

That is what these churches were in the process of doing as they had allowed these Judaizers to come into the church and start preaching another gospel.

And as they turned to this different gospel, they were turning away from grace.

That is why we have to be careful and verify everything that is spoken in church to make sure that it lines up with the Word of God.

Just because someone speaks of Jesus – it doesn't mean that they are speaking of the same Jesus.

Different groups may use the same words and talk about Jesus, but their "Jesus" is not the Jesus of the Bible.

For example:

"Mormon Jesus" - One of many "gods", was the half-brother to Lucifer.

“Jehovah’s Witness’ Jesus” - used to be Michael the Archangel, a created being. **That is not what the Word of God says.** He was there from the beginning of time.

“Eastern Religion Jesus” - one of many enlightened ones who show us how to reach peace within ourselves, others include Krishna, Buddha, Maharishi’s, etc. **That is not what the word of God says – we don’t find peace within ourselves – we are sinful, we only find peace in what Jesus Christ did on the cross.**

7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

In verse seven, Paul makes three claims about this different gospel that had started to be preached in the churches of Galatia.

1. Paul's first claim is that this gospel that is being preached is an illegitimate gospel. It is not simply an alternative gospel.

There is only one true gospel.

And the one true gospel says that we are all sinners, our sins separate us from God – that is the bad news.

However, God took care of the problem by sending

Jesus to die in our place – as He paid the penalty for our sin.

And all we have to do to receive this payment for our sins is to believe in Jesus and accept God's free gift of salvation.

Grace is at the center of what the one true gospel is all about.

2. His second claim is that this gospel (remember gospel means good news) this gospel is not good news at all – it is trouble.

At first, this other gospel might look appealing but deep down inside – it's bad news.

I have cousins who became LDS, it was appealing to them at first – and the after a while, we started to see the burden that is placed upon them and their family to do good works. Not because they want to – but because they are forced to do it because their beliefs stress the need for works as a requirement for salvation.

3. His third claim is that this new gospel that was being preached was a perversion – a distortion of the one true gospel.

Instead of the gospel being all about what God has done for them, it becomes all about what the Galatians must do for God.

8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Paul is so adamant about preaching the one true gospel that he even includes himself in the warning regarding bringing in a different gospel.

He does not put himself above scrutiny – if his message changed, let him be accursed.

If another apostle were to come in preaching another gospel – let him be accursed.

If an angel from heaven brings a different gospel – let him be accursed. **By the way, the Mormons believe that the angel Maroni gave Joseph Smith access to golden tablets and the magic glasses required to interpret them.** And as a result – millions of people have turned to a perverse gospel.

To be accursed means to be doomed to destruction without any hope of salvation.

That is the fate of anyone who proclaims a different gospel.

And Paul repeats his warning in verse 9.

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

As Paul is writing this letter to the church in Galatia, he wants to make sure that they are aware that his first obligation is to please God and not to please man. He refused to shape his message in order to please his audience.

Now, why would people prefer a different gospel to the one of grace???

Why do so many flock to a gospel of works???

The reason people seek a different gospel is because the gospel of grace is offensive to our human nature – let me explain.

- The gospel offends our pride. It tells us we need a savior, and that we cannot save ourselves. It gives no credit to us at all for our salvation; it is all the work of Jesus for us.
- The gospel offends our wisdom. It saves us by something many consider foolish – God becoming man and dying a humiliating, disgraceful death on our behalf.
- Third, the gospel offends our knowledge. It tells us to believe something which goes against scientific knowledge and personal experience – that a dead man, Jesus Christ, rose from the dead in a glorious new body that would never die again.

I want to finish our study this morning with a quote from the late Chuck Smith regarding grace.

I have discovered that the lack of God's blessings on my life has nothing to do with my outward performance, but rather stems from my lack of faith in God's grace. I have learned that God's blessing is unconditional. The more I see His blessing in my life, the more I realize how totally undeserving I am. Because of this truth, I can have glorious peace. I have no need to worry.

Amen.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I

believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please

forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I

accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give

me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of

my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.