

# 01 - Preach the one true gospel

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, good morning, everyone. Welcome to the service here this morning, a new morning that the Lord has blessed us with, and we praise Him for that.
- I've been blessed this morning already. Thank you, song leaders, for your selection of songs, and I was just thinking as well, as Brother Jake was mentioning in the opening this morning, the freedom that we have to gather peacefully.
- We're not being bothered here. It is only because of God's grace towards us. We can praise Him for His grace as well.
- So, our scripture this morning does talk about the grace and the peace that comes from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
- I will, in the coming turns that I am up to speak, I am intending to work through the book of Galatians. Galatians, and so we start off this morning in chapter 1, maybe somewhat of an introduction to the rest of the book, and we will work our way through it, through the letter that Paul writes to the Galatian churches.
- [ 1 : 3 8 ] And so, before we get into it, let's just again bow in a word of prayer. Heavenly Father, we come before you this morning.
- Lord, thank you for today. Thank you for this morning. Thank you for each one who is here this morning, who has come to glorify you, to praise you, to worship you, and honor you.
- And Lord, it is by your grace that we are here this morning, and that we have breath and life in our bodies. We thank you for that. Lord, I just ask for myself as I speak your word this morning that you would grant me the words to speak, that you would give me clarity of thought, and fill me with your spirit to share what you would have me to speak on.
- In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. All right. So Galatians, the book of Galatians.
- I have the title in my Bible, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians. So what is an epistle?
- [ 3 : 0 1 ] The definition of epistle is to send to, or simply to send. So it is a writing that is either directed or sent, communicating intelligence to a distant person.
- It is rarely used in familiar conversation or writings, but chiefly in solemn or formal transactions. Galatians. Galatians is such a writing.
- So in the days that Scripture was written, these letters were written, these epistles, that is what they were.
- They were letters. Letters either to individuals or to churches or to groups of churches. And so Paul was a man who wrote a number of letters.
- We have 13 letters within the New Testament for sure. And it may possibly be 14 if he is the author of Hebrews as well. So we have before us here, the book of Galatians, we have a letter.
- [ 4 : 1 3 ] So if we sit down to write a letter, how do we do that? There are things that need to be present in a letter, right?

There's three main components in an epistle or a letter. We have an introduction or the greeting.

There is the body and a conclusion. Some other things that it needs. It needs an author.

The author of Galatians, we have evidence of who the author is. It is here in verse 1, Paul, an apostle.

He starts off by identifying himself. There is also evidence in chapter 5, verse 2, and chapter 6, verse 11. So we know that it was the apostle Paul writing this letter.

[ 5 : 11 ] Another thing that we need is recipients. The letter needs to be addressed to someone, right? We have in verse 2, he puts in to the churches of Galatia.

So this letter is intended to more than one church, to a group of churches within the Roman province of Galatia.

You know, there's some who believe it was to the churches more of the southern region of Galatia. Others say it was to the churches in the northern region of Galatia. There's a difference of opinion on that.

It could be either. And so what is Paul's purpose for writing this letter to these churches?

There must be some reason, right? And it is to try and prevent the turning away of these churches of Galatia from God to a different gospel.

[ 6 : 26 ] And one other note, the date, when did Paul write this letter to these churches?

Well, it isn't all that easy. He doesn't date his letters. We don't know exactly when it was, but it was probably somewhere between the years 49 and 55 A.D.

and either during his second missionary journey or his third. That he's been to these churches before, established them, and now he writes a letter to them.

The three main points that I want to look at this morning, I want to focus a little bit on Paul's greeting to these churches and then as well, the addressing of his concerns to these churches.

And then thirdly, defending his apostleship and the gospel. And so I've titled the message this morning, Preach the One True Gospel.

[ 7 : 41 ] Thank you, Brother Aaron, as well for reading the text for us this morning. Let's break it down and work our way through it.

Verses 1 and the first part of verse 2. Paul, Paul, an apostle, not from men nor through 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.

So Paul starts this letter in the typical Greek fashion of the day. He introduces himself as the author and expands on his position.

And it's not to elevate himself in any way, but to make his authorship clear, that we know who is writing this letter. It was common in that day.

It is still common today. Today we do not so much write letters anymore. We send emails and so on. Technology has advanced. But even in emails, if we get an email from any kind of organization or so, the order may be a little reversed.

[ 9 : 06 ] It may start off with a greeting and addressing who it's to and go through the body and then the introduction, who wrote the letter or the email, is at the bottom.

And they will often have their position or their title there as well, that we know who it is coming from. But it was common in the letters of those days for especially for officials as well to include their position or their office just to verify who they were.

And so Paul has a very specific reason for starting his letter the way he does by adding that he was an apostle. As we work through this letter, it becomes clear that there were murmurings going around throughout Galatia that Paul wasn't really an apostle.

He wasn't who he said he was. People were questioning Paul's claim of being an apostle and it has come to his attention.

He has heard about it. And because he's hearing these things and together with what he hears is going on in these churches, what is happening there, it sets the tone for Paul's letter to them.

[ 10 : 38 ] He is less than pleased with them and it does come out in the way he writes to them. He purposefully chooses to address himself as an apostle and he expounds on it right at the start of the letter.

He has a reason for doing this. If they are wanting to doubt it, he will set the record straight. He will make it clear. He says that his apostleship is not from men nor through any man.

It is through Jesus Christ. The same Jesus whom these churches had first put their faith in and God the Father who had raised this same Jesus, his son, from the dead.

Paul's apostleship was different than the other apostles, the twelve who walked with Jesus. They had been with Jesus.

They had been taught by him while he walked this earth as a man. And yes, absolutely, they were apostles.

[ 12 : 07 ] Paul did not walk with Jesus. But on the other hand, he received this calling not from the man Jesus, but still from Jesus.

Only it was the Jesus Christ who had been resurrected, glorified, and exalted to the right hand of the Father. And so his apostleship was as sure and maybe even more so than the others.

We also have included in the authorship of this letter all the brethren who are with me.

So Paul includes that as well. And not to say that there were other brethren who took part in writing this letter, but simply stating the fact that they stood with Paul, that they were in agreement with the contents of his writing to these Galatian churches.

They were in agreeance with what he was writing to them. And so next we have the second part of the introduction in this letter.

[ 13 : 27 ] It is the greeting of the audience. Verses 3, the last part of verse 2 and 3 through 5. To the churches of Galatia, grace to 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 age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever.

Amen. Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. You know, Paul had planted these churches either his first or second missionary journey.

He had spent time with them. He had proclaimed the gospel of Christ to them. And he had been establishing these churches within their communities. He loved these people.

Yes, he was upset by the reports that he was hearing about their faith wavering, but he loved them. He wanted what was good for them.

He wanted them on the right path, following and serving the Savior who had given himself for their sins. It was through this Savior that they had deliverance from the evil world around them according to the Father's will.

[ 14 : 56 ] And so it was Paul's desire not only for the Galatians but for believers everywhere.

You know, and as evidenced in his other epistles, his other letters, to experience the grace and peace of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We read Paul's letters in the New Testament. it is a very standard greeting that he gives to each of them. And so we have it, we have his writings before us here today within Scripture and these greetings pertain to us as well.

we too should have such love towards our brothers and sisters in Christ to desire for others to experience the grace and the peace that God gives.

Grace that is unmerited, undeserved. We can do nothing to earn God's grace. It is through his great love for us that he offers his grace to us as a free gift.

[ 16 : 18 ] There is no price tag attached to it because there is none who could afford to pay that price to have enough to purchase that grace.

And so praise God for extending his grace to us, for loving us so deeply though we were so far away from him lost in sinfulness his love for us was so great that he willingly sent his only son to die for all of mankind.

You know that grace of God it flowed down through his son as well. Jesus was willing to give himself for us to face the shame and scorn to lay down his life as payment for our sins and to open up the way for us to be reconciled back to the Father to rise above the world to experience his peace.

grace. So Paul writes these greetings in his epistles this way on purpose. You know the order of it. Grace comes before peace.

It's not the other way around. We cannot experience the peace of God without him first extending his grace to us.

[ 17 : 52 ] and it is when his grace finds us and we accept that free gift that he so graciously offers then his peace fills our soul.

Glory to God forever and ever. Amen. So from there Paul continues and he goes into the body of his letter he gets to the heart of the matter the reason that he is writing to them.

He says I marvel that you are turning away so soon from him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel which is not another but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

He expresses amazement disbelief that they would turn away from God so soon. No more than a few years could have passed since their faith in Christ had been established through Paul's teaching and his missionary journeys.

You know all three of Paul's missionary journeys only spanned about 11 years and so from one to the next it was a few short years so it was not that long ago that they had heard the gospel preached to them by Paul and they had accepted and yet now he is amazed to hear that they are turning away or thinking about turning away.

[ 19 : 38 ] So how could these people who had stepped out in faith only a few short years ago how could they be turning to another gospel already?

Had they not experienced God's grace for themselves? Did they not know his peace? peace? Here in verse 6 Paul is marveling at those whom God had called in the grace of Christ.

You know if we look ahead to verse 11 for a moment we see that Paul calls them brethren and so he is speaking to believers here. They have experienced God's grace.

They have experienced his peace. they had surrendered their lives to Christ and yet now Paul is hearing that they are wavering that they are thinking about a different gospel they are considering it which he plainly tells them is not another gospel.

it is perverted. It is false. You know how many gospels do we know of?

[ 21 : 06 ] Is the issue of the Galatian churches still an issue today? Today the issue that these Galatian churches were dealing with in those days are issues that we deal with today as well.

These issues are very alive and well today. Most of us have probably heard different variations of the gospel and apart from believing in Jesus Christ as our Savior not being a part of these gospels we are hearing.

I would dare to say that most of them include some kind of works that are required for salvation as well. That is the issue that was in Galatia close to 2,000 years ago and it is an issue that the church deals with today.

Maybe not the exact same issue that the Galatian churches were dealing with. We'll see later on in the letter for the epistle that circumcision was the big concern here.

That may not be the issues in our churches today but nonetheless there are issues. We have our own laundry list of issues that are wanting to creep into the church to trouble us, to pervert the gospel.

[ 22 : 48 ] I put together a short list of maybe some examples that we may face different variations or perversions of the gospel.

Types of dress for men and women. Observing of days. Foods to abstain from.

which day to keep as the Sabbath. You know the list can go on and on. Are these examples that I just listed, are they bad in and of themselves?

No, not at all. They are personal choices for us to make. You know, there's nothing wrong in choosing to dress a certain way.

Scripture instructs us to dress modestly, and if we stay within those guidelines that Scripture gives, we have a choice in what we wear.

[ 23 : 56 ] Another one, common to Mennonites especially, do we want to observe three days at Easter, at Pentecost, at Christmas?

Christmas. You know, by all means, do so. There is nothing wrong with that. Another, if we'd rather abstain from eating pork, so be it.

Is there Sabbath on Sunday, or Saturday, or any other day? You know, in and of themselves, any of these examples are okay to observe.

But it is when we make any one of them, or all of them, a requirement for salvation, then we cross a line.

The gospel of Christ, which, by the way, is the only true gospel, does not have one single work attached to it.

[ 25 : 04 ] Turn with me to Romans chapter 10 for a moment. Romans 10, verse 9.

That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart, and that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised this Jesus from the dead, you will be saved.

This is the gospel of Christ. I don't see any works attached to it. There is no works required.

One thing that I see, and that is faith. Confessing the Lord Jesus takes faith. I must believe that he is who he says he is.

God raised this Jesus from the dead, that takes faith. And if by the grace of God I confess that kind of faith, it tells me very, very plainly, I will be saved.

- [ 26 : 43 ] God raised this spirit. And so if I, or anyone else, adds anything else to that verse, Galatians 1 verse 7, tells me that I am a troublemaker who perverts the gospel of Christ. And that is very dangerous ground to be standing on. Let me show you why. Let's read verses 8 and 9 in our text.
- But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.
- If anyone, doesn't matter who, even if it were an angel from heaven, came and preached a different kind of gospel, a different gospel than the true gospel of Christ, what does Paul say?
- He says, let him be accursed. What does that mean? What does it mean, let him be accursed? To be accursed means to be doomed to destruction or eternally condemned.
- [ 28 : 22 ] Bluntly, if we are accursed, we will have our part in the lake of fire for eternity. Those are some strong, strong words that Paul uses here.
- Let's look as well at 1 Corinthians chapter 16. 1 Corinthians 16 verse 22.
2. If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.
- O Lord, come. If we pervert the gospel of Christ, if we add any one thing to it, or subtract from it from that matter, do we love the Lord?
- If the gospel of Christ is too much or not enough for us, do we really love the Lord? If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.
- [ 29 : 38 ] why would anyone try to pervert the gospel of Christ?
- Verse 10 in our text, for do I now persuade men or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.
- So why would anyone try to pervert the gospel of Christ? Is it being done to persuade men, to convince them that such and such is the way?
- There are those out there who would have us believe there is more than one way to heaven to the Father. Jesus, speaking in John chapter 14 verse 6 says, I am the way, the truth, and the life.
- No one comes to the Father except through me. There is only one way. Or is it, is it perverted gospel an attempt to persuade God?
- [ 31 : 00 ] God, you know, God, I want to go to heaven, but I want to go a different way than the Bible teaches. I want to do it my way.
- I think I have a way that I can do it. God, I want to do it. I want to do it. Maybe it's simply to please men, to bend to their will, to the ways that they desire.
- Paul has a very simple answer to this. If I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. Christ.
- It's very cut and dry. If I am pleasing men, I am no servant or follower of Christ. So let's make the right choice, as Joshua did in the Old Testament.
- But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Continuing on in the chapter, Paul defends his apostleship as well as the gospel that he had preached to the Galatians.
- [ 32 : 19 ] He expounds even further on the introduction he gave at the start in verse 1. Verse 11. But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man, for I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

believers. Brethren, listen here. I am speaking very plainly to you, Paul says. I am an apostle.

Only a few years ago I was in your midst. I was teaching and preaching to you. Remember that gospel that I preached to you. You know, I've just, just in the prior verses, just the beginning of the epistle.

I've just finished telling you there is only one true gospel. Now let me refresh your memory as to where I received that gospel.

[ 33 : 49 ] That gospel was not according to man, Paul says. It wasn't given to me by any man. No man taught it to me. The gospel I preached was as genuine as it gets.

It came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. I received this gospel right from the source.

It wasn't passed on to me by any man where error might creep in. Jesus himself, the risen Savior, revealed the gospel to me.

God in verses 13 and 14, Paul reminds them of his past and he affirms that there is no way any man could have taught him this gospel.

He had been entrenched in Judaism in the strict religious ways of the Jews. He persecuted the church of God.

[ 34 : 58 ] He says beyond measure and he tried to destroy it. He was so zealous for the traditional ways of the Jews, especially the Pharisees, that he took it further than many of his fellow countrymen.

He's telling them, I was a Jew of the strictest order. You've heard what I did to the church. I did not hold back at all. My full wrath came down on them.

And we have testimony of that in Scripture, in Acts, where Stephen is stoned. Paul is there consenting to it.

faith. He would kill people for their faith. He tells them plainly, there is no way that any man could have taught me Christ's gospel.

I would have destroyed him. That is who I was. And yet, here I am preaching that same gospel. And it has come from none other than Jesus himself.

[ 36 : 20 ] Verses 15-17. But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through his grace to reveal his son in me that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood.

Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. But I went to Arabia and returned again to Damascus. You know, Paul recognizes God's working in his life.

He says, in God's perfect timing, I was given life. I was separated from my mother's womb. God had a purpose for me.

God's grace. It was by God's grace that Paul was called to the faith, having had the Son, Jesus Christ, revealed to him on the road to Damascus.

He was given the calling to preach Christ among the Gentiles, and it was not a commission from man. that commission came from Christ Jesus.

[ 37 : 39 ] Paul says that he did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, meaning he did not go and be taught by other men, by other people.

He didn't receive his teaching from man. Neither did he go to Jerusalem to be taught by the apostles, and is where the apostles were.

The second part of verse 17 again, but I went to Arabia and returned again to Damascus. He did not go to the apostles.

He went out further to areas the gospel hadn't gone to. Who would have taught him the gospel? Truly, it came by revelation from God.

Continuing on, verse 18, then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

[ 38 : 55 ] Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie. Afterward, I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, and I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea, which were in Christ.

But they were hearing only, he who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy. And they glorified God in me.

It was only after three years in ministry that Paul first went to Jerusalem.

And even then, he says, I was only there for fifteen days to go and see Peter. Not to be taught by Peter, but to get to know him. And besides Peter, the only other apostle that he saw was James.

In verse 20, Paul affirms to his audience, to the Galatians, that before God, he is writing the truth to them.

[ 40 : 05 ] It is a plea for them to listen to him, not to those who have come in or who have risen up within and are stirring up trouble, trying to convince them of another gospel.

After this short visit to Jerusalem, Paul is on the road again. He is in the regions of Syria and Cilicia. The churches of Judea, back in Israel, they only knew his reputation.

He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy. God will be the gospel.

We too have been called by God through his grace to be lights in this world, to preach the one true gospel, the gospel of Christ.

God will be called to go and make disciples of all nations, share the good news everywhere with everyone.

[ 41 : 16 ] Only be careful to not pervert the gospel, neither adding to it nor taking away from it.

Spend time in God's word, meditate on it. It is our roadmap for life, for this life. It holds the answers to our questions.

And should we meet someone who preaches another gospel, which is very likely, the Bible is our sword.

the truth of God's word will expose false teaching for what it is. May the grace and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ abound toward you as you serve him.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we again bow before you this morning. Lord, again we thank you for your grace, for apart from your grace we would not know you.

[ 42 : 34 ] We would not know the good news of salvation. We would not know your son who came and died for us. Lord, we thank you for sending your son, for him being willing to come and to die for a lost world, a world who for the most part turns away from him, who denies him.

And yet he was gracious enough to come and to die for each one, that those who would see him as the Savior and come to him, to live for him, that there was the opportunity, Lord, to through him and him alone, to be reconciled back into a right relationship with you.



We thank you and praise you for this relationship with you, that we can boldly come before your throne in prayer at any time of day or night and talk with you.

Lord, we thank you for the one true gospel, that if we believe on your son, Jesus Christ, that he is who he says, that he is the Savior, and that we believe that you raised him from the dead, you say we will be saved.

Lord, we cannot add anything to this, we cannot subtract anything from it. This is the one true gospel.

[ 44 : 21 ] We thank you for it, that it is a free gift to us. It is nothing that we do to earn it, we cannot buy it, we cannot work for it, it comes through faith in you alone, in accepting it as a free gift.

Thank you for this gift, Lord. And again, I just thank you for each one who is out here this morning. Lord, may your grace and your peace rest upon them for the rest of today and forward throughout the week ahead.

May you go with us. In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Amen.