

Gospel is God's Message

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Amen. If you've got your Bibles, turn with me to Galatians chapter 1. Great song. Great gospel. You know, when I've got two girls, I've got a 5-year-old and a 4-year-old, and sometimes when I pass by their rooms, I notice, I peek in there, and I notice that their room is a mess.

And so I will look at the oldest, Charlotte, and I will tell Charlotte, I say, Charlotte, go tell Annie to go clean your room right now. I want you to pick up stuff. And I could just hear Charlotte run up to Annie. She goes, Daddy says you have to go up there.

And then my mind goes back to those times when I was a kid, when my siblings used to tell me when my dad told me something. And I go back to times when I remember when I used to tell my parents, or I used to tell my siblings that, hey, Mom and Dad told me to tell you, and when they really didn't happen, you know what I mean?

And we'd always get in those arguments. We'd always fight. Like, you know, Dad said to mow the lawn. You're supposed to mow the lawn, Jared. That's your job. And he wouldn't listen to me. There's always this fight.

[1 : 11] Like, who has the authority? You're not Dad. You're going to tell me what to do. That's what we see here in Galatians chapter 1. We see Paul fighting for his authority. We see Paul fighting for his apostleship.

But I see something greater. You see, Paul's authority was being questioned in the churches here at Galatia. There were troublemakers in this church. Galatians chapter 1, verse 7, it says this, Which is not another, but there are some that trouble you.

In Galatians chapter 5, verse 10, he says this, I have confidence in you through the Lord that ye will be a none otherwise minded, but he that troubleth you should bear his judgment.

And in verse 12, he jumps down and he says this, he says, I would that they were even cut off, which trouble you. There were people inside this church that were troublemakers.

And they had infiltrated these churches in Galatia, and they had tried to gain the confidence, the confidence for their teaching among Paul's converts. And the way they were doing it is they were defaming and casting doubts about Paul's credentials, about him being an apostle, his apostolic credentials.

[2 : 24] These troublemakers were saying that Paul wasn't a real apostle. They were, that he wasn't preaching the gospel. He was not preaching, he was preaching another gospel, not the true gospel. And that the believers there in Galatia, that they should keep the law, the Old Testament, if they wanted to be true believers.

See, Paul was in this fight, this struggle. Was he from God or wasn't he from God? And as a result of this, the church there at Galatia, they lent a ready ear to this teaching, because it seems that they were on some bad terms with Paul.

So in our passage today, we have the apostle Paul fighting to defend his apostleship. Now the question that was running through my mind as I was studying this passage out, I was wondering about this.

You know, when Paul talks in the New Testament, he usually tells us not to fight. You know that? In Romans chapter 12, verse 19, before we get there, why was, the question I asked myself when I was studying this, why was Paul defending himself?

Why was Paul so quick to fight for his position? Why was Paul fighting to defend himself? And why was he fighting? This man was telling people, telling believers, in Romans chapter 12, verse 19, he says this, he says, Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.

[3 : 38] Why is Paul all of a sudden taking up this mantle that he needs to go out and he needs to fight these troublemakers? Why is he fighting? What is it, what's going on? Why is Paul being so adamant about this?

Why does it seem that Paul was fighting when he taught others not to fight? Was this attack, was this on, was the attack on his apostleship, was that his real concern for Paul or was there something else at stake?

You see, I think there was an underlying issue going through here. It really wasn't, hey, I'm an apostle, I'm sent by God. Yes, that was the fight, but the fight was something much more important than his position.

The gospel is at stake. The gospel is at stake. And when the gospel is at stake, Christians contend. We fight for the gospel. And Paul was fighting for the gospel, whether it was from man or whether it was from God.

Paul was fighting over again. He says, I certify you. I want you, in verse 11, he says, I want you to know, I want it to be revealed to you, brethren, that the gospel which I preach, it's not of man, but it's by God.

[4 : 47] Paul wasn't fighting necessarily for his apostleship. Paul was fighting for, does the gospel come from God or is it something that man made up? That's what we see in these verses.

See, I believe today we have the same dilemma. You might have had a professor or maybe a school teacher or maybe you took a literary class in college or something like that.

And maybe you were sitting down there and maybe one of those teachers, those professors say, probably at a secular school, I hope not a Bible college, probably at a secular school said, this stuff was just made up by men about 2,000 years ago.

It's just a good genre. I mean, they talk about all this stuff. Maybe you sat through that and you listened to that junk. That was a fight against the gospel. Maybe you have a co-worker that was shedding doubt in your mind that the gospel, meaning that Jesus, God in flesh, coming to earth, living the perfect life and then dying on the cross to save humankind from the sin and eternal hellfire.

Maybe they've shed some doubt in there. Maybe you have a family member or a group of friends that have argued that this type of Christianity that you believe in was just made up, was just man-made.

[5 : 58] It's no different than any other religion. You know, I don't know your situation. I don't know, maybe you have a friend or someone close to you that said, man, your Christianity, your belief, it was just all made up by man.

It was a bunch of fishermen 2,000 years ago. And then some religious, and they have really good reasoning and they have all this stuff and it's put doubt in your mind. Can I tell you this is the exact same thing that's happened here at this church?

They were bringing doubt into the people's mind that Paul's message was just a man's message and Paul was screaming emphatically, this is God's message.

This is God's message. I'll be honest with you. As I was reading this passage of Scripture, Galatians 1, 11 through the end of the chapter, like things came up in my mind.

As Paul began to like defend the faith, like my mind began to think about certain things like, okay, Paul says he was given the gospel by revelation, but aren't there other religions out there that said that they have revelation from God, right?

[7 : 02] Isn't there other religions out there that say that they have religion? I don't know if you ever think that. Does anybody else have those same thoughts that I don't know if this, is this story, this is really true? Is this really true that Jesus, God in the flesh, came down to the earth?

Is this message, is it trustworthy or is it just something that man concocted? I've dealt with those things. I fight with those things. I struggle with those things. But after studying this, after reading this, I've come to the conclusion that this, this is God's word.

God's word. And his message is the gospel message. And it wasn't made by man, but he originated it. And it's his message. And I need to take that message to everywhere.

The gospel message is God's message. And this afternoon, I humbly try to give you some reasons so you can know that the gospel message is God's message. The first reason that Paul gives is found in the first chapter of Galatians.

And notice in verse 11 through 12, notice what Paul says. He says, But I certify you. I would have you guys to know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after me.

[8 : 11] For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by revelation. The first reason that Paul gives the believers in Galatia that the gospel was given to him, not by man, but by God, was that Paul's testimony.

The gospel that Paul preached was given to him by God. Paul wasn't taught the gospel by some man. Paul had a unique conversion. And it was like, unlike anybody else before. You see, when Paul got saved, it wasn't like your normal Christian getting saved.

I don't think anybody would say, Yeah, last time I got saved, I was going to persecute a church. I was actually going to throw some people in jail. And as I was on my way there, all of a sudden, this light shone around about me and it just knocked me down and Jesus spoke audibly to me.

I don't think many people have that testimony. But Paul says, Let me tell you about my testimony. Let me tell you about where I come from. Let me tell you about what I want. You see, Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

He was born out of the tribe of Benjamin. He was circumcised on the eighth day. Concerning the Old Testament law, he was a Pharisee. That means Paul had rules about the rules. He was perfect.

[9 : 21] He was perfect. Paul sat at the feet of one of the greatest teachers of the time. Paul was a Jew and his name was first mentioned at the end of Acts chapter 7.

You see, the Bible gives us a story there of how Paul's conversion happened. You see, Paul was living during a time when Israel, the nation Israel, was under control by Rome.

Israel wasn't his own country. They paid taxes to Caesar. They had a military that was actually inside their country. They didn't have their own military. They had another occupying country setting up military bases inside their country.

They weren't their own country. And so, whenever they did something like taxes or even the death penalty, they had to go through the Roman government. You guys remember the crucifixion? Who did Jesus stand before?

Why didn't the Jews just kill him outright? Because they didn't have that option. They didn't have that right. They had to go through the Romans. And so, in Acts chapter 7, in verse 58, we see a group, an angry mob, these witnesses, and they were laying their coats at the feet of a man called Saul, which is the man that we're talking about here, the apostle Paul.

[10 : 33] They were laying their coats at the feet of his, laying their coats at his feet, meaning that he gave approval to this murder. This murder was like no other murder.

You guys remember the story? If you've ever gone through the book of Acts, I get the opportunity to teach the training center and we go through the book of Acts and I love it. It's an awesome time. But during that time, this is a chapter before, the church has called out some men and they add them as deacons and one of those guys is Stephen and their job was this, to take care of the widows.

And so Stephen goes to the synagogue and he goes out and he preaches and he preaches a hard message and he's hard. I mean, he's telling them they're stiff-necked, they don't believe, they don't understand, they won't repent, they won't convert and all of a sudden these people start getting angry.

So angry, they start gnashing their teeth and they run up at them and they throw them outside the city and this murder was an act of passion. They weren't allowed to kill people and the person that was the gang leader, the head leader, the guy that was consenting, the guy that really liked it according to Acts 8, verses 1, the guy that really liked it was Saul and he was there when they murdered a guy that took care of widows.

Saul was a bad guy. Paul says this, he says, you want to know how I know the gospel message is of God? Look at my testimony. You want to know how I know it's real? You want to know how I know it's not of man and it's of God?

[11 : 55] Look at my life. Do you realize who I was? Do you realize that I was there when Stephen was stoned? A guy that would take care of widows. I was there and I consented to his death.

And not only that, in Acts chapter 8, it goes on. Look, before we go there, in Galatians chapter 1, verses 13, Paul's terror didn't stop at Stephen's death. It didn't stop there.

Paul kept on going. Look in Galatians chapter 1, verse 13. For ye have heard of my life in time past of the Jews' religion. How? Underline this, that beyond measure, I went to extreme measures to persecute the church.

You want to tell me the gospel message is man's message? Listen to this. I went to extreme measures to persecute God's church. I went to extreme measures to persecute the church of God and wasted it.

And it profited the Jews in religion, the Jewish religion, above mine equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous.

[13 : 02] what Paul was saying was this. At the time of my conversion, before my conversion, there was nobody like me. There was nobody like me that hated the church as much as I hated it.

I was there at the time of Stephen's death. In Acts chapter 8, verses 3, the story goes on. It didn't stop with Stephen's death, but it kept on going. You see, because Saul at the time, his name was Paul.

Can we just call him Paul from here on out? Okay, we'll call him Paul for here on out. Thanks for the agreements. Okay? So Paul just said this. He said, it just didn't stop there, but I went. I made havoc. I desolated the church.

I went into every house and I found men and women and I hauled them off to prison. Paul's life was like anyone else. People, when Paul says he was the chief of all sinners, he was the chief of all sinners.

He hated Jesus. He hated that sect out of Nazareth. He hated those people. He wanted to persecute that church. He hated that church. And he says, you want reasoning?

[14 : 04] You want to know how I know that this message is from God? Look at my life. I was there when Stephen was dead. I was actually part of it. I was there making havoc, desolating the church, going in from house to house, hauling out men and women.

And get this, it gets so bad. God in Jerusalem that people begin to pack up and say, we got to leave. We got to get out of Jerusalem. This guy is just crazy.

We got to go. Look in verse chapter 4. Look what happens. Therefore, because Paul made havoc, therefore, they that were scattered abroad went forth preaching the word everywhere.

Preaching the word. What happens was this. Paul started it off in the synagogue where they killed a man named Stephen. And he was consenting. He liked it.

He enjoyed it. He was part of it. And then he took it to a step further. He started going into people's houses. If you can get this story in your mind, you could realize it's a pretty good story. I mean, he's a villain.

[15 : 11] If there's ever a villain, Paul was a villain of villains. And he was going to people's houses and knocking on their door and seeing whether they loved Jesus or not. And then he would haul them off and throw them into prison.

And people were so scared that they were relocating their house and their family. And they went out. But God, through his miraculous provision, people started going out and they started preaching the word and the gospel started spreading.

But the thing that Paul is giving us here in Galatians chapter 1 was this. I persecuted the church above everyone else. You want proof that the gospel message is God's message?

Friends, know this. Look at my life. It just didn't stop there. It just didn't stop with Paul going into these people's things. He kept on pressing. He kept on going. He kept on going.

And he was able, finally, to get clearance with the high priest in Acts chapter 9. He was able to get clearance from the high priest to go into other towns. You think, after a guy had someone killed and after he made havoc on a church, that means he made it desolate.

[16 : 12] He's making it desolate. And after he made those people so scared of him that they started leaving the city, you'd think he'd be like, I've done a pretty good job. I think I can settle down now.

I think I've done my job. I think I've scared him enough. But Paul went a step further. He went up to the high priest. That would be like, I was trying to think of a story or a movie or something, but that would be like a guy, I couldn't think of anyone.

I was just trying to get the illustration, something good. But that would be like a, I don't know, like this ultimate Jesuit or something like that, going up to the Pope and saying, hey, would you mind if I go out and leave Italy and just maybe go into different parts and see if I can't find people that oppose us and haul them up and bring them back to Jerusalem?

Paul got letters from the high priest to do that. So when Paul says, hey, the message that I'm preaching to you guys, it's not by man.

It was neither by, it's not by man. I wasn't taught it by man. I wasn't given to it by man. It was given to me by God. And you want to know how I know this? Look at my testimony. Look at my testimony.

[17 : 20] I persecuted the church. I hated the church. If you were to watch a movie, and like I said, I couldn't think of a good movie or anything like that or a good story, that guy, that villain, he doesn't change teams.

You know what I mean? At the end, he dies. You know what I'm saying? That villain that's persecuting the good people, the people that you like in the story, he dies at the end of the story. He doesn't change.

I mean, he's already killed. He's already wrecked families and he's wrecked homes. He's already gone out to go to different places to bring people back into jail. He doesn't turn around. This doesn't go good for him.

But our God had a different plan for Paul. You see, when he was on his way to Damascus, he saw this great light shine about him. And it was Jesus. Now, I want you to think about this. If you go through your Bible and think about this, how many other people were saved by this great light shining about him in the book of Acts?

Not very many. You guys remember just the next chapter over, in Acts chapter 10, there's a guy named Cornelius. Okay? And he did alms. He gave to God. He really loved God. He was praying and stuff like that.

[18 : 21] And the angel of the Lord came to him and said, hey, there's a special guy that's going to come to you and he's going to preach to you. Now, my question to you is, why didn't Jesus just shine to that guy like he did to Paul a chapter before?

Why didn't Jesus just go down there and talk to him? Because Paul was a special character. Paul was a special character. And here at the church at Galatia, these people are saying, Paul, hmm, I don't know if I, I, these guys come in there, these troublemakers as we saw in Galatians 1, 7, 5, 10, and 5, 12.

These troublemakers, these people that troubled them came in there and they're planting a seed of doubt inside their mind. They're saying, this guy that's preaching, that preached to you, he does, he's not, it's not real. It's not of God.

And they're letting that truth, that air permeate inside their mind and inside their head. And Paul just writes this letter and screaming to them, saying, hey, you guys can trust my gospel because the gospel that I got wasn't of me, it was of God.

I didn't get it, I wasn't taught like other men. It was revealed to me by Jesus Christ. How can we trust this Bible? How can we trust this thing? How do we know it's real?

[19 : 30] Because we believe that it was revealed to men by God. That's how we believe. And that's what Paul was teaching. Paul was a special character.

He had been divinely appointed by God to take the gospel to the Gentiles. In Acts chapter 9 verse 15, the Lord said unto this man that was going to baptize Ananias, that was going to baptize Saul, he says, go thy way.

Because this guy that was going to baptize him, he was scared to death. He's like, Jesus, I've heard of Saul and I heard that he was coming here because he's going to throw us in jail. I heard that he was going to come here and throw us in jail.

Us that believe in Jesus. I don't want to have any part of him. He says, it's okay. It's okay. The Lord said unto him, go thy way. He is a chosen vessel unto me. He is a special purpose for me to bear my names before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. In the book of Acts, it recounts this. When Paul got saved, he was saved for a special purpose.

[20 : 37] He was a special character. That's why in Galatians 1, verse 15, Paul says this, But when it pleased God, who separated me out of my mother's womb and called me by his grace to reveal his son in me that I may preach among the heathen.

You see, it was God that gave the message to Paul. How do we know that the gospel message isn't something that man made up? How do we know that the gospel message is different than Islam?

How do we know the gospel message is different than what they talk about in Mormonism? How do we know the gospel message is different than this? Because we know one thing, that this gospel message, it didn't originate with man, but it started with God and it was given by God to man.

That's how we know that this gospel message is God's message. And that's what Paul was saying. It was commissioned that Paul should be a speaker to the Gentiles. The message that Paul was preaching wasn't man's message, it was God's message.

How could the most zealous man, the man that spent his life killing and pitting those people that followed after Jesus in jail, now be himself a follower of that same Jesus?

[21 : 48] It was a God thing. It was a God thing. Paul didn't make this message up. God revealed it to him. That's the first point.

Paul didn't make up this message. God revealed it to him. God revealed the gospel message to Paul. How do we know that the gospel message is God's message?

It was revealed to Paul. What's the second reason Paul gives? The first reason that Paul gives is that it wasn't taught to him. He said that over and over in the passage.

It wasn't taught to me by man. I didn't go up to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles. I didn't go up there to say they were alright. I realized that it was given to me by God. It was revealed by Jesus. And the second reason that I see in this passage that the gospel that Paul preached is God's message is this.

It didn't originate with Paul. It was before him. Notice what verse 22 and verse 23 of Galatians chapter 1 says. Notice what it says in Galatians chapter 1 verse 22 and 23.

[22 : 57] He says this. And was known by faith to the churches of Judah which were in Christ. But they had heard only that he which persecuted us in times past now what is that word?

Preaches the faith which what? He once destroyed. What was the faith that Paul once destroyed? who originated that message?

Who was the one that preached that God came down and came into flesh and he dwelt among man? Who was the one that proclaimed that now is the acceptable time?

Now is the day of salvation. Who was the one that said that upon the fact that he was the Christ the son of the living God that he would build his church?

It was Jesus. You see the the message that Paul persecuted the one that he now preaches was the same message that Jesus was preaching.

[24 : 07] That should give you some comfort right there. As I was thinking about this I think about all these different people that I come into contact and they just ask me all these questions. Well how do you know that your message is the right one?

I mean there's some pretty good arguments that some people have right? I think Joseph Smith said that he saw an angel. How do I know the gospel messages of God?

Because it started with Jesus. It started with the man that claimed he was God. It started with the man that that that that that parted the that walked on the waters.

It started with the man that turned the water into wine. It started with the man that that that that claimed to be God and proved it through his miracles. The faith that Paul once destroyed was the same faith he now preached.

And that thing that he preached that faith that he preached was just the message that he heard or the message that the apostles heard. And like Peter Phil all those apostles I'm getting a mind blank.

[25 : 10] Okay I'm sorry back in children's church I need their help. But all those apostles back there those what those guys were preaching what Peter was preaching James and John was preaching. Where did they get that message?

They got it from Jesus. And Paul was saying hey guys don't you realize the message that I preach now was the message that they preached that they heard from Jesus. You guys realize what we have here?

You realize when we tell the gospel Jesus came to the earth God came to the earth he lived among men and he died and he was buried and he rose again.

That's just not something we made up. That's something that God made up. That's something that God authored. That's something that God spoke into existence.

That's something that God did. We should fight for that. We should believe in that and we should communicate that with everybody. Jesus claimed that he was God.

[26 : 19] Like I said he didn't just claim it he proved it. He displayed his power and his resurrection and he's the one that started the message. Paul was just a messenger of this amazing gospel.

God's gospel. You see there's been many people that have claimed they have been given revelation and seen their God.

They claimed that they had the truth. Joseph Smith and his heresy that's leading millions of people to hell. He claimed he had revelation from an angel.

Muhammad was it 500 B.C. or A.D. I'm not good. I'm not a historian. Okay. 500, 600. Asked Zach if he wanted the exact date. He could tell you he was there.

Muhammad claimed special revelation. All these different religions out there say we have revelation but none could claim that they were God.

[27 : 25] Well they could claim that they were God but none could prove it. None could claim that they were God then claim that they were going to die prophesy that they were going to die and then come back but Jesus did.

and then give that gospel to men to proclaim it to everywhere. There's only one man that's ever done that. His name is Jesus Christ.

His name is Jesus Christ. And what Paul is telling us here in Galatians chapter 1 was this. Guys the message that I preach I didn't get it by a man.

I didn't receive it from a man. The man didn't teach it to me. The message I preach comes from him. The faith that I preached was the faith that God gave.

The message that God gave. The message that Jesus started. You guys understand what you have? Do you understand?

[28 : 30] Do you realize what you have? You have the message from God. You don't need to doubt it.

You don't need to think well is this something man made up or can I really believe it? You can trust it. You can trust it. It's a message that Jesus made.

It's God's message. And that's what Paul preached. Today if you're here and you've doubted this gospel message I just see one thing you need to do.

If you doubt in this message repent and believe it. Repent and believe it. Trust that God came down here in the flesh and he came to this world to die in your place for your sins.

He resurrected in the third day. And brother and sister who have trusted in this this is our call like Paul.

[29 : 42] You see Paul realized that this was God's message and so he was going to take it everywhere. He was going to tell everyone. He was going to proclaim it to everyone.

man. And you might be here and you might say I'm sitting here I can't do this. I don't know Greek. I don't know Hebrew. I've never read many commentaries. How can I preach like Paul?

Can I tell you listen you don't need to know Greek. You don't need to know Hebrew. You don't need to study commentaries. This message not for this message. Not for this message. As a preacher once said let the carpenter lay down his saw and hammer and say to his co-worker standing by his side.

Let the businessman step outside of his office and tell the young intern that he has a message from God. Let the secretaries speak to someone earnestly and faithful working in an office.

Let you who are sitting by someone that's come today and they don't know Jesus let you tell them what God has done in your life like Paul has.

[30 : 49] This is one of the highest prerogatives and one of the most sacred and holy assignments that we've ever been given. We've been allowed to speak God's message.

And Paul in Galatians chapter 1 verses 10 through 24 he's just saying this guys this is not my message. I didn't make this up. This is God's message.

Do you realize that today? This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

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