

The Gospel's Seriousness

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[0 : 00] So Galatians chapter 1 verse 6 through 10, picking up where we left off from last time, and hear the word of the Lord. Paul writing to the churches in Galatia.

I'm amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel, which is really not another.

Only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed.

As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed.

For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were trying, still trying to please men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

[1 : 13] Let's pray together. Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the giving of this Word by Your Holy Spirit, giving us this revelation.

We pray, Father, that we would listen to Your voice in Your Word. We would hear what You have spoken. And we would compare everything in our lives to that.

Help us to love You and to love what You have done through Your Son. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

Sometimes we give our trust to people who are intent on leading us astray. Such as older brothers. I'm about five years of age.

He's about seven. We're living down near Beaumont, Texas. And we're living on the same property with my grandparents that they've donated to the church that I grew up in where my dad was pastor.

[2 : 19] We didn't have bathrooms. And so they were in the middle of adding bathrooms onto the church building. And they were digging out a hole for the septic tank to go into.

And if you've ever dug a hole in southeast Texas, you have to always have a shovel and a bucket because those things fill up with water fast.

And we were told, because the hole was deep, not to go around the hole and play. And we made sure she couldn't see us.

And as we're sitting there around the hole, my older brother and I, we're playing. We're throwing things in the hole. We've got boards that we've taken from Grandpa's shop. We're pushing them across the water to each other.

We're making waves. And my older brother looks at me and he says, Hey, you know what? I said, what? If you stand on this board, it'll hold you up and I can make waves and you could surf.

[3 : 29] Well, needless to say, in God's providence, my mother walked out of the house at about that time and saw me disappear right into the water.

And I did not think I was going to survive because I can't swim very well. And the sides are nothing but clay mess and you can't get any purchase on it at all to get out.

But then this hand grabs the back of my shirt and just pulls me up out of the water. And of course, spankings ensue. But I always thought about that.

You know, my brother has always been doing things like that to me. Always had an intent to kind of lead me astray a little bit, get me in trouble and tell me to do certain things. But here's the thing.

That's kind of a benign thing and maybe I could have died. But it is far more dangerous when someone is misleading us about the Gospel. And there is a seriousness about the Gospel that we need to take.

[4 : 30] Yes, the Gospel is a beautiful story. Yes, the Gospel is simple. But the Gospel can be gotten wrong. And Paul here warns in verses 6-10 about getting the Gospel wrong.

And as Christians, we can get the Gospel right, but we need to understand both the dangers of getting it wrong and we need to have the discernment on when it's right.

And so I want to cover those two things in our sermon this morning. The dangers of getting the Gospel wrong. Let me give you the first danger.

There's four of them. The first danger is that if you get the Gospel wrong, if you're preaching a false Gospel, if you're believing a false Gospel, you abandon the triune God.

You abandon the triune God. Look back in your Bible at verse 6 of chapter 1 where Paul says, I'm amazed that you're so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ.

[5 : 33] He knows that they are abandoning and being taught a false Gospel. And what he's saying is that by believing this false Gospel, they are deserting Him.

The Him is the one who calls us by the grace of Christ. So we get the Father who calls us to salvation by the grace of Christ.

So you get the triune God there. You can even go and look at John 6.44 that no one comes to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. It is the Father who does the drawing, who does the calling to salvation.

So what Paul is warning the Galatians and warning us is that if we get the Gospel wrong, we completely and entirely miss God.

We abandon Him. We desert Him. We run from Him. And if you are listening to the preaching of a false Gospel, if you're persuaded to believe a false Gospel, then just like the Galatians, you are quickly deserting God.

[6 : 43] There's a seriousness about this. There's a second danger. The second danger is that we believe bad news. That's what we're doing. We're believing bad news.

Look at the very end of verse 6 where he says, for a different Gospel. And then in verse 7 he says, which is really not another.

And you're supposed to fill in the blank Gospel. In other words, what he's saying is he's trying to clarify that just because he says you're believing another Gospel, Paul doesn't really believe that there are other believable, viable Gospel messages out there.

He is trying to say there is not another Gospel. You remember that the word Gospel means good news. So what Paul in essence is saying to the Galatians is that if you believe another Gospel, you're not believing anything that really is good news.

because what this is going to do is lead to being accursed. You'll notice that he says that those who do such a thing, they are to be accursed.

[7 : 55] Verse 8 and 9. Twice he says if someone preaches a false Gospel, they're to be accursed. They're to be accursed. Let me give you the background of this word.

It comes from the book of Joshua. It's an interesting word because in the book of Joshua, God has called the Israelites as they go to take over Jericho.

He tells them, I want you to devote everything to destruction. Don't keep anything at all once Jericho is destroyed. But one man, Achan, once he got into the city, was tempted and saw all the things that were there and decided to keep some of these things for himself.

When that sin was found out, it was said that he took things that had been under the ban. Things that were accursed.

In other words, things that were devoted to destruction. So when Paul uses this, the Jewish mind would immediately begin to hear this word.

[9 : 01] They would begin to think that if someone preaches a false Gospel, they are devoted to destruction. That's why believing the false Gospel is bad news. The third danger, the third danger is that anyone can be a false teacher.

This is a sobering part of this. I stand here as one. I'm just, I'm a little nervous because there's nothing that says that I won't be one of these.

I mean, I don't want to be. But you and I have to recognize that Paul, hear what he says. He says, if we, if we or an angel should preach to you a Gospel contrary to the one that we've already preached.

Paul is saying, if I were to come back and preach to you a Gospel that's different from the Gospel you've already received. He's saying that there is the possibility of false teachers that anyone could

be this and the source of this false Gospel could be from trusted human instruments. When he says we, he means himself. He's looking at the other apostles. He's looking at other leaders that he knows and he's saying, listen, if we were to come back and preach something different, we should be accursed.

[10 : 34] Any church organization that decides to preach a different Gospel, it's a false Gospel.

It doesn't matter who started it. It doesn't matter how trustworthy it's been in the past. If it doesn't line up with what the Gospel is as we have received it, then we cannot believe it.

The only safeguard against this is to judge every preaching of the Gospel by the Scriptures.

And I would even say that one of the helps that we have to do that is a confession of faith.

Historically, churches have all had confessions of faith.

As a Baptist church, we have what's called the Baptist faith and message. It's a summary of what the Bible teaches and you're to use it to judge if someone preaching the truth or not.

[11 : 38] There's been a time where some people would say, well, we have the Bible and I say to you, yes, but it must be interpreted. So we need to know that we're preaching the right things. We need to judge whether or not this is the Gospel or not.

Because theology matters. What you believe forms what you do. And what you do is built on what you believe.

But not only does Paul warn them about human instruments, he warns them about spiritual, angelic visions and appearances. If an angel from heaven should come and preach to you another Gospel. I don't know how many times people have wanted to have God drop out of the sky Himself or send some sort of angel to speak and to say that He's there and to preach some sort of message to them.

Let me tell you something. If you hear a voice, if you see an angel, your first response ought to be skepticism. That should be your first response.

[12 : 48] Because if he's preaching something, it has to be judged by what has already been given. Not how we feel. Not how it makes us think.

Do you know how many people have seen an angel, had a vision, received a message and it was wrong? How about Joseph Smith, Ellen G. White or Mohammed?

All seeing visions that led them astray into false gospels. Beloved, the danger is that we are a little loose sometimes with our language about wanting to hear God speak.

And I'm saying that if you hear something, you need to be skeptical that it comes from God without checking it by the Scriptures because it is the gospel we have received that we stand on.

The fourth and final danger that Paul puts in here is becoming a man pleaser. In verse 10, he asks the question, am I seeking the favor of men or am I trying to please men?

[13 : 59] Basically, the idea is this, is that those who preach a false gospel end up being appreciated and liked or at least ignored by the world. But those who preach the true gospel are the ones who end up persecuted.

And Paul will talk about that as he goes through the book of Galatians. The world around us hates the true gospel. But they love the false gospel.

You look at all these places that are preaching a false gospel and look at how many people show up to hear a false gospel. It's astounding.

Those are the dangers then of preaching and believing a false gospel. Let's then turn our attention to a discernment because the question is asked, how do we discern between the right gospel, the true gospel, and a false gospel?

And I am so glad that you asked that question because that is what I'm going to talk about next.

Thank you. I want to give you five categories. Five categories that you need to look at and say, is someone preaching a true gospel or a false gospel?

[15 : 15] And these five categories help us to just sort of look, ask the right questions, and sort of discern. Okay? Here's the first category, the person of Jesus. What do they say about Jesus?

We know that the truth is that He's 100% God, 100% man. He was the Messiah, He's the Son of God. He had one man, one person, with two natures, human and divine.

Those two natures are not mixed, and the second person of the Trinity has always been divine.

When He took on flesh, He was 100% God. When He was up on the cross, He was 100% God.

He's never stopped being 100% God. But I want you to listen, or I'm going to read to you a quote, and I think it will be up here on the screen. This is a quote from a sermon not too long ago by a

famous speaker, and this is what this person said.

He could have helped Himself up until the point where He said, I condemn, I condemn, I commend my spirit into your hands. You know that point on the cross, Jesus, He prayed, Father, I commend my spirit to you, right?

[16 : 25] So, He could have helped Himself up until that point, and at that point, He couldn't do nothing for Himself anymore. He had become sin. He was no longer the Son of God. He was sin.

I hope that that makes you just cringe. If it doesn't make you cringe, you need to understand, He never stopped being the Son of God. This is a famous speaker that a lot of people listen to named Joyce Meyer.

Do not listen to that false teacher. This is how you spot a false gospel. You look for how they denigrate the divinity of Jesus Christ. They will downplay it, or at some point at the cross, maybe He lost some of His divinity.

But you need to see and ask the questions, what do they teach about Jesus? How long has He been the Son of God? What is His nature? So as you examine false gospels, other gospels, what do they say about Jesus?

Secondly, let's look at the work of Jesus. Now the work of Jesus includes a lot of different things. It includes the virgin birth, His sinless life, His death for our sins, His resurrection, His ascension, His interceding, His ruling, His reigning for His people, the final victory, everything.

[17 : 44] But in particular, when you get to His work, false gospels have a tendency to take the work of Christ on the cross and manipulate it just a little bit. And sometimes it's not so much what they say as what they don't say.

This was a tweet, a tweet by a famous pastor.

He said, Jesus bled and died for us so that we could lay claim to the promise of financial prosperity. That's Creflo Dollar.

I mean, this again, this is how you spot false gospels. What do they teach about the work of Christ? What did Jesus accomplish upon the cross?

What did He do there? Many times you need to look and ask, what else are they shoe-horning into the death of Jesus that shouldn't be there?

[18 : 49] Third, let's talk about the condition of man. The Bible teaches that the condition of man is that we are creatures of God.

We're different from God. We're made in the image of God, but that image has been ruined by the fall of Adam. We are sinners because of what Adam did, and we've inherited Adam's guilt and corruption.

We are sinners because we have our own actual sin, because we've broken God's law. So, the Scriptures teach us that we are dead in sins. As a matter of fact, we're dead in sins because we're rebels.

But this past December, this particular pastor preached this about mankind. I want to talk to you today about recognizing who you are.

It's easy to go through life being defined by how we were raised, what we saw modeled growing up, what people have said about us, our mistakes we made. We end up wearing these labels like average, not talented, unattractive.

[19 : 54] This distorted image of ourselves is keeping us from being who God created us to be. Now, you may not catch this one immediately, but here's the force of what he's saying.

The force of what he's saying is that God has a goal for us and how He created us, and the thing that keeps us from getting there are the labels that we wear from other people, not that we're rebels against God.

Beloved, this takes the condition of man and says it's not as bad as we thought. It's just some bad thinking that needs to change. But that is not the truth.

The truth is that we are wretched sinners deserving of death and hell and there is no good in us at all. I said this a few weeks ago. You know the book title that says Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

And the subtitle ought to read There Are No Good People. Obviously, this is the king of all of them. Joel Osteen is who said this.

[20 : 59] But this is how you spot a false gospel. You look for what it is they say about man. What they say about his condition. What is his problem? What does it mean that he's a sinner?

It's an important question to ask. Fourth, is the response of man. The response of man. The Bible clearly teaches that the response to the gospel ought to be repentance and faith. That's it. Repentance and faith. Now I want to illustrate that for you because repentance and faith is a little difficult sometimes for us to grasp. I want to go back to the Old Testament in the book of Numbers.

The children of Israel have complained against God. And so God sent snakes. And the snakes start biting people. And as the snakes bite people, people start dying.

And so Moses calls out to God. And God says, I want you to take bronze, make it in the shape of one of the snakes, put it on a pole, and take it outside the camp and put it out there. And tell them that if they're bitten by a snake, look to the serpent upon the pole and they'll be healed.

[22 : 09] And so Moses makes the snake, he puts it upon the pole, takes it to the outside of the camp, and if you've been bitten by a snake, if you are on death's doorstep, then you should stop doing whatever it is you're doing and look at the snake.

And just the look heals you. Now that's a description of both faith and repentance. Because faith and repentance is that you and I are dead in our sins, we are under the wrath of God, and whatever it is we're doing in life, the sin that we're committing, the way we're trying to fix ourselves, we just need to stop, put it down, and look to Christ.

And what false gospels do is they tend to say you need to repent and believe and be baptized. And be obedient to the law.

And join a church. And whatever else they want to add. They add other things to that gospel.

But there is no adding. It is repent and believe. You don't need baptism to express your faith.

Baptism is something you do once you have faith and repentance and you're trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[23 : 33] This is how you spot a false gospel. Final discernment is the results of salvation. Salvation results in lots of good and wonderful gifts from the Lord.

We're forgiven of our sin. We're declared righteous. We're adopted into His family. We're sanctified by the blood. Washed clean. But I want us to deal particularly with the problem that comes up and it's with the doctrine of justification.

The doctrine of justification states that God is a judge and based upon the work of Jesus on the cross, His sinless life and His death, those who trust Jesus, God the Father declares them righteous.

He doesn't make them righteous. He doesn't transform them into righteousness. He doesn't take their faith and so gives them righteousness. But because of their faith, He credits the righteousness of Jesus to their account.

They are covered with the righteousness of Christ. That's a very, very nuanced difference from what so many people are teaching us.

[24 : 40] As a matter of fact, we'll go back to Joyce Meyer for a second who said this actually just a couple of months ago. When you begin to believe I am the righteousness of God in Christ, there's going to be a little battle, a little bit of a battle.

If there's anything the devil does not want you to know, it is that. And up to that point, I agree. He does not want you to have a good attitude towards yourself.

He doesn't want you to like yourself. That is equating the righteousness from Christ that it contains not law-perfect righteousness, but it contains pleasant thoughts about yourself.

Maybe you can't see it, but the point is this. Righteousness is not something from us. It is Jesus' righteousness.

And we're covered with that righteousness. What she is suggesting is that the results of salvation is that we get to have good thoughts about ourselves.

[25 : 47] Beloved, there's nothing wrong with having a good thought about yourself. Sort of. But righteousness is not that. You spot false Gospels because they mess with the person of Christ.

They mess with the work of Christ. They mess with the condition of man. The response to the Gospel as well as the results of salvation.

And if you're not a Christian, if you're not a Christian, I want you to understand that your only hope in this life is the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know, maybe all of this stuff, you feel like you're a Christian, you believe some, or not all of this, or some of this is confusing to you. Let's just cut through the clutter for just a second. Let's talk

about one thing we know for absolute certain.

Listen, every single person in this room is going to die. That is coming. And my question to you is this.

[26 : 57] Where will you go when you die? Maybe you don't believe in eternity like the Bible teaches, but I believe that the Bible teaches it and it's true that there is an eternity.

And the Bible teaches that you either go to be with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for all eternity, or you go to hell suffering under the wrath of God for all eternity.

The only way to be with the Father is for you to repent of your sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. None of us are born saved.

None of us are born on the path towards heaven. We're all born needing to repent and believe. So I want to close with three final words to you as Christians.

And I want you to really listen carefully to what I'm going to say. The first two things are pretty simple, but when I get to this third thing, we'll see. Three applications.

[28 : 06] Number one is that you need to know the Gospel. You need to know the Gospel. You need to understand the Gospel. You need to believe the Gospel, but you need to know the Gospel. And in God's providence, guess what we're doing?

We're preaching the Gospel. We're preaching through the book of Galatians. I'm not going to try to tell you what I think. I'm going to try to tell you what the book of Galatians thinks. And when we get through with the book of Galatians, you're going to understand a little bit more about who Christ is, about what Christ has done, about what our condition is, about the results of salvation, and what a proper response is going to be.

You're going to understand more about that, but you've got to be here for these sermons. Some of you, I know, life is taking you places that you just can't. So listen, we record them, we put them up on the internet, download them, listen to them.

You know, I don't know how long it will take us, but by summertime we'll be done with this. I guarantee you, we'll be done. And if the Lord were to take me home right then and there, I would be happy because we've made it through Galatians, we've preached the Gospel, and you know the truth.

So take it. Drink it down. Consume and know the Gospel. Secondly, let me just encourage you, stop listening to false teachers. I know that it's terrible to look at TV and see all the trash that's on TV and so you flip it over to one of these channels that has all of these people on there and you're going like, this isn't as bad as that other stuff.

[29 : 37] Well, if you're listening to a false teacher, it's just as bad as watching Game of Thrones. It's all trash and it needs to be turned off. Stop listening to that.

Instead, let me encourage you, you can look up Ligonier Ministries. You can look up Refnet. Let me tell you about Refnet. R-E-F-N-E-T. R-E-F-N-E-T. It's internet radio.

It's got 24 hours preaching music. It may not be, you know, modern music, but it's a lot of good traditional hymns and it's excellent. But you can't go wrong listening to Refnet. If you need to listen to some preaching, listen to Refnet.

But the final thing I want to say to you is this. Actually, let me pause. Let me have some water, please. I forgot my water bottle this morning.

Talking about those that preach prosperity gospel is a low-hanging fruit. It's easy to see how wrong it is. But I'm convinced that you and I as Christians we get the gospel wrong in the way we live.

[30 : 50] Like we know the right thing. We believe the right thing here. We believe the right thing here. But sometimes as we live these things out, we live as though we're not believing the real gospel.

And I just want to give you a few examples to challenge you and encourage you. when we do not obey when we do not obey as Christians, when we do not obey God, when we know what His Word says and what we're supposed to do, but we don't do it and therefore we sin against God, we're living as though we don't believe that Jesus is really divine.

If we really believe that He is divine, then we would see what He says in His Word and we would do all that we could all by the power of the Holy Spirit to obey Him and do what He says.

We would look at everything that He says in His Word and we would say this is from God. But because we disobey His Word, we live as though He's not really divine.

When husbands and wives get angry with each other, maybe you yell, maybe you get super short with each other or maybe you do the ever famous silent treatment which is a form of murder.
[32 : 09] It's pretending the person doesn't exist. You're saying that the forgiveness that Christ won for your spouse on the cross is not enough forgiveness for you to act in mercy and grace towards them.

You're saying that whatever Jesus forgave, that's fine, but this is above and beyond what Jesus forgave and I want to do something about this. They need to pay for what they have done to me. And when we respond sinfully to being sinned against, we're saying that the work of Christ upon the cross was not enough to be gracious and kind. When you look at your kids or your grandkids' behavior and you see them do something, you see them say something, you hear them believe something wrong and you're all flabbergasted and you say, well, I can't believe you did that. I can't believe you said that. I can't believe you think that. Right there, you're denying the condition of sin that they have.

You're denying that they're rebels before God. You're denying that their only hope is Jesus Christ and instead, you expect them to be perfect from the womb because they're from your DNA.
[33 : 22] But there's nothing in your DNA that's perfect. Why would you expect them to be perfect? You should absolutely look at your kids and expect that they're going to rebel, that they're going to hate God, that they're going to walk away from Him because they're sinners in need of the Gospel.

and when you have sin in your life and you hate it and some of you, some of you, I guarantee, I guarantee that there are some of you, you look at your sin and you feel worthless.

worthless. You look at this sin that you keep trying to get rid of and it just keeps coming back and your worthlessness begins to feel just so much deeper.

You begin to feel evil. You begin to feel wicked. You feel as though maybe this sin has condemned you before God and you begin to question whether or not you're really saved. You struggle to have any kind of assurance of salvation.

That assurance of salvation is like a leprechaun, elusive and non-existent. Because you've got sin in your life and there's some of you that you rake yourself over the coals.

[34 : 47] If you could, you would take a whip and you would beat yourself with it to try to pay God back for what it is you have done. Did you not know that by your fear, you are denying the truth of justification?

that if God has declared you righteous, then there is no sin that can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Beloved, we as Christians, though we believe the gospel rightly, many times we fail to live it out in our lives. We fail to think deeply about it. And that is why the Galatians fell to something like circumcision being added to the gospel.

you and I must know the gospel so that we are not led astray by our sin and behavior or by somebody else's teaching.

May God have mercy on us. Let's pray. for better