A Gospel Greeting

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[0:00] So, Galatians chapter 1, beginning in verse 1. Paul, an apostle, not sent from men nor through the agency of 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.

Now remember, Acts chapter 13, 14 tell us it's about five or six different cities there. Verse 3. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins so that he might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.
Let's pray. Lord, thank you for your word. We pray that right now that you would use it by your spirit to convict us of our sin, to encourage us in the right path, to give us the right thoughts to think, the right attitudes to have, and the right actions that we might live out.
And we pray that you would be glorified in all things. In Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. I love to eat healthy food.
I just love it. Eating healthy food is one of the best things. As soon as I'm beginning to chow down on some sort of Brussels sprout, and I'm chewing that thing up, immediately, every cell in my body begins to go like, healthy, healthy, healthy.
[1:35] See? The bloodstream, it runs faster. The cells grow bigger. You're all looking at me like I'm crazy.

You know, I think that's the thing. Eating healthy food, if you could feel the effects of it immediately, but you feel nothing.
You eat this healthy food, and you eat this healthy food, and you go five or six weeks, and you're just kind of like, this tastes nasty. And I can't tell that it's doing anything.
Well, that is the analogy that I want to use to speak for just a moment and kind of get us into our topic this morning. because so often, we in the church have been plagued with emotions and feelings.
We try to feel our way toward God. We try to use our emotions to understand things. So, the preaching of the Word on a Sunday morning, oftentimes, the one thing we come expecting is that I want to feel something.
[2:44] And when I don't feel something and leave, I kind of feel like, well, maybe that wasn't for me today. But I would argue with you that the way you ought to view the preaching of the Word, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, is very much like health food in the sense that you take it in, you take it in, you take it in, but you are not expected, nor even promised, to feel something or to feel it working in your life.

You know, the Bible tells us that we walk not by sight, but by faith. And too often, we've used our feelings as a replacement for sight.
The atheist wants to see evidence of God, and oftentimes, we as Christians act just like them because we want to feel something as we progress through life.
But God has never promised us to feel something. He's promised that what He says is true. And in what He says that is true, we hang on to it. And just like that good, healthy food, the vitamins and all the other things work on us without us feeling it, the more that you dive into the Word, the more you hear the preaching of the Word, the more you get into the Gospel and understand it, it will work in you to make you more like Christ as you should be.
And so Paul opens his letter, and it's fascinating to me that he just says, I'm Paul, I've got people with me, to you bunch of churches in Galatia, but here's the big deal.
[4:19] The big deal is, I didn't make myself an apostle. God did that. And the God that I want to give you grace and peace, He's going to do so because His Son has given Himself for our sins, to

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rescue us from this present evil age.

In other words, Paul's greeting is, grace and peace to you built upon the foundation of the Gospel. He has no other way to greet you.
He's not going to say grace and peace to you because I like you. Grace and peace to you because you guys were friendly to me. But it's grace and peace to you because of what Christ has done.
And so what we want to do this morning is we want to understand then is this letter is going to get us right into the meat of this world. It's going to get us right into where the rubber meets the road. How do we live life in this world?
Paul bases his greeting upon these two things. What Christ has done and why He has done it. And so that's what I want us to talk about this morning.
[5:24] These two things. First of all, just so you know, we're going to be almost entirely in verse 4 of these five verses. What Christ has done, that very first part of that verse says this, that He gave Himself for our sins.

And I want you to notice three things about this particular phrase. Number one, Christ gave Himself. It shows His willingness to be sacrificed for our sins. He was not forced.
He was not coerced. Many times people like to say that God committed cosmic child abuse by having His Son die upon the cross. But the problem is, is that number one, just because Jesus is a Son doesn't mean that He's a child.
Right? And number two, He went willingly. It was His desire as much as the Father's for Him to come and to die for our sin. And while we're on it, you can notice at the end of verse 4, the Father, it was all according to His will.
The Father is not some angry God that Jesus tries to placate. As a matter of fact, Jesus came into this world, John 3.16, because God so loved this world.
[6:36] It was the Father and the Son willing for the Son to sacrifice for our sins. The second thing I want you to notice is that He gave Himself for our sins.

I want to talk about that word for. That word means in place of, in behalf of, as a substitute for.
In other words, Jesus is the substitute for our sin. Now, we don't normally think of it this way. We normally think of it as a substitute for our punishment.
But just bear with me for a second. Being the substitute for our sin means that whatever our sins are, they're a curse.
They're the breaking of God's law. Whatever our sins deserve, death and hell. Whatever that's going to happen to sin, they'll be judged and punished.
[7:34] These very things are the things that happen to Christ. He becomes a curse for us. Galatians 3.13 He is going to face death on our behalf.

He suffers under the wrath of God. That's why He prayed, Lord, if this cup can pass from Me. So Jesus gave Himself in place of our sins.
Now let's just talk for a moment. About what do we mean when we say sins? Too much is not understood here. The idea of sin is really breaking God's law.
That's the big theological idea behind it. But this particular word is the word that means missing the mark. Missing the mark.
If you've ever done any target practice of any kind, you know that if you shoot a gun, bow, whatever it is, and you get close to the bullseye, you and I are pretty happy with that.
[8:36] We feel like that's pretty good. We want to get closer. We want to get closer. We want to get it to where we can get it perfect. But if we can just get them all right there around it, we're pretty happy with that. That's sort of good enough. But this word means that you've missed the mark.

In other words, what God wants from us is for us to perfectly hit the bullseye with all of our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. And when we miss that, it's called sin.
Let me see if I can explain it this way. We are supposed to have law-perfect righteousness. Let me just say that again this way.
In order to be with God forever, you and I must have a law-perfect righteousness. Which means that of all the laws that God has ever established in His Word, we cannot, from birth to death, ever disobey any single one of them in thought, word, or action.
We can't disobey it either internally, because think about murder, right? Murder is also anger, right? So we can't disobey it internally. We can't disobey it externally.

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[9:55] We can't disobey it positively or negatively. Positively, what I mean, the commandment, do not murder, also means to protect life positively and don't take life negatively.

So in other words, what I'm saying to you is that sin is the lack of perfection. We've broken God's law.
And all it would take is to break one law for us to be lawbreakers of all of it. Look at James 2, verse 10-11.
James says that whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he's become guilty of all. For he who said, do not commit adultery, also said, do not murder.
Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do commit murder, you've become a transgressor of the law. Sin is missing the mark.
[10:56] It's a lack of perfection. And Christ gave himself for our sins. For our missing the mark.

Now this is a hopeful thing for us. This is a hopeful thing because one of the things that you and I need to do is we need to believe that every one of us starts out life separated from God.
Every one of us starts out life as sinners. As a matter of fact, John Newton wrote the song about us. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch.
It should be our constant refrain to say to everyone that I am the wretch the song refers to. We start out life as sinners.
We have broken God's law and we can do nothing to pay Him back because everything that we have is tainted by our sin. But the other thing that we need to hold on to is that He gave Himself for our sins.
[12:04] He took the punishment that our sins deserve so that we might go free. We have been enslaved by our sin. We've been enslaved by our selfishness.

And as sinners, all we care about is us and our people. We don't care that this world belongs to Christ. We don't care that God rules this world.
And as sinners, we can do nothing in life to please Him. that is why Christ gave Himself for our sins. And this ought to be the very thing that causes us to be thankful because of all that Christ has done for us. It ought to be that thing that drives us to give Him praise and drives us to give Him worship.
And so what we must do in light of the fact that Christ has given Himself for our sins is we need to live with the glory of Christ, the cross of Christ as the center of our lives.
[13:08] We need to live with the cross of Christ, the gospel of Christ, always front and center in our lives. That's going to require us to do two things.

It's going to require us to remember that our problem is always sin. Our problem is always sin. Our problem is not that we were born small.
Our problem is not that we've been treated badly. Our problem is not that our mental health is poor. Our problem is not that we lack resources to make life easy.
Our life is not that we've faced too much suffering. Our problem is not that we have diseases and sicknesses and trials. Our problem is that we are sinners.
Those around us are sinners. This earth is full of sinners and this world is cursed by that sin. The problem is always sin.
[14:21] The moment we stop calling sin, sin is the moment we've stepped off into hopelessness. example that I would use and maybe you'll find it controversial maybe you won't but so often we look at the person addicted to alcohol and call them an alcoholic or say that they have a disease but the Bible doesn't offer hope out of that by the cross of Christ because we just call it a problem.

Matter of fact the Bible calls that drunkenness. The Bible calls that being a drunkard and for the drunkard there is great hope because Christ died for our sins.
We need to remember that the problem is always sin and we need to remember that the solution is always the gospel. Only Christ giving himself for our sins is the solution.
marriage difficulties come because one spouse sins against another spouse who tends to respond sinfully to being sinned against.
Paul David Tripp in his book wrote that sinful people respond sinfully to being sinned against. And if that is the primary problem that's within our marriages is that we sin against one another and the gospel is our hope then there is great hope for all marriage difficulties because of the cross of Christ.
[16:00] And if you're not a Christian I pray I pray that you can see what it is that Christ has done. I pray that your heart would be broken over your own sin that you would see your sin nailed to the

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cross and that today you would turn to him.

You are a sinner and one day you're going to stand before God and you're going to give an account of your life. What will you tell God then?
Do you think that he's just going to wink at your sin and let it go? No he's not and here's the reason why. Because he gave his only begotten son for that sin.
You want to know how wicked and ugly and nasty our sin is? Look at the cross. Look at the cross. This is what Christ has done.
I want us now to then turn to our second point today and that is why has Christ done it? Why has Christ done it?
[17:02] This is the last part of verse four and it gives us this word it says to rescue us from this present evil age. He gave himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age age so that he might rescue us from this present evil age.

It's the purpose for why he takes our sin. So let's break this down two parts. One, let's talk about this word rescue for just a second.
The word rescue here, there's a lot of different words for being saved and rescued and delivered in the New Testament. This one only occurs eight times and it means to be snatched out of bondage or plucked up, delivered, rescued then therefore, right?
So we're in bondage to something and his rescue comes and sets us free, emancipates us, plucks us out of that bondage. Matter of fact, to illustrate this, this word ends up being a little Easter egg from Exodus chapter 3 verse 8.
Where God tells Moses, so I've come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them up from the land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite.
[18:32] In other words, God, there at the burning bush, looks at Moses and tells him, I have come down to pluck out of bondage to rescue my people out of Egypt.

And here's the reason this is so important. One of the things that we often overlook and don't really know about is that Israel, though they had become enslaved, were quite cozy in Egypt.
They had begun to worship the gods of the Egyptians. They had begun to forget the things that they were taught by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph. They had begun to adopt the culture around them, the world view around them.
As a matter of fact, we see in Joshua 24, verse 14, as Joshua is telling them, listen, you've got to pick who you're going to serve today. And he says, now therefore fear the Lord, serve him in sincerity, and put away the gods your fathers served beyond the river, and in Egypt, and serve the Lord.
Israel had left God and began to worship the pantheon of the Egyptian gods. So when he comes and he says he's going to deliver them out of the power of the Egyptians, he's not just saying they were in physical slavery and that was the only problem.
[19:50] No, the primary problem is that they were in spiritual slavery worshipping other gods. And so if you can imagine with every plague that God brought, he was destroying another one of the Egyptian gods.

He bloodied the Nile, he brought out the frogs, he destroyed the livestock, he brought the hell stones, the darkness, the flies, all these things, hinting at one of the gods of Egypt so that you get a ruined Osiris, Isis, Ra, and even Pharaoh himself, and here's Israel with their hearts entangled with strings of affections to the gods of Egypt, and God delivers them by plucking them out like a tree pulled out by its roots, to take them out of that bondage and put them into a new land.
This word, we're supposed to see that and understand that, as Christ comes to rescue us, he is plucking us out of this present evil age, removing like a tree by its roots all our strings of affections to this world.
And that's the second thing we need to talk about, is what is this present evil age? Let's break it down, the word present, this is right here, right now. As a matter of fact, Jesus lived in the present evil age, Paul lived in the present evil age, you and I live in the present evil age, and it will be the present evil age until the present evil age ends at the second coming of Christ.
It's an evil age. And here's the interesting thing about this word evil, the root idea behind this word evil is about an imperfection, very much like what we've already talked about, but in this case, it's an imperfection that means a uselessness.

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[21:47] It's a little bit like the house we bought in Port Lavaca when we moved there. We bought this house and we walked in, I go into the living room and we've already moved everything in, we hadn't noticed anything and then all of a sudden there in the living room under the window, I kind of noticed something and I began to push on the wall under the window and as I did, the wall pushed past the slab and I could see outside.

The wall plate, the horizontal two by four that gets connected to the slab had rotted completely out. This word evil means to rot to such a degree that it is useless.
That's what that wall plate was. It had rotted until it was useless. That is what Paul is saying that this age is. It is rotted and cursed, it is evil, and it is of no benefit to us.
And you have to understand where that came from. And where that came from, if you'll connect Genesis chapter 3 with Romans chapter 8, you will see that because man rebelled against God and sin against God, God subjected this world to the curse.
As a matter of fact, it's the same exact idea. The futility that God subjected this world to is the same idea you get in the book of Ecclesiastes. Vanity of vanities.
[23:20] All is vanity. The last word in this phrase is the word age. This word age is a period of time. And the Bible particularly speaks of this age and the age to come.

This age and the age to come. As a matter of fact, a good example of this would be Matthew 12, 32. Matthew 12, 32 where he's been speaking about the unpardonable sin.
We're not going to talk about what that is today. We are going to see that it is unforgivable. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven to him. Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him either in this age or the age to come.
This age is where we live now. The age to come is once we get past the second coming. It's the eternal age, meaning that this is a sin that's an eternal sin that can never, ever, ever be forgiven.
This age then is this period of time and just to cut to it, it's the period of time from the fall to the second coming. And then one day when the age to come comes in, it will be completely different from this age.
[24:38] Paul is saying that Christ, he gave himself for our sins to rescue us out of this present evil age.

What that means for us is that we need to believe a couple of things and one of those things that we need to believe is that this present evil age is not as it was created to be.
This is not what it was supposed to be. When Adam sinned and God cursed the ground, it set off a chain of events. humans began to die, get sick, and have cancer.
The earth began to destroy human life through earthquakes, volcanoes, and sinkholes. The weather is after us because of the hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, droughts, and forest fires.
Animals now fear us, hate us, run from us, or perhaps seek to destroy us. The point is that this is not how it was supposed to be.
[25:39] The harmonious relationship that man had with the creation was destroyed. The harmonious relationship we had with one another destroyed. We use one another, we curse one another, we manipulate one another.

Marriages are rocked, parenting is a minefield, our jobs are meaningless and useless many times. This is not how the world was supposed to be. This present evil age is a ruined version of what God has in store for us.
But the second thing you need to believe is that Christ is rescuing us from it. And how is He rescuing us from this? How does taking our sin make it so that He rescues us from this?
Because Him taking our sin is taking the punishment deserved by the first Adam and now, because He's raised from the dead, He gets to recreate the world.
Watch that parallel between Genesis 1 and the work of Christ. Genesis 1 and the creation, what you have is you have the creation of the cosmos, of the planets, of the stars, down to the land and the sea and the animals and the plants and finally, culminates in man being created.
[27:00] But under the second Adam, there will be a second creation. He will recreate this world. But He doesn't start with the cosmos and He doesn't start with the animals or the weather.

He doesn't start with our culture or with our government. He starts with the individual. He changes the heart of the individual and then He takes that individual and He sends that individual out to preach the gospel so that other individuals are saved and that the gospel will be preached until the full number of those to be saved will be saved and then the end will come and in the end, in that

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moment, there will be the reverse of the curse upon culture, government, society, animals, plants, weather, planets, stars.
The curse will be reversed on all of it. That's what the scriptures teach us about the new heavens and the new earth. This is why Jesus says, blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. This is a ruined place but this is our home. Yes, when we die, we go on to be with the Lord. Yes, there is heaven and I'm probably saying some things to either make you scratch your head but just hold on with me because here's the thing, we're being rescued from this present evil age one day when He comes in the age to come there will be new heavens and new earth, there will be a reversed curse, recompense will be given, we will have this promised land, the true promised land that we live in.
You see, we will not live in an ethereal spirit, untouchable form. You and I, when it's all over, it will be a corporal existence.
[28:58] I'm going to be able to shake your hand, we're going to be able to give each other a hug, we're going to be able to run, we're going to be able to eat because it is this world remade and the only dark thing that will be left in the new creation will be the scars in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This world is our home. we're just waiting for Christ to come back and take it back over. Recreate it. So what we need to do, beloved, is we need to let this rescue that Christ is giving to us teach us how to live in the here and now.
No matter your world view, no matter how you look at things, whether you agree with me or disagree with me, you cannot deny that this world is full of sorrows and troubles and heartaches. And there's all kinds of people with all kinds of world views trying to figure out how they're going to deal with it, how they're going to get through, how they're going to think about it. Historically, two of those groups have been the first group and that is the people who will try to dull pain with pleasure.
[30:14] They will try to indulge in pleasure in order to let their minds let go of it. They'll try to indulge in pleasure in order to give them something to look forward in order to get through it.

You know people like this. You know people that just dull their pain with the pleasure. There are others who for them they think the pleasure route is the wrong route, but for them they grin and bear it.
I mean it is what it is. I can't do anything about it, so I might as well just grin and bear it and get through it. For them there's virtue in having a stiff upper lip. For them there's something about being able to pull myself up by my bootstraps and not living in a fantasy world in pleasure.
But the problem is that both of these are not Christian ways of living. These are not Christian ways of living. The Christian, we understand that there's suffering in this world, but it has a purpose.
It has a place that it came from. And for us, suffering is an opportunity to raise the banner of Christ. For us, suffering is an opportunity to promote Christ. For us, suffering is an opportunity for us to grow in Christ's likeness.
[31:20] For us, suffering is nothing more than just a tool. Yes, it hurts. Yes, it's difficult. Yes, we have trouble. But the point is is that as we face this world, as we face our trials, we're supposed to do so with our eyes fixed upon Christ.

So His rescue, it prepares us to live in this world. world. His rescue prepares us. Even though He's rescued us from this present evil age, He's left us here because His rescue prepares us to live here. And it prepares us three ways. Number one, it changes our heart and our motives for why we do what we do. Listen, you can hear me say all these things and you can walk away thinking to yourself, yeah, but God doesn't ever help me.
You know, I don't like the suffering. I don't know how many times I have sat down across the table from someone doing some counseling with them and hear them talk about whatever problem it is that they have and them saying and looking for, how can this problem come to an end?
How can I get out of this depression? How can I get out of this anxiety? How can I get out of this problem that I'm in? And the fact of the matter is that I'm not sure that you should be getting out of it.
[32:40] I think you need to use it as a tool to shape you and mold you into the image of Christ. What is your motive for living this life? It also prepares us because His rescue empowers us to long and crave to live for Christ.

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I mean, if you don't have a desire to live for Christ, if you don't have a desire to face this world for the sake of Christ, for His glory, for His promotion, Christian, then are you really Christian?
Third, the rescue of Christ prepares us to live in this world because it encourages us to lean on Him in the middle of suffering. Not just to get through it, but to be content with the suffering so long as it promotes the goodness and grace of God.
God. But His rescue also teaches us to live in this world because we know that this is not how it's supposed to be. We know what our purpose in life ought to be.
And thirdly, we know who's in charge of all things. So Christian, He has given Himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age.
[34:05] And one of the things I just want to say in closing is that every single one of us, we were born into this present evil age. We were all born under the first Adam. You see, that's the way it is.

You're either in Adam or you're in Christ. There are only two kinds of people in this world, either in Adam or in Christ. We're not born in this world in Christ. We're born in Adam.
We're born in sin. But you can be reborn in Christ. And you're not going to be reborn because you've been baptized or you pray a prayer or walk an aisle or do good deeds.
No, that new birth is going to come because He wants it to come. He will save you. Your part is to repent of your sin.
And believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, there's no amount of persuasion that anyone can make of your heart. It is all by God's grace.
[35:13] The question is, is He calling you? Is He calling you that you need to surrender your life to Him? Let's pray.

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