

Galatians 1:1-10

Never Forsake Freedom

Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), ² and all the brethren who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

³ Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ 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, ⁵ to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

⁶ I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ 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. ⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

Pray

Sitting on top of the United States capitol building is a 20 foot statue known as the “*Freedom Lady*”. She was sculpted by Italian artists in the city of Rome, & shipped across the Atlantic Ocean to her perch in Washington DC.

During the delivery, the ship carrying the statue encountered a fierce storm.

Howling winds and huge waves threatened to capsize the ship. Its skipper ordered the cargo thrown overboard.

But when the men went to toss the Freedom Lady the captain shouted, “*No, never! We’ll flounder before we throw “Freedom” away.*” This is the message of Galatians... *Never throw away your freedom.*

A)Galatians has been called the “Magna Carta of the doctrine of Christian liberty.”

B)It declares the total liberty in Christ from the religious laws of Moses

1)emphasizing that freedom from sin is accompanied by freedom from the law and the doctrines of man.

C)The great reformer Martin Luther especially loved this letter; he called Galatians his “**Catherine (his wife’s name)**

1)because, he said, “*I am married to it.*”

C)This letter transformed his way of relating to God – and became the catalyst for the Protestant Reformation.

Background

A)Galatia is not a city, but a region- consisting not of one Church but many Churches that were in that region- **Note v.2 to the churches**

Aa)Some of the cities that Paul ministered in the region of Galatia were Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

B)The people of Galatia were a celtic people originally from Gaul, or present-day France, 1)migrated south, settling in a region which is in present-day Turkey.

C) History tells us the Galatians were **country folk - backwoods people - ancient Hillbillies,**

1)who were unstable, uneducated, & easily misled.

D)Some of the People of Galatia had a reputation for being Barbarians

Julius Caesar described these people as being ‘They are fickle. They are fond of change. They are not to be trusted.’

A)Acts 13-14 gives us an example of their **fickleness...**Paul works a miracle and heals a lame man in the city of Lystra.

B)At first the people **assume he’s the Greek god JUPITER. They try to worship him**

Bb)But Paul sets the record straight..... and preaches the Gospel... !!

C)That was in the morning - By evening time some **grace-rejecting Jews** arrive, in Lystra

1) stir up the people against Paul.

D) The Galatians end up picking up rocks and stoning the man they had originally tried to worship.

1) That is how fickle and barbaric they were.

The Date of the writing:

A) Two theories – one view puts the date of the writing in AD 55 when Paul was in Ephesus – so around Acts 19

B) The other puts it in AD 47-49 which would mean that Paul wrote this letter from Antioch – around Acts 15

In Acts 15 something significant happened in the early Church

A) The Apostles and church leaders gathered in Jerusalem to discuss how to deal with the Gentile believers – Jerusalem Council

B) Because there was a problem that had arisen in the Church –

1) See many of the people who were first saved were Jewish.

C) Many of the new believers coming out of Jewish background were having a hard time embracing their full freedom in Christ

D) Their Christian experience still included following the rituals

1) and keeping the days associated with their Jewish faith

I think any of us here who have come to faith in Christ who were previously a part of some other religious system – understand that

A) Example – I know many people who come to Christ out of Catholicism

B) It takes a while and some teaching of the Bible to completely walk in their freedom in Jesus

1) Many still hold on to some of those Catholic traditions at first

C) Or if you came out of a more legalistic part of Christian demonation

1) Baptist in the South – Women don't wear pants / make up

D) Grew up being told – Christians don't dance, or drink, or wear certain clothes –

E) Sometimes when you have been brought up in that it is hard to get past those traditions

1) Legalistic mentality and walk in freedom in Jesus

Many of the new Converts to Christ coming out of a Jewish background were still holding on to their Jewish roots

A) The real problem that was happening in the Church was this

B) The Jewish believers were putting all of these rituals/regulations on these new gentile Christians

C) Essentially saying – It is great that you believe in Jesus

1) but if you really want to be truly saved – need to embrace Judaism too

D) Namely they needed to be circumcised!

1) Not a pleasant idea especially for a grown man in the 1st century

The counsel in Jerusalem in Acts 15 – met for the purpose of addressing how to deal with the Gentiles

A) Conclusion was – We should not put any unnecessary trips on our Galatians brothers and sisters

B) Salvation is by Grace alone – through faith alone in Jesus – period

C) Paul makes mention of the report he gave at that council meeting in Galatians 2:1-2

Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. ² And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.

D) Which would give evidence that the book of Galatians was written after that meeting in Acts 15 – so AD 55 time is more accurate.

The heart of the letter:

A) Paul is writing to combat the false teaching that anything can be added to or improve upon that finished work of Jesus for our Salvation

B) We will see in our text today – Paul is passionate about this fight

v.1 **Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),**

Paul begins by addressing his authority as an Apostle of Jesus Christ

A) The Basic meaning of the word Apostle = sent one – sent on a mission

B) Jesus Chose 12 – Apostles - Mission to Change the World !

1) Minus Judas – so 11 original

C) Now the 1st apostles who were sent out by Jesus had have a unique place in the history of the church!

1) God's plan!

D) They were used by the Lord in the birthing of His Church

1) & in the putting together of God's word! (Inspired!)

E) Paul was later added to this Unique group of original apostles – but as he mentions here in v.1 – He was added not by men – but by the Lord

1) After his Radical conversion experience in Acts 9 – Saul of Tarsus

E) Paul was not commissioned by a church, or a denomination, or a theological institution...

1) but by the risen Lord Himself.

2) He explains later in the Chapter about his Conversion & calling by the Lord – talk about next time

Now why is it so important that we recognize Paul's Apostleship:

A) If Paul's apostleship can be challenged then so can his message – the gospel that he preached – **Salvation by grace alone... faith alone**

B) Important to note: Paul was made an apostle by Jesus himself

3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,

A) Grace and peace have been called "the Siamese twins of the NT"

B) Always in that order – Grace and peace

These two words really summarize the Message of Paul's Gospel

A) The **SOURCE of Salvation is grace**: God's unmerited free favor that is void of any human works

B) Nothing we can do to EARN IT – Nothing we can do to ADD to it !!!

C) The **NATURE of Salvation is Peace**: Peace w/ God / Peace w/ men & peace with in !!!!

D) Grace is who God is and peace is the result of knowing Him

Now in v. 4-5 Paul describes how this Salvation that we enjoy that came by the grace of God was brought about –⁴ 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, ⁵ to whom *be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

A) Note 3 things:

- 1st He tells us what Christ did
- 2nd He tells it why He did it
- 3rd He tells us Who it was done for

B) 1st What Christ did: The first thing he says about Jesus is that v.4 **He gave Himself for our sins**

1) Throughout the epistle Paul points the Galatians to the centrality of the cross.

C) The Cross of Christ and his subsequent resurrection for the dead is the foundation that our faith is built upon

2nd Why did He do it? *To Deliver us from this Present evil age*

A) The word Deliver means to RESCUE – Christianity is a rescue faith

B) The word Deliver is used in Acts 7:14 of the Children of Israel being Rescued from Egyptian slavery

C) Acts 12:11 Of Peter being rescued out of Prison instead of being beheaded

1) And in Acts 23:27 Of Paul being rescued from the Mob that was about to Lynch Him

D) This verse in Galatians is the only place where it is used Metaphorically of our Salvation

E) We have been rescued from this present evil age.

But what does it mean that He rescued us from this Present evil age?

A) Understand that The Bible divides history into two ages –

B) there is this age & the age which is to come – Kingdom age

C) This age started in the garden at the Fall –

1) Man forfeited this world into the hands of Satan – god of this world

D) The age which is to come – started at the cross – Redemption –

1) Jesus has not yet laid claim to that which is rightfully his

E) So presently the ages are overlapping – and when a person is born again they are transferred from this age – to the age that is to come

1) Transferred from the Kingdom of Darkness Kingdom of God

Col 1:13 ¹³For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

A) There are two Kingdoms – we are not taken out of this world – we are to be salt & light

B) but we are transferred One Kingdom to the other

C) SO the Purpose of Christ death was not only to bring us forgiveness but having been forgiven we should live a new life

1) Life of the Kingdom of God

D) So Paul tells us what Christ did – He gave Himself for our sins /

E) He tells us why He did it – to Rescue us from this Present evil age

And 3rdly He tells us who He did it for – the Motivation: according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

A) Jesus lived to Please His Heavenly father:

B) His desire was to bring glory to God – Father be glorified !

That is a Crucial Pt. Because any teaching that adds to or subtracts from the work of Christ – doesn't glorify God but glorifies man

A) If Salvation can be earned – PRAISE BE TO ME

B) I changed my life / I cleaned up my act – I followed the plan – I made it / I did it!!!!

1) ME ME ME - Praise be to me

C) This is one of the things that is at the heart of all legalism – Pride – I achieved Salvation – I earned it

D) I achieved a blessing from God by doing I earned it

E) The Message of the gospel is this: Jesus did it all – You believed

1) Not by works lest anyone should boast

Legalism occurs when a person tries to attach some type of work to the finished work of Jesus

A) Like trying to improve upon a Van Gogh with finger paints – Can't do it

B) Here is another thing that is at the heart of Legalism: - Misery loves company.

C) Mentality – If I can't do certain things as a Christian –

1) you shouldn't be allowed to do them either.

D) Don't watch TV – Everyone throw out your TV's

1) Laying trips on others

Nothing in the Bible that says you should or shouldn't watch TV

A) Bible teaches as a Christ follower you should be a discerning viewer

B) Secular music – Secular vs Sacred – (wait is there really such a thing)

1) U2 incredible songs – Not overtly Christian but they are talking about worthwhile things – Justice and mercy

C) learning to be a discerning listener

D) Legalism occurs when I try to put my own convictions on someone else

1) Paul is combating both ideas in the book of Galatians

⁶ I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ **which is not another**; (one gospel) but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

A) As I mentioned, the Galatians were fickle, gullible, impressionable and thus, vulnerable to false doctrine.

B) Paul says they were "*turning away*" from the Gospel of grace.

C) The phrase turning away in the Greek is very strong : It means "*to change sides, to defect*".

1) Idea is that of Deserting – means to transfer allegiance/

D) It is used of a soldier in the army who revolts or deserts – and goes to the other side

E) This is what Paul accuses the Galatians of –

1) They were in danger of becoming religious turn coats – they are spiritual deserters

F) The verb tense implies they were not there yet, but they were getting close.

But note they were not just turning away from a teaching to embrace another teaching

A) They were turning away from a Person from Him who called you – JESUS

B) To turn away from the true gospel is always to turn away from the Person of Jesus Christ.

1) Christianity is not just a truth to be learned, but a person to be experienced.

C) Anytime you attach any kind of religious ritual to your faith in Christ in order to earn approval from God

1) You are not just turning from the truth – you are turning away from Jesus

D) Anytime we try to improve upon the Finished work of Christ – with our own human effort –

1) we actually ruin the work of Jesus

V.7 You pervert the gospel of Christ

What Paul says next is Heavy!

8 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. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, Repeat for emphasis - if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Wow that is harsh Paul – not very loving – a little extreme ?

10 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.

Paul is saying Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God.

A) If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant.

B) Jesus said something similar to the words of Paul about stumbling little ones

Anyone who causes a little child to stumble – it would be better for that person to have a Mill Stone... sea –

C) Millstone – giant stone – neck straight to the bottom

D) We would applaud that when it comes to child abuse? – Yea Millstone

Well God takes seriously when people are stumbled physically and spiritually

A) Sober warning to anyone who is a teacher

B) Now let's bring this home: Most of us here are not going to get off track in preaching or teaching another gospel.

C) We are pretty secure in our relationship with Jesus – we know the message of the gospel

1) We are grounded in the truth

But here is something that is easy for even followers of Jesus to fall into

A)Performance Based Acceptance mentality with God

B)Not that my salvation is based on my performance

1)but my blessings or being in God's favor is based on my performance

C)I lived this way in my Christian walk for a number of years

1)Where I basically felt if I was reading my Bible enough,

2)or if I was praying enough or serving enough witnessing enough – **I would be blessed.**

PBA produces one of two types of countenances and mentalities

A)When I was performing well – Pride – I am a really good Christian – what is wrong with them

B)Why don't they read like me, pray as much etc
1)Not as radical as me

C)Those type of believers are hard to be around – Idealistic mentality – holier than though –

1) "if you were like me"

D)Very Pharisaical – Pharisees laid trips - Pride

The other mentality or countenance that is produced is one of condemnation –

A)If I am not performing well – I am condemned – loser

B)Here is the sad thing when you fall into that mentality of PBA–

1)there is always someone better than you

C)I prayed for an hour – your friend – I prayed for two – shoot

D)Forget the One year Bible – I did in 6 months

1)I did it in 30 days – what?

Then here is the other thing that just throws you for a loop –

A)when you are Performing well – but life is met by struggles -running against the wind

B)Another Christian that you know is just a flake – inconsistent in his readying etc –

1)He gets a major blessing from God

C)That is not right – that is not fair – God what is up with that?

D)PBA mentality is a trap – Legalism -

Here is the message of the Gospel –

A)God accepts me is not based on my performance but the performance of Jesus

B)It is FINISHED – My standing is based on being put in Christ.

1)**Christ in your heart – you in Christ**

Note v.6 again - ⁶I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ,

A)KJV is more accurate called from Him you into the grace of Christ

B)he called you into the grace of Christ – idea of being enveloped by grace

C)Your life is completely covered and refreshed by the grace of God

D)Old Nestea Ice tea commercials – take the Nestea plunge – falls into the pool with his Tea – comes up AWE – REFREHED

Idea: Grace is refreshing

A)Saved by grace, stand in grace, sustained by the grace of God

B)It is all about Grace – God's riches at Christ expense

C)You belong to God – blessed by God – because of who you are in Jesus

D)Not performing to earn his favor

1)**Performing because I have his favor.**

I enjoy doing things that bless my wife.

A)I am not doing that – so that she will love me - I do that because I know that she loves me.

B)My actions are a response to her love!

So why read? Why Pray? Why Serve? – If it doesn't improve your Standing with God –

2 Reasons

A) 1st Well when I understand His grace / Understand His love I want to bless Him – Natural Response because I have been so blessed

B) I am not doing anything trying to earn God's favor / But all that I do is in response to the Realization – I have it –

C) 2nd Reason I do those things – Although I understand that nothing I do improves my standing with God

1) But When I do those things reading Praying serving etc – It improves His Standing with Me !!!! WHAT ?

Explain – let's say you have an uncle you have never met living in NC – you hear that he died

A) No living heirs – He left everything to you! – His house in NC

B) You think to yourself – That was nice of Him – probably a little shack – a real fixer upper –

1) but hey it is the thought that counts

C) You find out later is not a fixer upper / Pictures come in the mail - it is a Mansion

1) WOW that was really nice of Him !!!! Generous guy

D) SO you travel there only to discover it is not only a mansion – It is fully furnished – with the best of everything

1) Not only a mansion – But two cars – really nice cars in the Garage – fully paid for.

D) Property Taxes Paid for, for Life !!! Maid Service / Gardeners paid for, for life

E) And every month as long as you live in that house there is a new surprise

1) that only Magnifies your uncles Generosity, love Kindness & Grace

Now if that is the case don't you think that you're going to find yourself wanting to find out more about Uncle Bill

A) Want to find out – how he made his money – what he was like

B) Might hang a picture of Uncle Bill in the Living room –

1) **Definitely think** – I wish I would have had the chance to get to know Uncle Bill

Well the same is true with us – Nothing I do changes my standing with God

A) He loves me – I am in Christ & But when I dig into the word and meditate on the person of Christ –

B) It Improves His Standing with me

C) And unlike Uncle Bill our Lord is Not dead – He is Living – We can Know Him –

1) In fact that is exactly why He has saved us – Know Him

Now here is what Happens: The More I study the word, the More I learn of Him / the more I realize what He has done for me / Promised me

A) My appreciation for Him grows into an Adoration – A worship

B) The Curiosity that I experience when I was first saved – what is this all about –

1) Who is this Jesus really who died for my sins The Curiosity grows into a Hunger

C) My thankfulness grows into a reason to give Testimony { To share w/ others about How great My God is / How wonderful My Jesus is

The More that I discover who He is & what He has done for me & what He has promised & I realize that I could never repay Him! – Impossible

A) But I find myself wanting to give to Him – spend time with Him –

B) Because I am so Blessed {Natural response to Grace

C) That my friends is why the study of this book is so important –

D) We need to grow in our understanding of Grace!