

Galatians: No Turning Back

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[0 : 0 0] I'll go this morning to Galatians chapter 1. Galatians chapter 1. I decided to go with Galatians.

Usually this fall time of year, I pick a book and we go through it. And last year, remember, I did Ecclesiastes. And this year, I'm going with Galatians. And if you look on the screen there, what's the theme of Galatians?

No turning back. No turning back. So we're going to talk about Galatians and the fact that we don't go backwards. We keep moving forward for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The book of Galatians is the first of 12 epistles written by the Apostle Paul. He writes to a group of churches in a province of Galatia.

Look at verse 2. He talks about unto the churches, plural, of Galatia. It's the only one he does that. Every other book is either to a person or to a single church. This one he writes unto the churches at that province of Galatia.

[1 : 1 3] He's writing to them because he has deep concern about what's happening there and what's going on there. They're being confused by false teachers. False teachers who say, yes, having Christ is good, but you still have to do the law.

You still have to follow the old things. You still have to follow the Jewish traditions. And he's saying, no, no, no, no. This is a gospel of grace. You do not have to follow those things.

Don't turn back. Don't follow them. You know, Satan, a lot of times, is not successful in keeping someone from getting saved, from someone following the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

But if he can't keep you from doing that, he will try to get you to turn back. Okay, you've accepted Christ. You're doing that. That's great. Now you keep living the life. How many today, how many times have you heard me say, so many today, I'm accepting Christ.

I'm taking Christ into my life. I'm adding him on to everything else I have. That's not the way it works. I take Christ in me.

[2 : 1 9] He takes control. He lives within me. I conform to him, not him to me. But these people were trying to say, no, no, no. You can have Christ. That's okay. But, remember, to keep the law.

And another thing that Satan does a lot of times is he gets people to question the authority of the message that they have. You know, you have this message of grace, and that's great, but think about where you got it from.

Paul. Paul, he, remember, he used to persecute Christians and things. Remember, he used to, you know, be careful of who you're listening to.

And so, Satan will try to do that. He'll try to undermine the validity of Paul's message here. And he has these false teachers coming in and trying to get them to question things about their salvation.

Throughout the book, Paul's going to emphasize that the message of the gospel is a pure message. He's going to emphasize it is a message of grace, not of works.

[3 : 24] We're saved by grace, through faith, not by works. He's going to exhort them to hold on to the truth and rejoice in the fact that God's grace has changed them.

Look with me in the first five verses. Chapter 1, first five verses, it says, Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead, and all the brethren which are with me, under the churches of Galatia.

Grace be unto you and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father, to whom be glory forever and ever.

Amen. Let's have a word prayer. Father, help us this morning as we look at this passage of Scripture, as we begin to look at this book of Galatians about not turning back.

Lord, I pray that you would help us to realize what we have because of the grace of God. Lord, you have blessed us in so many ways.

[4 : 46] You have taken care of us. You have met our needs. You have given us direction. You have given us guidance. You've given us fellow Christians to fellowship with. You've given us so very much.

And then, to add on to all that, you've given us a hope in Jesus, as we sang about. We have a hope for all eternity in heaven.

God, you have abundantly provided for us. Thank you for all that you have done. Lord, minister to those that are not here today that we've mentioned, Lord, and others who are not here for one reason or another.

Watch over them. Take care of them. Heal them. Lift them up. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So, Paul's going to start off.

Remember, I mentioned that some people questioned the authority which came. So, Paul's going to start off with talking about the man God called. The man God called. Look at verse 1 again.

[5 : 51] He says, Paul, an apostle. Stop right there. Paul, an apostle. That word apostle carried some weight with it.

He's identifying himself as a writer and as he does this, he tries to mention two different things about the fact that he is writing this epistle. He starts with the fact that he is Paul, the apostle.

To be an apostle meant to be one who was sent with a commission. One who was a witness to the resurrected Jesus Christ.

The original twelve apostles, not including Judas, Matthias, got added there. They had all been ones who had followed Jesus. They had all been ones who had seen the resurrected Christ.

As a matter of fact, you look in Acts chapter 1, verse 21 and 22, it says this, wherefore of these men which have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

[7 : 05] Two requirements to be an apostle. They had traveled with Jesus and the group from the time of John the Baptist until the time that Jesus rose up to heaven.

They had been there, they had heard, they had seen all of those different things. And then, they had been a witness of his resurrection. They had seen the resurrected Christ. They saw him go up in heaven, they saw the resurrected Christ.

But that was the requirement. They've been with Jesus, they've heard him preach, they've watched his life, they've seen everything that he has done, and they saw the resurrected Christ.

How does Paul qualify to be an apostle? Well, you think about the day on the road to Damascus. Paul saw the resurrected Christ that day.

He had a conversation with him, if you read back in Acts. In Acts chapter 9, verse 15 and 16, a man by the name of Ananias is supposed to go and see Paul and help him to get his sight back and everything.

[8 : 08] And it says in chapter 9, verse 15, But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. Ananias, you go talk to Paul. You touch him, you heal him, he gets his sight back. He has seen me already.

You're going to give him some instruction. And as a matter of fact, if you look further there in chapter 1 of Galatians, look at verse 17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother.

What was he doing for those three years? We believe he was getting instructed. into the things of God. He did not get to travel with God, Jesus, and see him in all the things that he did.

[9 : 17] But I think he got some instruction from the Holy Spirit those three years on what it meant to be an apostle and to be a follower of Jesus Christ. And let me add this.

There is no precedent in the Bible for that perpetuating. It wasn't the apostle John and then one of John's disciples was a guy by the name of Polycarp.

We did not call him the apostle Polycarp. But I have seen people when we lived in Dothan, Alabama. We lived next door to the church.

You come out the street we lived on, go around the corner and just down the road there maybe a quarter of a mile there was a strip mall type thing and there was a place in there that had a church led by the apostle so and so.

I'm going, hmm, that's interesting. I didn't know there were any apostles today. There are none. They did not perpetuate. There were only those who followed Jesus and saw the resurrected Christ.

[10 : 16] Then he says, look, he's Paul the called. He's Paul the apostle. He's also Paul the called. Not from men.

Notice what he says there. Not of men. Neither by man. Paul was not self-appointed. He was not appointed by men. He was appointed by God himself.

He even mentions that. 2 Timothy 1.1. He says, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. Not by men appointing him.

Not by the disciples. Notice he mentioned there where we looked in the middle of Galatians 1. He didn't even visit any of the disciples, apostles, until three years afterwards. And that was only Peter and he saw James as well.

He said, it wasn't by men. They did not do it. Jesus Christ called me. Today, we go out and we have young men who want to become pastors and preachers and things.

[11 : 15] and we have things called ordination services. When they have an ordination service, they are not being called by men, by the pastor and deacons of that church to go out and do the work.

When they have that ordination service, what they are doing is they are giving their blessing to the man to go out and do what God has called him to do.

It is not by men. It is by God. So it was not by men. Number two, it was by Jesus Christ. Jesus called Paul on that road to Damascus and then, to go along with this idea of ordination and things, Acts chapter 13, verses 1 and 2.

Acts 13, 1 and 2 says this, Now, there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon, that is called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, and Manon, which was been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch and Saul.

Stop right there for a second. I was, when I look at that, I always get amazed by that. Manon who was brought up with Herod the Tetrarch. I was thinking, you don't hear any more about Manon or anything about him, but I always go back to think about Moses who was brought up in the house of Pharaoh.

[12 : 38] Here's Manon who was brought up with Herod the Tetrarch who was going to be king. This guy had a good education, had a good background, but he was also a follower of Jesus Christ.

Verse 2 says, As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them.

It wasn't the church calling them. The work that I have called them to. They were going to give their blessing. The Holy Spirit said, You put your hands on them and you give them blessing as they go out to do the work that I've called them to do.

God appointed Paul. Paul says there in the last part of verse 1, It's also the same God who raised Jesus from the dead. Paul had a pretty good pedigree as far as being able to go out and preach the word of God.

He says, I've been called by God who raised Jesus from the dead. Okay, so Paul's been called. What's he going to do? Here's the method that God used.

[13 : 43] The method that God uses. What is God's primary method for getting the gospel out into the world? The local church. He uses the local church.

You say, I thought he used people. Who makes up the local church? People. People. But when we gather together like this, we're a church. And he says, I'm going to send you out to establish churches.

He didn't send a letter to Christians. He sent a letter to the churches of Galatia. So the importance, first of all, of planting a local church. Having a local church that you attend.

Have one that you go to. If you don't live here, you live somewhere else, find a local church that you can agree with their doctrine and you can agree with what they're teaching and get together and fellowship with them and go and learn what God has for us.

See, Paul was a missionary. What do missionaries do? We got a whole board full of missionaries back there. What do they do? They go, take the gospel to people and establish a local church.

[14 : 48] Why do they have local churches? Because you can work easier with a group of people to take the gospel out. You can work together to learn more from the word of God when you come together as a church and study the word of God together.

You can have fellowship, being encouraged as you go out because you have the encouragement of others. We're going to say, we're praying for you. We're going to keep going with you. We'll help you in the things that you're trying to do.

Paul says, look, I have faced all kinds of things in my ministry, but I still understand the importance of a local church. You think about Paul.

What did he face? Take your Bible and go back just about a page or two backwards. It's 2 Corinthians chapter 11. 2 Corinthians chapter 11.

Beginning at verse 23. Paul says, Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool. He was talking about others who weren't. I am more. In labors, more abundant.

[15 : 51] In stripes, above measure. In prisons, more frequent. In deaths, oft. Of the Jews, five times received I 40 stripes plus a saved one. Their rule was you couldn't go past 40 stripes or if you went to 40 stripes, the person was probably going to die from the injuries that they faced.

He says, five times I had 39 stripes. Then he goes on, he says, Thrice I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned.

Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night in the day have I been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the sea, perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.

In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in thirst and hunger, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

Paul says, I've been through all of these different things. And I have the care of all of these churches on me. But I still trust God and I'm still following God.

[17 : 15] I still keep my focus on him. And I'm going to continue establishing local churches wherever I go. He talks about these ones here in Galatia. He says the churches of Galatia.

Cyprus, Pergia, Antioch of Pesda, which was a military installation. He had ministry there. Iconium, a resort area for pleasure-loving Greeks to go on vacation.

He had ministry there. Lystra, which was a town that had a lot of superstitions. When Paul first got there, oh, they thought he was wonderful. He had new things to tell them. Before he left there, they tried to stone him.

And then Derby. Paul planted churches wherever he went, taking the gospel. Paul has a pedigree. When he comes to these guys and he's writing and says, an apostle, he's got a background that shows that he was doing God's work.

Not only was he planting local churches, he was preparing local churches. Preparing them. Throughout Paul's ministry, he has a lot to do with local churches.

[18 : 21] As he goes out and he starts these different ones, four missionary journeys, he starts churches and helps people get organized and starts making sure they have someone there who can teach them the word of God.

He visits them as subsequent missionary journeys. He goes back and visits them, makes sure they're doing all right, checking up on them. He wrote to them these letters that we have, these epistles.

He helped train people to go there. The purpose of this epistle was to prepare them and to warn them about things that were taking place and things that were coming in and things that they needed to be aware of.

How is he going to warn them? How is he going to help them to be ready? First of all, he uses God's word. God's word, his word. He's going to go throughout this book and he's going to share things from God's word to them.

Things that God had given him to give them, to help them to grow. In 2 Timothy, he writes this in chapter 2, verse 2. And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.

[19 : 33] See, our job is to teach the word of God, to commit it to you so that you can take it and you can teach others also.

See, what if I'm the only one that has the word? Remember the old Catholic Church tradition? The priest had a Bible in Latin. The rest of them couldn't read it.

The rest of them couldn't have one. So everything he said, they had to go by. But he says, no, I want you to have the word of God. I want you to know the word of God so that you can take it and tell other people.

So that you can show others who Jesus is. So that you can show others how he came and died for them and gave his life so that they could have eternal life.

And then he gives them warnings as well. As part of the church, my job is to give you warnings, to tell you about things that are coming down the road, things that you might see on TV or hear on the radio, things that are not according to the Bible.

[20 : 33] Here's what he said in Acts chapter 20. He's actually talking to the Ephesians here. And he says this, For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. He says, be aware, be listening, think about things, compare it to the things you have heard from the word of God.

He said, wolves are going to try to come in. Wolves in sheep clothing are going to try to come in and take over and do things that are contrary to my word. And he says, also there are going to be people who will arise from within.

He says, be careful. Listen to things. Compare everything to the word of God. Make sure it lines up with that. So, God sends him.

He sends him to these churches and things. He has a method, a local church. What's the message? The message that God sent.

[21 : 41] Look at verses 3 and 4. 3 and 4 say, grace be unto 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 world according to the will of God and our Father.

Stop there. What was the message that Paul had for these people? They're being drawn away. They're being told that, you know, you need to keep the law.

You need to keep doing the Jewish traditions. You need to keep. So does he come and rebuke them? Does he come in and condemn them? He says, grace and peace be unto you.

You know, sometimes in dealing with things, you get a whole lot further if you learn to do it in a nice way. What's the old saying about you get a lot more with honey? Learn how to talk to people in a way that's going to help them.

A way that's going to increase your chances of getting them to understand. So what's the message that God has? He has a message for them. First, he has a message of grace. A message of grace.

[22 : 49] And one of the great things about this message of grace, it tells about our position in Christ. Ephesians chapter 1 verses 6 and 7.

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

God has given us his grace. God's riches at Christ's expense, we often say. We have the riches of his grace, which help us to be redeemed, he says, and to have forgiveness of sins, he says, which allows us in the first verse there, verse 6, to be accepted in the beloved.

Think about the position you have. As a Christian, as one who knows the Lord, has accepted his gift of grace, what is your position?

I've been accepted in the beloved. I am part of the family of God. I am part of God's family, eternal family.

[24 : 05] Bible also says in Romans that I am a joint heir with Jesus Christ. Do you ever stop and think about what you have in Christ? What?

Say, yeah, I've got eternal life. I'm going to heaven. I've got eternal life. What about now? You have Christ with you always, living inside you, giving you direction, giving you advice, giving you his word.

He is there to help you in this life as much as he is in the life to come. But do we look to him? Do we follow him? Do we understand I have Christ right this very minute as well as for eternity?

I am accepted in the beloved. Wow. Think about that. And not only that, we are our disposition toward other believers.

See, he says, you're accepted in the beloved. You have, whether you're rich or poor, whether you're black, white, yellow, whatever, purple, polka dotted, it doesn't matter.

[25 : 29] You remember over in Revelation when it talks about the marriage supper of the Lamb? It says, people of every kindred, tongue, and nation, it doesn't matter what race you are, it doesn't matter what age you are, it doesn't matter what your social status is, we are all going to be there together.

So our disposition toward believers should be one of, I love every one of them. If I have the Lord Jesus Christ in me, my attitude should be one of, I'm going to show them the grace of God just like he has shown to me.

Ephesians 4, 29, let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

No corrupt communication. How do you talk about people? He says, no corrupt communication? What am I going to do?

Man, if I can't complain about people, what am I going to do? He says, that which is good to the use of edifying. How can I build them up? How can I help them? How can I help myself?

[26 : 45] How can I help those that are around me? Those are good to the use of edifying, building people up. Aren't we supposed to be building the church of God? So he says, building them up. He says, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

So we have a message of grace. We also have a message of peace. A message of peace. When we have a message of peace, we are also showing that Christ lives within us.

Those of you who were in Sunday school, we were talking about the fact that Melchizedek, he was a king of righteousness, he was also a king of peace. And we talked about the fact that Jesus is the prince of peace, tells us in Isaiah.

He says, you have a message of peace to take to people. God has given you comfort. He's given you peace.

He's given you a chance to just rest in him. We go further in Hebrews here in Sunday school. We'll talk about the fact that the rest we have in Christ.

[27 : 51] We've talked about it some already. Romans chapter 5, verses 1 and 2. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

He says, we have peace. If we've been justified by faith, if by faith, by God's grace, through faith, we've received Jesus Christ as our Savior, we have been justified and we have peace with God.

God and us are not at war. God and us are having have a treaty wherein we are working together.

He says, we have access by faith. I was talking about that just a minute ago. The fact that we're accepted in the beloved. We have access to God.

We can go to him at any time. We can talk to him at any time. We have access by faith into this grace. And he says, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

[29 : 06] He says, rejoice in God's glory. Do you realize that as a Christian, you get to participate in God's glory.

You get to see his glory close up. You get to see him at work and can praise him for it. Third thing, verse four, who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us.

It's a message of deliverance. Jesus came to give us deliverance. Paul wants us to understand. You have grace. You have peace.

You have deliverance. Think about what you have in Christ. Why would you ever want to go back? Because of what you have. What do we have?

We have a message of deliverance. How do we have that? He says, who gave himself for our sins. Jesus gave himself. Jesus gave himself for our sins.

[30 : 09] Jesus gave himself so that we could have forgiveness. Galatians 3.13 says, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

For it is written, cursed is every man that hangeth on a tree. Jesus went to that cross to take our place. Jesus went to that cross so that we would not have to. Jesus gave himself for us.

Just think about that. He gave himself for us. Again, you have Jesus. Why would you want to go back?

Why would you want to go what you had before? You have Jesus. Jesus gave himself. Jesus also delivers those who trust in him. He says, who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us.

He might deliver us. Salvation is not earned. It's a gift. Most of you have been here before when I gave the illustration about Christmas gifts. You know, if you're going to give a gift at Christmas, I'm going to give Bonnie a car.

[31 : 27] The reason I'm giving it to Bonnie is because I can still get to drive to home later. I'm going to give Bonnie a car. Does this, I just told you, I'm giving Bonnie the car. Does that belong to her?

Not yet. Come on up. Still doesn't belong to her. She's getting closer, but it still doesn't belong to her. Now it's hers.

She's accepted the gift. Jesus gave us a gift. We have to accept it.

It's not ours until we reach out and take it. He says, I did it for you. He gave himself for our sins. But we have to reach out and take it.

Now I look around this morning, I'm going to assume everybody here knows the Lord Jesus Christ is their Savior, but I don't know that. Have you accepted the gift that he has given to you? Christ made the payment for sin.

[32 : 38] All we have to do is receive the gift. We just have to get what he has given to us. We have to accept it into ourselves.

1 Peter 2, 24 and 25. Who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree. Again, Jesus gave himself that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness by whose stripes you are healed.

For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls. We strayed. We went our own way.

We did our own thing because of sin. He says, I gave my life so you could have forgiveness of sin. You could have redemption. You could be made part of the beloved.

But you have to reach out and take it. And when we do, he says, you returned to the fold. You returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls.

[33 : 44] God takes us in and makes us accepted in the beloved. You look at it, why did he write a whole book of Galatians?

You look at those first five verses. Jesus did all of this for you. He made it so you could be accepted and beloved. Why in the world would you go back?

But he's going to tell us more in the weeks to come about why we go back. Look at verse five. To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. He gives a doxology to that first part.

He gives a closing to that first part. He gives a let's give praise to God for all that he has done for us. And we sing the doxology praise God from whom all blessings flow.

They do. As a matter of fact, when Paul was writing 1 Timothy, writing 1 Timothy, chapter 1, verse 17, now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever.

[34 : 57] Amen. He says, look, I'm telling you all these things and as I tell you all these things, just stop and praise God for who he is.

The king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God. We need to give him honor and glory. What's he saying here in Galatians? To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Amen.

So be it. You say amen, did you know that's what you're saying? So be it. He says, look at what God has done. Look at what Jesus has done.

Look at the message he has for you. Look at the fact that Jesus gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us. To whom be glory forever and ever. Praise God for what he has done.

He's reaffirming everything he's just said and he's giving God glory for it. This morning, as I said, I think everybody here probably knows the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior.

[36 : 01] If you don't, come talk to me afterwards. I would be glad to take the word of God and show you how you can know for sure that you've been accepted into the beloved, that you're part of God's family.

But I'm assuming most all of you are, or all of you are. So let's go with verse 5. To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Bonnie, come on up. This morning, I want us to close by singing about the glory of God.

Notice, I opened the service with to God be the glory. And then we talked about no turning back. Let's end the service with worthy of worship. God is worthy of our worship because He is such a faithful, loving God.

He is one who has taken care of everything for us. We should do nothing. Never, ever think about going back. We should stand and praise Him for who He is.

Let's stand. Let's stand. Thank you.