

No Other Gospel

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 May 2026

Preacher: Rev Calum M Smith

[0 : 00] Well, we can turn back to our reading in Galatians chapter 1. We're going to look at the section, verse 11 to 24, taking some aspects out of these verses of what Paul is talking about here, about the gospel.

Galatians chapter 1 at verse 11, For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it. But I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ, and so on. As this letter that Paul writes, as he opens it up here in chapter 1, that word gospel is used very often because that is what is important to him as he is writing to the churches in Galatia.

The gospel and the gospel that is at stake in many ways because they've been hearing a different kind of gospel. Although Paul, as he says, there is no other gospel he makes very clear. But they have been hearing a twisted version, if you like, of the gospel that sought to lead them astray. And as we look at this section today, it's really looking at it under this theme of the gospel and the fact that there is no other gospel.

[1 : 20] But what is the gospel? And what is the gospel to you today? What does the gospel mean? And what part does it play in your life on a daily basis?

When we come under the sound of the gospel, as we say, it means that we are hearing what the gospel says. So when we read the gospel, we are hearing God's word to us. And that is what the gospel is. It's God speaking to us and speaking to us particularly about the good news of Jesus Christ.

That's what the gospel is, the good news of Jesus Christ. And as we hear this gospel, it leads maybe to many questions, questions that perhaps you have in your own heart today. Is this gospel real and meaningful to me? Will it make a difference in my life, whether I believe it or not?

[2 : 24] How important is this gospel? Can I really know the Jesus that it speaks of, the good news of Jesus Christ? And can I know the salvation that it speaks about?

Can Jesus really forgive my sins and help me to break free from them? I'm sure there are many other questions that you could add to that list.

Because when we hear the gospel, when we hear this good news, it makes us ask all of these kinds of questions. And perhaps you ask them of yourself, and you ask them as you look around at others.

When you see the difference that the gospel has made in people's lives, how people have been transformed by the gospel. Paul's life, he was one, as we're going to see, who was persecuting the church, but who was transformed by this gospel.

And it made people ask questions of him. Is it true? Has he really been changed? And that's the question that we can have of others around us as well.

[3 : 28] Has the gospel really changed that person? Is there only one gospel? Is there not many ways to God? There are all kinds of questions.

And if you have any or all of these questions, then you can take heart from reading through the scriptures. Because you see in the scriptures, you see in this letter, it's the kind of questions that people have had down through all the generations.

We see it here in the churches of Galatia, how people have all of these questions. It's not just questions that they had, it's questions that we have.

It's questions that so many people have had through all the generations. And if you have these questions, then let me take this opportunity to remind you about the meeting in Cafe Cabana on Tuesday evenings, where you can come with these and any other questions that you might have

about the gospel, about the Christian faith, and seek to discuss them and find out more about them and seek to have answers about these questions.

It's great to have questions. It's good to ask questions. And therefore, it's good for us to be together looking at all of these questions. But today we're going to focus on the gospel as Paul speaks about it here.

[4 : 49] And in the introduction here, in the opening verses, you see that in verse 6 he says, I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel.

There was a real challenge, a real problem in the midst of the churches of Galatia. And he strayed to the heart of it. I am astonished that you are quickly deserting him who called you and turning to another gospel, not that there is another one.

And so he strayed to the heart of this problem of turning away from what God has revealed to them about Jesus and turning instead to go, almost going backwards, you could say, to their former ways of seeking to please man rather than to please God.

Because around them were these false teachers who were saying, that is not the real gospel.

Believing in Jesus Christ is not what it's all about. You have to do your part.

You have to be circumcised, for example, they were saying. You have to follow all of these laws.

The gospel as they were being presented with, the false gospel was just a burden on them.

[6 : 06] And you see it in verse 10. For am I now seeking the approval of man or of God? Or am I trying to please man? There's this idea here that the people were trying to please man rather than pleasing God.

And Paul is taking them right back to what they have first heard and first learned in Jesus, that he is the only way to salvation. That faith in him is the only way to salvation.

This is the good news. This is the gospel. It's not a burden on you that you have to keep every law perfectly because that's impossible.

It's not about circumcision. It's not about any of these things. It's about faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So that is the gospel, the good news.

Somebody once put it, the gospel isn't man's good news about God. It is God's good news for man. And that's the challenge that Paul was writing into.

[7 : 11] Because the gospel in the eyes of many there was man's good news about God. How we can find our way to God. But instead it's God's good news for man.

And that is the difference. Because God's good news for man is that he sent his son to find us. Not that we have to find him through our ways.

So the gospel doesn't need to change. It doesn't need to adapt to a modern world. It needs to be heard. It needs to be believed. And if it is, then lives are truly transformed and kept by the Lord Jesus.

And so that is what is at stake here for Paul. The gospel. And so in this section that we're going to look at in verse 11 to 24, we see three things about the gospel together today.

The source of the gospel. The power of the gospel. And the praise of the gospel. And the first thing is the source of the gospel.

[8 : 15] What or who is the gospel about? And where is it from? Well, in verse 11, what does he say? For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.

It's not something that any man has given to Paul. What the gospel is about is good news. Who is it about?

It's about Jesus Christ. You can go back to Mark's gospel, chapter 1, the very first verse. It says, The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And so there is who it is about. What is it? What is about? Good news. And who is it from?

It's from God himself speaking to us. So where is the source of the gospel? Well, as Paul is saying here, it's not man's gospel.

[9 : 20] And yet we can so often make it into our gospel. Adding our own laws or truths to it. And that is a very dangerous thing to do.

There's a warning about that in verse 9. If 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.

That is the seriousness of presenting the gospel in the wrong way. But the right way, the source of the gospel, it's not man's gospel, but the gospel of God.

Some people say it's just a made-up book. Something that's been written just to keep people blinkered, to keep people under control, as it were.

Some people say it's just a tradition. Some people say that we're just doing what others have told us to do. We're doing it just to please others, because it's been passed on to us by parents or grandparents or traditions of where we live.

[10:27] And these can be good things. But we have to see the source of the gospel is not man, but God. Well, he goes on to say in verse 12, You have a Bible before you today.

You have it open there before you. You're looking at it. And what is it? It is the gospel. It is the good news of God speaking to you, to us, together.

And the whole Bible is about the gospel. As somebody put it, the gospel is the heart of the Bible. Everything in Scripture is either preparation for the gospel, presentation of the gospel, or participation in the gospel.

Preparation for the gospel, you see it pointing towards the coming of the Lord Jesus. The presentation of the gospel. It speaks to us of a Savior and what he has done.

And participation in the gospel, because it tells us how we are to live in light of the gospel. The source of the gospel is God himself, who has given us his word.

[11:52] All Scripture is God-breathed, as Timothy says. So the source. We think of the source of something. Think of rivers, for example.

The River Clyde, the River Thames, the Nile. So many of these great rivers throughout our world. They can be mighty and powerful at the mouth where they enter into the sea.

They can look so big and so powerful. But the source of it can often seem like just a small beginning when you trace it right back to where it starts.

It can often just start with a small stream or a trickle in the way that we see it. Small beginnings. But is that the source of these rivers? Well, the source of the rivers, you have to lift your eyes up and see the sources from the sky, from the clouds that pour down the masses of water that enter into them.

And in some ways, we can look at the gospel like that. The source is very small. When we're looking at it, it's just man. But the source is great when we lift up our eyes and see it's from God.

[13:04] God who has poured out his spirit upon us. God who has poured out his word to us. He has given us the word of God. The problem in Galatia was seen as the source was man.

And not God. These false teachers in Galatia who were leading the Christians astray with another gospel. Preaching a different kind of gospel.

It was no gospel at all. And so Paul is reminding here the source of the gospel is of God.

And he has this authority. When he says here, I would have you know, brothers. It's not just a gentle kind of introduction.

I would have you to know. This is a firm word from God through Paul. I would have you to know. Listen to what I am saying.

[14:03] But it's also said in love, as he says, brothers. There's a firmness, but there's a gentleness to it. But there's always a firmness.

Because this is truth. This is serious. As he says in verse 6, I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting. There is a firmness in all of these words.

But the source of the gospel is what is bearing fruit. The source of the gospel is what is giving its increase.

The gospel, as Paul wrote to the Colossians in chapter 1, verse 5 and 6, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing all over the world. The source of the gospel, it is pouring out the gospel far and wide.

And the gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ, a Savior for his people. Preacher Daniel Stearns was preaching in America once.

[15:09] And at the end of the service, it's going back to the late 1800s, at the end of the service, a stranger came up to him and said, I don't like the way that you spoke about Jesus and the cross in your sermon this morning.

Instead, you should be preaching and emphasizing Jesus as an example, as a teacher. Daniel Stearns looked at him and said, Well, if I presented Jesus in that way as an example and a teacher, would you then follow him?

And the man replied, Certainly, I would. And so Daniel Stearns said to him then, All right then, let's take the first step. Jesus, he did not sin.

Can you claim that for yourself? And the man looked at him confused and surprised. He said, Well, no, I have to acknowledge I do sin.

Then he replied, Daniel Stearns replied, Well, your greatest need is to have a Savior, not an example. And the gospel is not about setting an example for us.

[16:15] Though there are good things how we are to live, it's all about a Savior. He did something that we could never do. He saved us from our sins.

So the source of the gospel is from God. The power of the gospel is the second thing. The power of the gospel. And in this we see Paul giving a word of testimony.

In verse 13. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And he goes on to speak about everything that he was doing.

Then in verse 13. But then he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me.

So there you see the power of the gospel. Paul had a past. Something he wasn't proud of, but something he often uses to highlight the power of the gospel.

[17:18] How it transforms lives. Paul was a persecutor of the Christian faith. He was driven by a zeal to destroy the church, and he believed he was achieving much in his life, and yet it was nothing.

But the grace of the Lord changed his whole life. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace.

Paul's plans were not God's plans. And it's amazing there to think that how it speaks of he was set apart before he was born.

God knew the plans he had for Paul, even before he was born. And the wonder of it for you and I is that he knows exactly the same for us.

Every plan, every purpose he has in our lives, he has known before you were born. And you see the pride that was in Paul's heart, standing out among his own people, in Judaism advancing beyond anyone of his own agencies, so extremely sellous he was for the traditions of his father.

[18:38] He was standing out in so many ways, proud, boastful, and yet the power of the gospel, the good news of Christ, brought him to his knees.

And that's the power the gospel still has today, to bring people to their knees. The gospel frees us. But in many ways, the gospel was being contained by the people, or confined by the people, or changed by the people, to make it something it wasn't.

And the power of the gospel was not being set free. We have many pets in our lives today. If you were here last week, you maybe heard about ours in the children's address.

We have a dog. And many other people have dogs. They have other kinds of animals. They have as pets. But so often, these animals have been taken out of their natural environment and domesticated.

[19:39] As you were reminded last week, they still have that inclination in them to their natural way. And that is the way we are. But we think of the gospel in the same way, and how people try to domesticate the gospel, to make it something nice and pleasant.

But in so doing, you're confining the power of the gospel. Because the gospel is not being presented in the way it should be. If it's just as a teacher or as an example, it's being confined. But if we see it as a need for a savior, then we have to see the power that is behind that gospel. Because it's not our power. Paul says in writing to Romans, in chapter 1, I am not ashamed of the gospel.

Why? Because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. It is the power of God. And that is why the power of God has to be set forth, set free.

And that's what Paul was. He was a persecutor of the Christian faith, but he was transformed into a preacher of the Christian faith. Letting the power of God be seen in a very different way, in a real way, in a true way, that the power of God saves.

[21:02] Paul's life was an example of it, how it was completely transformed. But others would have seen him and been afraid, and they were.

Has this man really changed? Can this gospel really transform him? You think of Paul's testimony as it's given in the book of Acts, chapter 9.

There was a man called Ananias who God used. And he was told to go and lay his hands on Paul. This is the Paul who was breathing out murderous threats against the Christian faith.

Ananias' response was this, Lord, I have heard from many about this man how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.

He was afraid. He had heard what had been done through this man. And yet he did as the Lord asked him. Because God had powerfully taken hold of Saul as he was who became Paul.

[22 : 14] And that's because of the grace of God, the power of God to save. As verse 15 makes clear for us, when he had set me apart before I was born, he called me by his grace, revealing to me his son.

That is what made the difference. You wonder, was anybody praying for Saul? Or did they think, he's beyond saving?

Look at him. Look at what he is doing to the Christian church. Persecuting, destroying the Christian faith, killing Christians. Who would pray for such a man?

But doesn't it remind us today that we should never give up on praying for anyone who we see committing evil? Whether it's rich and famous or powerful, whether it's a friend, a family member, or even ourselves.

There are so many people we feel are maybe beyond prayer. But the gospel reminds us that there is power in the gospel to save.

[23 : 22] Because there is the good news of a saviour who is Jesus Christ. So we remember the power of the gospel. The final thing we see here is the praise from the gospel.

You see, that's at the end of this section. In verse 23 and 24, they only were hearing it said, he who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.

And they glorified God because of me. There was a huge transformation, not just for Paul, but for the church, where people were hearing of the persecutor who was now preaching.

And they glorified God. They saw his power. And that power leads to praise. What a testimony of the power of God at work through Jesus Christ.

From persecutor to preacher. When you think of testimonies you hear today, there are amazing testimonies given of how people have been taken from darkness, from addiction, from all kinds of walks of life and brought to a place where they love the Lord Jesus.

[24 : 52] The one they used to persecute, the one they used to curse, the one they used to mock. And yet there is power in the gospel to save.

And that power leads to praise. But the gospel isn't just for one kind of person. It's not just for the souls who are seeking to destroy the church.

It's not just for those who are caught up in lifestyles that seem so far from God they could never be saved. The gospel is for you, it's for me, it's for us all. Because it is the grace of God that saves. saves. Do we realize how dead we are in sin? As somebody put it, we're not almost dead, we're not nearly dead, we are dead.

We are dead in our sins. Which means that the only hope is the grace of our God, which is what the gospel offers.

[25 : 55] It is this gospel that is able to save. And this gospel then it reminds us that we can praise God because he is working. And it's this gospel power that reminds us that we should be excited about the gospel and what it is able to do so we can come under the gospel, we can hear the gospel and think, is the gospel going to save anyone here today?

How many will the gospel save today? What is God going to say to us today through this gospel? How is God going to encourage us and rebuke us and challenge us and strengthen us through this gospel?

It is the gospel that we need to hear because there is no other gospel. And it's the gospel that keeps us going because it is the power of God unto salvation.

Paul was astonished to hear of people so quickly deserting this gospel. Will we turn our back on the gospel?

The power of God to salvation. Will you go away from here today and think nothing more of the gospel? Or will you see it as the power that is able to save you?

[27 : 18] we can become so complacent with the gospel, so at peace with where we are and how we're living that the gospel loses its impact.

but as we hear it, may it open our eyes and help us to see the need we have of it constantly whether we are believers or not that we are living in light of the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ.

And may we see it as we go forward that our faith is by the grace of God a gift that helps us to fix our eyes on Jesus.

There's a man called Dr. J. Elder Cumming and he said this in almost every case the beginning of new blessing is a new revelation of the character of God more beautiful more wonderful more precious.

It's not a new revelation because it's the way God is but it's seeing him in that light more beautiful more wonderful more precious.

[28 : 38] As we hear the gospel the power that transforms we should see the more beauty that there is in Christ the more wonder that there is in him and see him and his gospel as more precious than ever.

There is no other gospel. The gospel is Jesus Christ crucified for our sin risen from the dead a saviour for his people.

Let us pray. Lord our gracious God we thank you for the gospel we thank you for the good news that we have in the midst of a broken world a broken and a sinful people such as we are.

We thank you that we have in Jesus one who came to conquer sin the one whose power is seen in the gospel the power of God to salvation and we pray that we would have that gospel in our hearts even today as we go from here that we would not leave it behind we would not turn from it but that we recognize the very source of it that you are God in heaven who gave your word to us who gave your son that we might have everlasting life and so may your gospel be more beautiful more wonderful and more precious than ever as we ask it all in Jesus name Amen we're going to conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 63 the Scottish Psalter verse in Psalm 63 we'll sing three stanzas verse 1 to 4

Lord thee my God I'll early seek my soul doth thirst for thee my flesh longs in a dry parched land wherein no waters be that I thy power may behold and brightness of thy face as I have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place we'll sing from verse 1 to 4 the tune as whether be we stand to sing to God's praise Lord thee my God I'll ever receive my soul doth thirst for thee thy flesh!

[31 : 16] thy flesh of sin and thy heart's grant when no waters be that I thy power may be who who Thank you.

After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my left. We'll close with the benediction. Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore. Amen.

Thank you.