

Deserting the Gospel

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Preacher: Cedric Moss

[0 : 00] I'm astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you into the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel.

! Not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble 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 the one we preach to you, let him be accursed.

As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

For am I now seeking the approval of man or of God? Or am I trying to please man?

[1 : 00] If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. Let's pray together. Father, we're so grateful this morning that we're able to have your word, to read your word, and then to sit under the instruction of your word.

And we pause, Lord, asking that you would grant us illumination this morning, that you would open the eyes of our hearts, that we may hear from you and receive the truth of your word.

Lord, I pray, Lord, that you would grant us the ability to hear and heed your word this morning.

I pray that you would grant me grace to be faithful, to proclaim your truth that never changes.

Father, we pray in Jesus' name that you would grant to us your spirit abundantly to lead us in truth and to help me to proclaim the truth.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. How do you know that you've received and believed the true gospel?

[2 : 24] How do you know that? How do you know that you have received and believed the true gospel? Well, the letter of Galatians as a whole answers that question.

But these verses that we have come to this morning, although they're introducing the letter, I believe that these verses answer that question for us as well.

So from these five verses, here's how we can know that we have received the true gospel. The true gospel calls us into, not away from, the grace of Christ.

And the extent to which we understand this is the extent to which we will be protected from false gospels.

We will be able to guard against false gospels. We will recognize the false gospel. We will be able to guard against the false gospels. In our remaining time, I want to consider this truth.

[3 : 29] And for those of you who are taking notes, I've organized my thoughts under three headings. And the first is, deserting the gospel. That's what the Apostle Paul tells the Galatians they were doing.

He tells them they were deserting the gospel, and he says so in the strongest terms. Now, the word gospel is thrown around and used all the time by many people in many different contexts.

But largely the word is misunderstood, and the word is misused. We have people talking about gospel music. And they talk about gospel concerts and gospel stations and gospel preaching.

But the truth is, when you listen to the music they're talking about, you go to the concerts, or you tune into the stations, or you listen to the preaching, it is void of the gospel.

It is void of the gospel. You hear songs about experience, and you hear people talk about all manner of things. But they do not address the biblical gospel.

[4 : 42] And quite frankly, this is astounding. I mean, one example is, when they talk about gospel music, largely it means black music. It means music sung by blacks, largely in the United States.

It's a genre. They say it's gospel music, and that's what it is. And so much of it is just about life and how hard it is, and how to get by, and how to feel good. And that's not the gospel. That's not the

gospel.

So I want to begin by defining the gospel. The word gospel means good news. It means glad tidings. It is the best news that you will ever hear.

You can imagine what you think is the best news that you've heard or want to hear, and the gospel is better than that. And the reason is that the gospel is God's news proclaimed to sinners.

He proclaims to sinners that he is no longer angry with them. He is no longer upset with them.

Because of the sacrificial death of Christ on their behalf, they can be forgiven of their sins.

[5 : 48] They can be reconciled to God by simply believing the good news. That is the gospel. But many people don't see the gospel as good news.

And the reason they don't see the gospel as good news is that they don't recognize that there's bad news. And the bad news is that every single person, every single sinner is the object of God's wrath.

Scripture is very clear of that. That every single sinner is under the righteous, deserving wrath of God unless they are reconciled to God.

And when you hear that or you understand that the only way to be reconciled to God is through Jesus Christ, then the gospel becomes good news. Because you recognize that you are an object of the bad news.

Because the only way to escape the wrath of God is to run to Jesus and trust in him as a refuge.

And so the apostle Paul was clearly upset with the Galatians because they were moving away from the gospel.

[7 : 02] They had heard the gospel, but they were moving away from it. Now, it is easy to miss how upset Paul was. It is easy to miss that he was gravely upset with the Galatians.

And one of the ways that we are able to see that is that the letter of Galatians does not have a signature mark of the apostle Paul in all of his other letters to churches.

When Paul would write to those churches, after greeting them, he would then begin to pray for them or offer a praise to God or some kind of blessing, some thanks to God for them, for what God was doing in their midst.

And when we look at the letter of Galatians, there is no such greeting. And this becomes very stark to see when we consider that Paul to the church of Corinth, a church that had major problems, a church that was divided, they were following different people, a church that was rife with sexual immorality, a church that abused the Lord's Supper, abused spiritual gifts.

This church, Paul, commends. And he, at the opening, expresses his confidence that they will be presented before the Lord on the day of his appearing, guiltless.

[8 : 27] But the apostle Paul has no words of confidence for the church at Galatians. As a matter of fact, later in the letter, he says to them that he feared that they had fallen from grace.

And the question is, why is Paul so upset with the Galatian church? I mean, what they did was, the Galatian church had ceased to only believe in Christ, but they had started to keep the law as well, as a requirement.

They were told by some teachers who came among them, you must keep the law. You must obey the law of Moses as well. And Paul was upset with them.

And I think you can imagine that if someone is committed to keeping the law of Moses, they're going to have a pretty moral life. They're going to have a pretty good life. And so in addition to committing to following Christ, they're now committing to keeping the law.

And what's wrong with that? Why would Paul be upset with that? But we'll come back to that question at the end of the sermon.

[9 : 38] But notice in verse 6, what the apostle Paul says to them, he says, I am astonished that you are quickly deserting him who called you into the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel.

Those are strong words. Astonished and deserting the gospel, those words are strong words. In the original language, the word that Paul used for deserting is a word that was first used in military contexts for those who betrayed and who became traitors and who were defectors in battle.

And later the word came to be used for people who changed from one religion or one philosophy to another because it was seen as a betrayal of that earlier religion or philosophy that they once held.

Paul had not too long preached to the Galatians and now they had turned away. They were deserting the gospel. And what Paul says to them is, Paul says, you're not just turning to some, kind

of like another denomination.

It's not like going to some other church. Paul says, what you are doing is you are deserting and you are abandoning the faith altogether. Now I'm sure that if we were able to interview the Galatians, they would not have agreed with Paul.

[11 : 05] They would not have agreed that they were doing what Paul was doing. They didn't think they were deserting the gospel. As far as they were concerned, they were just embracing the need to keep the law of Moses as the Judaizers were saying to them, in addition to believing in Christ.

And Moses is the major figure in the Old Testament. And they thought that what they were doing was a good thing.

In addition to believing in Christ, keeping the law was going to make them better Christians. But in truth, what the Galatians were doing was not a good thing.

It was quite the opposite. And Paul tells them so in verse 6. Paul actually tells them that they were more than just deserting the gospel.

He tells them, he says, you are deserting the one who called you into the grace of Christ. He accused the Galatians of abandoning God himself. In his commentary on Galatians, deceased pastor and theologian John Stott underlined Paul's point sharply when he wrote, to turn from the gospel of grace is to turn from the God of grace.

[12 : 24] To turn from the gospel of grace is to turn from the God of grace. He goes on, he says, it is impossible to forsake it, the gospel, without forsaking him, God.

And brothers and sisters, the gospel of grace that the Galatians were abandoning abandoning was a proclamation of a God of grace.

It proclaims a God of grace who is merciful and kind to undeserving sinners. He sent his son to die on the cross to take their place, though they deserve to die, so that they can be forgiven and reconciled to him.

But if all that God did was to send his son to die on the cross and then leave it up to sinners to accept salvation, none of us would choose salvation.

And none of us, as a result, would be saved. And the reason that none of us would choose salvation is that none of us left to ourselves can choose salvation. None of us can do anything to save ourselves.

[13 : 45] Yeah, we can get religious and we can begin to stop doing this and start doing that. But we can't save ourselves. And this is why God must do what Paul says that he did in verse 6.

He must call us into the grace of Christ, which is another way to describe salvation. And that's what God does for every single person who comes to Christ and is the only way that they come to Christ. One of the beautiful pictures in the New Testament about what salvation is and how God is active in our salvation is the raising of the dead of Lazarus.

When Lazarus was raised from the dead, Jesus stood at his tomb and Jesus said, Lazarus, come forth. And that's the only reason Lazarus came forth. He was dead. He could do nothing for himself. And every single one of us who have experienced salvation, that's what God did for us. We were spiritually dead like Lazarus. And God spoke into our death and our darkness and he called us forth.

[14 : 51] If all he had done was just make Christ available on the cross and leave it up to us in our spiritual death to choose, we would never choose because we could never choose. God not only provided Christ, but he calls sinners into the grace of Christ.

And without that call from God, no lost person would ever respond to the gospel. And here I want to put before us two theological terms that help us understand how God calls us into the grace of Christ.

The first is the gospel call. the gospel call. Here's how theologian Wayne Grudem defines the gospel call. It is the general gospel invitation to all people that comes through the human proclamation of the gospel, also referred to as external calling.

However, the gospel call is not enough for sinners to be saved. In order to be saved, sinners need another call. And it's the call that the Apostle Paul refers to in verse 6 when he says to the Galatians and tells them that they were called into the grace of Christ.

And theologians call this effective calling. Wayne Grudem defines effective calling this way.

Effective calling is an act of God, the Father, speaking through the human proclamation of the gospel in which he summons people to himself in such a way that they respond in saving faith.

[16:33] Again, no one responds to the gospel solely by hearing the gospel preached. God the Father must call them to salvation and he enables them to respond and he gives them the gifts of repentance and salvation.

Otherwise, they never believe. that's the truth about all of our condition. I want you to see the important distinction between the gospel call and effective calling.

The gospel call is a general call to all sinners. It comes through hearing the content of the gospel. It calls all sinners to repent and believe the gospel.

That is the gospel call that goes out to all. It is a general call. But effective calling is a particular call. It is a specific call to some sinners and it comes from God into their hearts.

It is not just an individual who is proclaiming content, who is proclaiming the gospel, who is calling sinners to repent. It is a call beyond their voice that goes into the heart of a sinner in such a way that they are able to respond to the gospel.

[17:57] He grants the gifts of faith and repentance. And brothers and sisters, this is the marvel of the gospel. The marvel of the gospel is that God effectively calls particular sinners and enables them to believe and respond to the gospel in faith and repentance.

and he doesn't do it for everyone. He doesn't do it for everyone. He does it according to his mercy and grace, not according to their merit and their goodness.

And Scripture says that God has mercy on whom he will have mercy and he has compassion on whom he chooses to have compassion. That is the goodness of God in the saving of sinners.

So Paul is reminding the Galatians that God had called them into the grace of Christ, a grace where sinners are forgiven and reconciled to God by no work or merit of their own.

And he expresses astonishment. He is saying, how could you? How could you desert such a wonderful gospel? How could you turn away and try to pursue what God has done through Christ in some other way?

[19:16] How could you turn to what is no gospel at all? It deserted the gospel, Paul is saying to them.

And it's no good news. And later the apostle Paul would tell the Galatians why would they have done is no good news. It's no good news because he says to them, if you try to keep the law, you must keep the whole law.

You can't keep the whole law so you are under a curse. But Christ became that curse for sinners. Christ did what we could never do.

And therefore, what he has done is good news that we don't have to try to do that. And this is an important lesson for us this morning.

This is important for us because what it tells us is when we add anything to the gospel of grace, which is salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, we lose the gospel.

[20:19] We don't have the gospel anymore when we add to that. And so when people add to the gospel the necessity of water baptism for salvation, as the church of Christ denomination teaches, it is no gospel because it adds human activity to the work of Christ and they lost the gospel.

When people add to the gospel the necessity to worship on the Sabbath and keep the Sabbath day with all of its requirements, as the Adventists do, it is no gospel because it adds the human activity of Sabbath keeping to the work of the gospel.

When you add anything to the gospel, you lose the gospel. It is a different gospel. It amounts to no gospel.

And so this morning we need to consider what are we trusting in for our salvation? Where is our confidence? Where is our hope?

Is it in the finished work of Christ alone or have we added something to it? Have you perhaps added your personal holiness to it as so many people do?

[21:43] Believing that the reason they would make it to heaven is based on some performance on their part something that they are actually able to do.

And make no mistake, we are called to live holy lives. We are called to seek to please the Lord in all that we do, but we are not called to have faith in our personal holiness.

If we do, we are no different from the Galatians. If we do, we have added personal morality to the gospel. And what we are in essence saying is Christ's work is not sufficient nor is it finished because we need to add to it.

But it is a finished work. Well, not only does Paul help us to see how the Galatians were deserting the gospel, he also helps us to see how the false teachers were distorting the gospel.

And this brings me to my second point, distorting the gospel. And it was because of how the false teachers were distorting the gospel that the Galatians were deserting the gospel.

[22 : 54] Paul refers to the false teachers in verse 7. He does not name them, but he tells us what the activity was. They were troubling the church and they were distorting the gospel.

In the original language, the apostle Paul uses a word for distorting, which was a word that could also be translated to reverse.

And essentially what he was saying was that what they were doing was they were reversing the gospel. They were turning the gospel on its head. And I'm sure the false teachers thought they were doing a good thing.

They probably felt superior to the apostle Paul. They no doubt looked very good in their rules and regulations and their disciplines that they followed in keeping the Mosaic Law.

And no doubt what the false teachers were offering was attracted to the Galatians. And therefore they pursued it. But they weren't improving the gospel because the gospel can't be improved upon.

[24 : 01] They were reversing the gospel. They were distorting the gospel. There's no doubt that the apostle Paul preached the gospel to the Galatians.

I mean, Paul is so graphic when he reminds them a little later in this letter in chapter 3 when he says to them, it was before your very eyes in verse 1.

He says, it was before your very eyes that Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. We know the Galatians did not witness the crucifixion.

They were not eyewitnesses to the crucifixion of Jesus. But Paul is here referencing how graphically and how certainly he preached Christ crucified to them.

He says, it was before your very eyes that Christ was portrayed as crucified. crucified. And so the question is, how then were the false teachers able to swing the Galatians into believing a false gospel when they had such a clear preaching of the gospel?

[25 : 15] And I think the reason is the Galatians lacked discernment. The Galatians lacked discernment to see how what they were doing was changing the gospel.

And many times we can lack the same discernment as well. We can sometimes be unaware of how something that we are doing is distorting the gospel.

When we begin to put confidence in particular things. And I'll give you just a couple of examples. Prayer, we're called to do it. We need to commune with God daily.

It is our lifeline with Him. Reading our Bibles studying. We're called to do these things. But you know, we can so easily and so subtly add those practices to our confidence of acceptance before God.

That God is more pleased with us and receives us more when we pray and less when we don't pray. more when we read our Bibles than when we don't read our Bibles.

[26 : 31] It's a distortion of the gospel. The gospel is through the finished work of Christ. We are accepted by God forever. Period. No further performance on our part.

And see, this is why we can't boast. The songwriter is correct. Nothing in our hands we bring, but simply to the cross we cling.

The Galatians accepted that there was really nothing wrong with adding the keeping of the law to believing in Christ because they lacked discernment. They did not see how that changed the gospel.

And brothers and sisters that we add anything to our faith in Christ, our belief in Christ, our hope in Christ as our only Savior.

We've changed the gospel. And our confidence is not solely in Christ. Our confidence is in Christ and something else. And that is another gospel.

[27 : 34] And so we need to be ever so discerning about how easily and how quickly we are able to distort and change the gospel.

And we need to be so discerning about the things we read coming to us by the internet over social media and almost on a daily basis we're bombarded with things.

I saw just the other day on one of the chat sites that I'm on. Someone began to circulate a prayer by T.D. Jakes that you pray it every day for seven days a week.

And I just responded and said why would you pray that prayer? Is there some confidence that you have that you can go before God and pray on your own that you need to bring this prayer and offer it to God and then God will hear you once you pray for seven days?

And friends I will tell you I have no doubt countless thousands of well-meaning professing Christians are praying that prayer because here's what they think God has some special place in his arrangement for T.D.

[28 : 52] Jakes. He'll hear his prayers but not my prayer. That undermines the gospel. That undermines the working and the reality of the gospel. And so I try to just humbly suggest if you want a prayer form pray the Lord's prayer.

And trust God your heavenly father to hear you. We can so easily distort the gospel. In addition to seeing the Galatians deserting the gospel and false teachers distorting the gospel, finally in this passage we see the apostle Paul defending the gospel.

he defends the gospel. And Paul's defense is strong and it is unconditional and Paul even defends the gospel against himself.

Look again at what he says in verses 8 and 9. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preach to you, let him be accursed.

As we have said before, and so now I say again, if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you receive, let him be accursed.

[30 : 15] Paul's point is the gospel is a settled gospel. There will be no new gospel, there will be no new light to expand on the gospel.

The gospel is settled once and for all. And friends, if we don't accept that, if we are not resolute in that, if we believe that there's something else, the devil will accommodate us.

He will accommodate us. The gospel is settled once and for all, and it is salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

all possible because of his death on the cross for sinners. It is a finished work. It is a work that is done, not to be done.

It is not under construction. It is accomplished. Jesus said it right when he said it is finished.

Nothing to be added to it.

[31 : 26] The gospel doesn't come to us with any other punctuation than a period. When you hear someone bring you a gospel that has a comma behind it, or a semicolon, or a colon, it's another gospel.

They've changed the gospel. And what the apostle Paul says is, don't believe them. Even if an angel comes, he says, don't believe. He says, if we come back saying something else to you, don't believe it.

And here, when Paul says, don't even believe when an angel comes, this is where some of us are vulnerable. There's some of us who have an inclination to believe people if they say they've had some supernatural experience.

They had a dream, or they had some vision, and God said this to them, or God said that to them.

And even though it contradicts the Bible, it contradicts the gospel, they believe the person because of some supernatural experience.

Paul says, if an angel comes and tells you something other than this gospel that you've received, let them be accursed. He said, if we come and try to change what we have told you, then let us be accursed as well.

[32 : 47] accursed. The word that Paul uses for accursed in the original is this word anathema. That's the Greek word anathema.

And it is the word for the divine ban. It refers not just to a curse, but it refers to a divine curse. It is God's curse resting upon anything that is subject to or devoted to destruction.

So Paul is not taking it upon himself to utter a curse. He is saying, in essence, that God himself will curse those who distort and reverse the gospel.

And he includes himself in it. He puts himself under that curse. And he says that anyone who comes behind and tries to change the gospel, is to be anathematized.

Now, why is changing the gospel so important? And why does it merit the curse of God? Well, here are two clear reasons why changing the gospel merits this anathema.

[34 : 07] The two reasons are the glory of God and the souls of men are at stake when the gospel is distorted, when the gospel is changed. It reduces God's glory and it puts at risk the souls of men

because you're calling men to believe in what is not a gospel, what cannot save them.

God's glory and it will be when God saves a person, all the glory goes to God and no redeemed sinner can boast about anything.

There's no room for boasting. We are not saved because we're morally good. We're not saved because we are better than others who are not saved. We are saved because God had mercy. Though we didn't deserve his mercy, we are saved because he had mercy and it is because of his sovereign grace that he bestowed upon undeserving sinners.

And any adjustment to that takes away from the glory that belongs to God alone for the salvation of sinners. See, when we remove that period and we put a comma or anything else, we're taking away God's glory that belongs to him alone.

[35 : 37] We're in essence saying that God's saving work through Christ is not enough. We're saying Christ's work is not a finished work, it is a partial work. It is kind of like one of those projects that they get started for you and then they say you need to finish it.

Friends, the way our salvation has started by grace alone is the way it will finish by grace alone without any help or involvement from us.

And so, all the glory goes to God now and then on that final day when we stand before him. No human effort, no human accomplishment added to the gospel.

Not only is the glory of God at stake when the gospel is distorted, but so are the souls of men. And Paul knew that salvation is available only through the gospel, only through the true gospel, and therefore when it is distorted, it is impossible for people to come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. I want to say to us this morning as soberly as I can, as firmly as I can, let us not believe the lie that people can be saved by other ways and means other than through saving faith in Jesus Christ alone.

[37 : 10] It's popular today to say that there are many ways that people can actually receive Christ. It's saying that there are many roads that lead to that one destination.

And to say that salvation is only by Jesus Christ alone will cause many to label us as bigots and label us as narrow-minded.

But we must not, in the face of that pressure, disagree with Scripture that this is the only way for people to come to saving faith in Christ.

So how can we recognize the true gospel? John Stott here again is very helpful in two quick things as we move on. He offers two marks that we need to consider.

First he says, evaluate its substance. Does it exalt man and his ability to save himself? to add to his salvation or does it exalt God and his sole ability to save?

[38 : 20] The true gospel exalts the name of God and magnifies the grace of God. That's the first test. Evaluate the substance of it. What is it? Is it man-centered or is it God-exalting?

And then second, he says, we need to evaluate the source of it. Where did it come from? The true gospel is the gospel of the apostles of Jesus Christ.

To put it another way, the source of the true gospel is the New Testament, which is the apostolic gospel. And by apostolic, we don't mean all the aberrations that are out there.

People are distorting what it means to be apostolic, but it is this body of teaching of who Jesus Christ is and why he came and what he did in his life and in his death.

That is the apostolic gospel. And Paul's anathema is pronounced on anyone who preaches a gospel contrary to this gospel that we have received.

[39 : 31] And here, let us not be respected as a person. Sometimes what we do is, based on the person who is pronouncing some other gospel, we give them a pass. Maybe they have a big platform.

Maybe they're on television. And maybe many people follow them. Popular people follow them. And so we give them a pass, even though we know what they're saying is contrary to scripture. Let us evaluate the source of that gospel they are proclaiming.

And one of the reality is that many of these non-gospels are new. They are modern versions. But ours is rooted in scripture.

And that's where we must look. Well, in verse 10, the apostle Paul addresses evidently an issue where he was being accused of being a man-pleaser.

father. He says to them, for am I now seeking the approval of man or God? Am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

[40 : 45] Paul knows that what he is saying to the Galatians doesn't please them. He knows that what he tells them their doing doesn't sit well with them.

And he's saying to them clearly, I'm not a man-pleaser. If I was a man-pleaser, I would tell you what you want to hear. But instead, I'm a servant of Christ. And that is why I am telling you these things. I'm telling you these things because this is the truth. They're not my words. These are Christ's words. And my aim is not to please you.

that should be our aim as well. I'm persuaded if we would take the time to read that interview in Table Talk that I referred to on Roman Catholicism, I think many of us, I believe most of us in this room, if not all of us, have either family members or friends who are part of the Roman Catholic Church.

And it's not to say that every single person in the Roman Catholic Church is not a believer. Some are. They just didn't come to faith based on that doctrine. They came to faith by the true gospel which is not a part of the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

[42 : 06] And when we come to grips with that, we realize that we can be tempted to seek to please those people we know, friends and family members who are in the Roman Catholic Church who are hearing a false gospel.

And we are called upon to not seek to please them but to seek to please God and to say to them the truth. That is a false gospel. You cannot receive eternal life by praying to Mary and pleading to Mary.

one of the saddest things that happened for me this week was I saw an email, a prayer request of a person who was in the late stages of cancer.

There was a prayer request going around asking people to pray to this particular Roman Catholic saint who is a saint for cancer.

How sad. How sad. I didn't know who the person was and so I googled it and sure enough that's who this person is, that's who this saint is, that this is the saint you pray to when you have cancer.

[43 : 31] Friends, if we seek to please men, we will not proclaim the true gospel. You know why? The true gospel does not appeal to our flesh. It doesn't appeal to our pride.

The true gospel belittles us. The true gospel causes the fallen out of face because it tells us that we are unworthy of God's grace and there's nothing we can do to deserve it. The only thing we deserve is the wrath of God.

But in his mercy he gives wrath-deserving sinners grace. Let me close by coming back to the question I raised at the beginning of the message.

Why would Paul be so upset with the Galatians? These proper law-keeping people that he offers no praise.

He offers no prayer. He offers no expression of confidence of their salvation. As a matter of fact, later on he offers doubt about their salvation. man, when on the other hand he would praise the immoral Corinthian church, belittle the poor, abuse the Lord's supper.

[44 : 48] They were divisive. Paul says, I am confident that on the day of the appearing of Christ, you will be presented lameness. If there's one reason I believe the Lord would have had us to hear this message again, I believe it's for this point.

And I'll try to say it as clearly and as succinctly as I can. The two behaviors at work in these two different churches are these.

In the Corinthian church, the behavior can be described as license. License is the belief that God has saved us by his grace.

We are saved. And therefore, since we are saved, it doesn't matter how we live. God's grace abounds and so his grace covers all. And so we just live carelessly and we do whatever we want to do.

And there is evidence of license in churches like Corinth. Paul says in his letter to the church in Rome in Romans chapter 6, he says, shall we go on sinning because grace abounds?

[46 : 04] God forbid that we would do that. See, that's license. On the other hand, there's legalism. And that was the practice of the Galatian church.

What they believed was that in addition to believing in Christ, you have to keep particular laws, you have to live in a particular way to receive acceptance before God.

And the difference between these two churches is license does not change or alter the gospel. License is a recognition of the gospel, a wrong understanding of it, and therefore we abuse it,

believing that because God saves us by his grace, and his grace is abundant, but we can sin and we can do whatever we want to do.

That's a distortion, that's not true, but license is staying within the grace of God and seeking to abuse it. It's staying within the gospel and seeking to abuse it.

Legalism, on the other hand, moves away from the gospel and therefore changes the gospel, believing that you have to add something else to it, and that's what the Galatians did. And in the scheme of things, legalism distorts and changes the gospel, and therefore Paul was upset with them, because it was absolutely no gospel.

[47 : 32] For the abusing Corinthians, Paul adjusts them as he writes his letter and tells them, no, you don't live that way.

You cannot join your body to a prostitute, because you belong to Christ. And this is why Paul was upset with the Galatians, because they had removed themselves from the grace of Christ.

The true gospel brings us into the grace of Christ. It doesn't take us out of the grace of Christ. And that is why Paul was upset with the Galatians.

Brothers and sisters, we, like the Galatians, we face false teachers, like the Galatians, we can fall prey to being deceived and believing that the gospel we have is not sufficient, and therefore we need to add to it.

But let us, by God's grace, hold on to the gospel of grace, because it is our only hope before a holy God.

[48 : 45] Let's pray. Amen. God's