

Only One Gospel

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, everyone. If you want to turn to Galatians chapter 1, we have just started a new Bible teaching! series in the book of Galatians.

So we just kicked off last week. So it's Galatians chapter 1. If you don't have a Bible with you, there's a stack by the entrance door. So feel free to stand up, stretch your legs, go and grab a Bible so you can follow along because we will refer to the text as we go through the teaching this morning.

Let me pray and then we'll look at it together. Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for the opportunity to have your word in a language we can read and understand.

And we pray that more than just reading words on a page, we would hear your voice because we trust and we know that Scripture is breathed out by you, spoken by you to be heard by us.

So we pray now that you would use your spirit to be moving in us, opening our hearts so that we would hear your voice. We pray in Jesus' name.

[1 : 16] Amen. Amen. So we're going to read from Galatians chapter 1, starting in verse 6 down to verse 10. I'm 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, which is really no gospel at all.

Evidently, some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preach to you, let them be under God's curse.

As we have already said, so now I say again, if anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse.

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.

We love new and improve, don't we? We take something that's already good, but we make it better. The upgraded phone with a bigger screen, the newly updated car which has a better engine.

[2 : 48] Even you take the classic lawnmower, make it into a robot. You don't even need to do anything yourself. But marketing people, they lean into this, don't they? And we get products that have plus in their name.

So we have things like Nurofen if you have a headache or the iPhone for your phone or Disney. But we have Nurofen Plus. It's just that bit better. We have the iPhone Plus.

It's bigger. Disney Plus. Even more access. You know about the originals, but these are better.

Well, what about the gospel? The gospel is the true message about God's redeeming work through Jesus. Received by faith. And it's an ancient message.

Isn't it about time it got an upgrade? About time we got gospel plus. Well, that is exactly what Paul is writing about.

[3 : 52] And these believers in Galatia, they came to faith and very quickly started to move away from the one true gospel.

Let me flick on here. Stand firm in the only gospel. Stand firm in the only gospel.

I'm astonished. I'm lost for words. I can't believe you've done this. Are these words that you've heard? Maybe something you've done. I can't believe you did that.

Maybe you've said it yourself. We come across a situation we hardly believed was possible. There's been a lot of uproar this week in the U.S.

I don't know if you've followed any of the media things where a popular chat show hosts show has been canceled. And lots of people say, I can't believe this happened. I'm astonished. I'm lost for words.

[4 : 58] Well, Paul hears news which he cannot believe. He can't believe his ears. Look at verse 6.

something different, don't listen to me.

[11 : 53] If an angel appears from heaven and says something different, do not listen. It is not the gospel.

No one can change it. No one can add to it. If anyone is preaching something other than what we received, it is not true.

The same goes at Amazing Grace. If anyone who preaches and teaches comes and shares something other than what we have accepted, it is not the gospel.

And the consequences for people who bring these false gospels, these false teachings, are dire. Let them be under God's curse, Paul says.

Preaching a false gospel brings judgment. Judgment from God. If we change that message, we have God to answer to. And He will deal with it.

[13 : 00] So let's be warned. Let's be careful. Be careful not to be people who teach anything gospel plus. Careful not to dilute the gospel so it might appeal to a wider audience.

Maybe telling people, well, sin doesn't really matter, but the gospel is just about loving others. Or teaching that there are certain habits or rituals that we must do to obtain salvation.

We can be careful not to let our gospel teaching change by reminding ourselves of the gospel itself.

We can be careful not to let those who teach us let the gospel change by keeping them to account.

You as a church keeping us as leaders to account. Tom, I think what you said isn't the gospel. I hope if I say something not gospel, someone would say it to me.

And we as a church need to keep each other to account. We need to remind ourselves of God's story of redemption in history by faith in Jesus.

[14 : 17] through His completed work, His life, His death and resurrection for us. And that's it. Nothing less, nothing more.

Let's remind each other, let's remind ourselves, it's all about Jesus, all of Him, nothing we must do. And this brings freedom.

Like Rob was sharing last week, freedom to live and serve and love as we stand firm in the only gospel. And take confidence that we're free from this judgment through the only gospel.

So be warned, it's a dangerous thing to be adding or taking from the gospel. It brings judgment. Finally, seek God's approval, not people's.

Paul goes on to explain whose approval matters most to Him. We see in verse 10, am I now trying to win the approval of human beings or of God?

[15 : 32] Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ. Seek God's approval, not people's.

Paul isn't trying to please people in his teaching or his rebuking. It's God he aims to please. In fact, he writes, why would I be saying all these things if I was trying to please people?

If he was still trying to please people, he wouldn't be a servant of Christ. Being a people pleaser and being a servant of Christ do not go hand in hand.

Paul was ruffling feathers. He was going against the grain, being persecuted. Why? Well, he wasn't trying to please a particular person or group of people because his aim was to seek after God's approval.

And that reinforces to us that the only gospel sometimes isn't very palatable to people around us. It turns things upside down.

[16 : 46] It declares things that are deeply unpopular. That this is the only way. That all roads do not lead to God eventually.

That Jesus is the only way. That is not popular. Or that God's design for sex is that it's exclusive for marriage of one man and one woman for the rest of their lives.

That is deeply unpopular. Or that the crucified Jesus actually rose from the grave. And he's still living.

He's still alive. that's not popular. And frankly, people just don't believe it. It's nonsense. The only gospel will ruffle feathers and cause friction.

And Paul is saying he's given up trying to please people because if he was still doing that, well, he wouldn't be serving Jesus. Jesus. Have you been told you're a people pleaser?

[17 : 53] Or maybe you see it in yourself. Well, it's pretty much in all of us, isn't it? Whether we want to put up our hands or not, we all have that people pleaser lurking inside of us.

Our motivation can often come from that desire to impress others or not to disappoint. or that others might think better of me.

And one way this may come out is in our conversations about Jesus himself and who we are in him. We're so conscious in those moments of what others might think.

If I say X or Y or Z, what will they think? But actually we've already received God's approval so anything we say or do now that might impact how people see us, it doesn't really matter.

Take a second to think about ways that the people pleaser in you comes out. I think for me it can often be not letting people down.

[19 : 04] I agreed to do something, I said I would do it, so therefore it must be done and all other important things can take a back seat. But I don't think God is primarily interested in my doing, doing, doing, rather he's more interested in our being, who we are, in our dynamic relationship with him, resting in his love and in our identity in him and letting that overflow into the rest of our lives.

So for me, people pleaser Tom, this may well lead to doing similar things, where you work or you parent or you study or you chat, but through it we want to be resting in God's approval of us, not striving in those things for the approval of others.

So let's be quick to identify areas where we're seeking people's approval and answer those motivations or actions with the only gospel.

Seek after God's approval, not people's. And hopefully that we will quickly realize as we seek his approval, if we trust in Jesus, we have it.

You already have God's approval. Isn't that incredible that the wonderful message of the gospel is that we already have God's approval. He approves of us.

[20 : 40] He loves us. We can't mess it up with him now. He's done it. He's secured it for us. Jesus' life and death and resurrection, it counts for us.

So God sees us just as he sees his perfect son, Jesus, who he loves and approves of. We've received God's approval already through faith in Christ, so let's walk in it.

Walk in that approval that we have. What does that bring? Freedom. We'll see freedom coming through this letter to the Galatians.

Not a need to please people. Not a need to add requirements to the gospel. Not a need to dilute or take from the gospel stripping of its truth.

It brings freedom. Freedom to stand firm in the only gospel. Freedom to be warned and warn others about distorting this message and freedom to enjoy God's approval on us.

[21 : 58] Let's pray together. Father, we pray for your help that as we look at this letter of Galatians and as we realize how other believers in this context were beginning to abandon your gospel message.

Let us take note. Let us be warned that we would stand firm in the only gospel, Lord. simply by faith in the saving work of Jesus, he has done it all.

Lord, let us take heed and be warned where we see that message being distorted. Thank you for the approval you have given us through your son.

Remind us that we don't need the approval of others as we have received it already from you. Lord, thank you for your grace. Thank you for your love.

Amen.