

Protect and Preserve the Gospel

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning, everyone. Great to see you all this morning. Well, this morning we! are going to continue our series in the book of Galatians. And that means this morning we! are coming to Galatians chapter 2 and we're going to be looking at verses 1 to 5. And Linda is going to come now and read our passage for us this morning. So thank you so much, Linda, for doing that for us this morning.

Good morning, Linda. Good morning. If I can get it open. So Galatians 2, verse 1 to 5, and it's page 1168 in the Bible.

Then after 14 years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

Well, thank you so much, Linda, for that. Well, I think that there is something about us as humans that, in general, we seek to preserve and to protect what is precious. I think that this is especially true when it comes to things like paintings and documents and treasures and gold. For example, the Mona Lisa in Paris is displayed behind bulletproof glass. It has constant security and it only has brief viewing access. The Crown Jewels in London has a 24-hour armed guard team and it's got sophisticated sound and motion alarm systems. The declaration of independence in Washington, D.C. is stored in a bomb-proof, oxygen-free, temperature-controlled case. The gold in Fort Knox is guarded by the U.S. military. It's got electric fences. You can't beat the electric fences. And advanced drone surveillance. The Book of Kells in Dublin is displayed under very low light and the pages are only turned a few times a year to protect it and to preserve it. The Sistine Chapel ceiling in the Vatican has very strict access guidelines where humidity, dust, and even the body temperature of visitors is regulated and monitored. And the list goes on and on. And even closer to home, we get an important document in the post. What do we do? Well, we take it out and we look at it and we, in general, we put it in a safe place and we try to preserve it and protect it. Or we get the passports home in the post and we take them out and we look at them and we try to put them in a safe place. You know, the top shelf behind the tin of peaches or, you know, behind the beans on the top shelf, we put it somewhere safe to try to preserve it and protect it. I think there's something about us as humans when it comes to all these sorts of things that we seek to protect and preserve what is precious.

Well, folks, thinking about paintings and jewels and documents, what in this world is more precious than the gospel? You know, we're told in Romans chapter 1 verse 16 that the gospel is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. What in this world, what document, what treasure is more important than the precious, wonderful, good news about Jesus? Who he is, what he has done for us, and who we are in him? You know, as believers living in this world, what can this world offer that is more precious than the wonderful truth that Jesus Christ, God the Son, he came and he took on flesh and he lived a perfect life and then he gave that perfect life on the cross and he paid the price in full and he rose from the grave victorious so when we come to him in faith and repentance, we can be once and for all forgiven, set free, redeemed, adopted, and all of the rest. What is more precious than the wonderful good news about Jesus and what he has done for us? Well, if we think about it, if people in the world go to such lengths to preserve and protect paintings and and stones and treasures and gold, things that are not eternal, how much more should we as believers seek to preserve and protect what is eternal, what will never fade away, the

wonderful truth about Jesus? Well, I say all of that because when we look at these verses this morning, this is exactly what the Apostle Paul is encouraging the Galatian believers to do. In these verses this morning, Paul is encouraging the Galatian believers to protect and to preserve the gospel. And Paul, in these verses, does that by using one of his trips to Jerusalem as an example. Paul here in these verses is using one of his trips to Jerusalem to serve as an example for the Galatian believers and for us of the importance of protecting and preserving the gospel. Paul said in verse one of our passage that after 14 years, he went back up to Jerusalem with Titus and Barnabas with him. Well, they all went to

[7 : 50] Jerusalem at that point to protect and preserve the gospel. In verse four of our passage, Paul said, speaking about Jerusalem, some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ and to make us slaves. Basically, these false believers were sneaky. They crept into the community of believers. And it seems that they watched and observed for a while. And in time, they went to work and trying to get the believers there to essentially go back under the bondage of the law. These false teachers wanted to add things in that needed to be done in order for folks to be seen as true believers.

And looking at verse three, we can piece together that we can see that one of the things that they wanted to add in was circumcision. These false believers wanted the Jewish believers to be circumcised before they could be seen as the real deal. You know, before they could be seen as true believers.

It's probably important to note that circumcision in itself was not wrong. But what was wrong is this. These false teachers were trying to say that unless these male Jewish believers were circumcised, they're not true believers. They were saying, in effect, that faith in Christ is not enough. They were saying that you needed faith plus circumcision in order to be seen as true believers. And making circumcision or any other work a requirement for salvation, it really undermines Christ's finished work on the cross. It undermines the sufficiency of Christ's finished work on the cross. Well, interestingly, to defend against this mistrude, Paul in verse three points to Titus Titus. As an example, Titus was a Greek believer. He traveled around with Paul. He was a true believer.

[10 : 26] And yet Paul says in verse three, that Titus was not compelled to be circumcised. Paul is basically saying here, lads, have a look at Titus. He's a true believer.

And he wasn't circumcised. So what are you on about? This is not needed for salvation.

Titus was a living example of the truth that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Paul is using Titus as an example.

These false teachers, they were trying to add works, such as circumcision, in as a requirement for salvation. But Paul was having none of it.

In fact, Paul said in verse five, we did not give in to them for a moment, Paul said, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

[11 : 36] Paul in Jerusalem stood firm to protect and preserve the gospel. Well, as I said, Paul is recounting this trip to Jerusalem to serve as an example to the Galatians.

Because we see in this letter that the Galatians were experiencing similar challenges. folks were trying to add works in in order to be saved folks are trying to add works in in order to be seen as as true believers and so Paul told them about what happened in Jerusalem to highlight to them that they too would need to stand firm to protect and preserve the gospel especially if folks are taking away from it or adding to it or twisting it or or changing it and so Paul's message to the Galatians and Paul's message to us through these verses is we too at times might need to protect and preserve the gospel when it's being added to or taken away from and you know what I think that is something that we are all called to do we are all called to protect and preserve the gospel it was not not just for Paul to do it's not just for some believers to do it really is for us all to do to protect and preserve the wonderful truth about Jesus in fact we're told in in second Timothy chapter one to to guard the good deposit that was entrusted to us to guard the gospel that was entrusted to us with the help of the Holy

Spirit who lives in us and you know today false teachers might not be demanding circumcision temptation but the temptation to to add to the gospel or to take away from the gospel is is still with us you know people kind of imply that you're not really saved unless you act in a certain way or unless you say a certain thing pray in a certain way give a certain amount experience a certain thing or the other side of the coin is maybe people might not add to the gospel but at times folks can take away from the gospel you know you hear people in the world kind of saying things like you

know well it doesn't really matter if people turn to Jesus and repent because you know what love wins so at the end of the day everyone's going to be okay no the true gospel is people need Jesus people need to turn to Jesus in faith and repentance and when they do they are once and for all set free made new creations in Christ they're holy and blameless in his sight robed in his righteousness as I said adopted forgiven redeemed forever and ever and you know that is a precious thing and that is what we are called to protect and preserve so briefly I just want to finish this morning on the back of these verses by just asking the the question how do we protect and preserve the gospel and this is not an exhaustive list I'm sure there's more ways that we can protect and preserve the gospel these are just some things that that came to my mind first to protect and preserve the gospel let us know it you know if we don't know the gospel and if we don't understand the gospel clearly we might not recognize when it's being distorted sort of like you know the way a jeweler knows the difference between real fake or real gold and fake gold a little bit like that let us know the difference between the true gospel and other gospels things that are added to the gospel how do we do that well I guess we grow to know the true gospel more and more by you know reading God's word by you know Bible study and and praying for wisdom and discernment but to protect and preserve the gospel let us know it clearly second how do we protect and preserve the gospel well let us defend it you know false teaching will often say Jesus plus something or Jesus minus something and like Paul when we hear things that are off we must at times be willing to to speak up and defend the gospel now this does not mean harsh arguments or shouting and and roaring at each other or there's a way to speak the truth in love with with kindness and with conviction but if we are to protect and preserve the gospel at times that might mean speaking up to defend it three how do we protect and preserve the gospel well let us live it the gospel is of course not just something we speak it's something we we live and when our lives display love grace humility forgiveness we show the world the power of the gospel you know our conduct at times can be a witness to the gospel and how we act at times let's just say maybe isn't always the best witness to the gospel and I'm in that camp too obviously there are times when I'm not a great witness to the gospel Paul in Philippians 127 says let us live in a manner worthy of the gospel and you know living in a manner worthy of the gospel is not living with this kind of mask of perfection showing the world that we've got everything together and we've got no problems and we've got no no challenges I don't think that's what it means to to live in a manner worthy of the gospel I think it means to live in a real way where we acknowledge that we don't have everything together when we acknowledge that we're not perfect but we're saying he is and we know someone who is living in a manner worthy of the gospel isn't living with a mask of perfection it's living kind of in a realm of grace where we show other people grace and we acknowledge that we need grace ourselves if we're trying to be a witness by being perfect that's not living in a manner worthy of the gospel when we live in such a way that others see the grace of Christ we are a witness to the gospel people out there are not looking for something that you know we are trying to show them we're perfect people out there need grace and if we come to them and say look hey we're not perfect but we know someone who is let us live the gospel in how we live grace with each other and how we live in grace with others finally let us pass it on a sure way to protect and preserve the gospel is by passing it on to others to children, to families, to the next generation to those who have never heard it if the gospel truly is precious to us if the good news about Jesus is really precious to us we will share it with others and again there are ways to do this

[20 : 08] I heard the story once of I think this is a true story of a guy who taught that rolling up gospel tracks into a ball and absolutely flinging them at people he thought that was a good way in passing on the gospel this is what he would do he was in a city and he would drive around and when he got to red lights he would roll down his window and he would roll up these gospel tracks and he would absolutely launch them at people as they passed by someone told me this right one day apparently believe it or not I said this can't be true is it but believe it or not he fired one and it hit a policeman right in the head and it knocked off his glasses onto the ground well that was the end of that he ended up getting his driving license taken away from him for a little while and he had to do community service picking up litter or I heard another story of a fellow who was at a team park families were queuing for different rides and he stood next to these poor families with this megaphone and he was roaring and shouting through this megaphone yelling at these people saying repent the end is near the only problem was through the crackling microphone megaphone it was really fuzzy and crackly people thought he was saying repent the queue is here so they kept kind of going behind them to the back of the queue folks God can and does use all sorts of ways of

sharing the gospel but there are probably ways to do that let us look for the opportunities that God gives and let's pass on the wonderful good news about Jesus folks people really do go to great lengths to to preserve and to protect paintings and and jewels and documents things that will fade away but the gospel is eternal it is the the power of God for salvation it is the truth that leads to to life and freedom it is the most precious thing so let us be a people who seek to protect it and preserve it

I think we can maybe start at least to do that well when we seek to know it defend it live it and pass it and going back to that verse in first Timothy we're to do that not on our own strength but we are to do it through the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us and I think that if we look to the Lord for his help to be his witnesses to be his ambassadors to be people that kind of overflow in grace and people can see that he will help us let's pray together and then we're going to close our time worshipping our Lord together Lord we thank you for just this little portion of scripture that highlights how Paul preserved and protected the gospel and we just thank you for that example and we thank you that there is an example there for us to protect and preserve the wonderful good news freeing truth that there is in you Jesus and I just pray you would help us to be people who really when people come across us may they see the grace of Christ may they see your love may they see your your mercy

Lord we know that each one of us are not perfect help us to be people who point to you and not point to ourselves and I pray that you would help us to do this as we move forward together and I pray this in Jesus name Amen Amen Amen