

Galatians 1:11-2:10

The Validation of Paul's Ministry and Apostleship

11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. 14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

When talking about the early church – one of the things that we need to remember that we often forget is this:

A) Those in the early church didn't have the NT that we hold in our hands tonight and hold dear to our hearts.

B) They didn't really even have the OT scriptures although they were versed in the OT. –

1) Scrolls – not owned by everyone – Like our Bibles

C) So imagine that – no gospels to read about the story of Jesus – they didn't have the book of Romans to study –

D) So they were dependent upon the teachings of the Apostles who were reflecting upon the teachings of Jesus

E) And who were being moved by the HS to bring to life how the OT connected to the work of Jesus and the way of Jesus

Important to remember that

A) And when we do – I think it easier to see how these false teachings – could creep into the Churches

B) Noted last week that one of the false teachings that had crept into the churches of Galatia was this –

C) In order to be a real true Christian believing in Jesus was not enough

1) you also had to embrace Judaism – by being circumcised.

The Apostle Paul is writing this letter to these believers/ combat that false teaching.

A) But the Place that Paul starts here in Chapter one and the first part of Chapter 2 is to defend his Apostleship – why?

C) So in order to Validate his Apostleship Paul is going to point to two very clear things

#1 His very Unique calling by Jesus Himself - 1:11-18

#2 His validation with the first Apostles in Jerusalem 2:1-10

He begins with His Unique Calling by Jesus

11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

A) Paul begins by stating how the Message of the gospel of JESUS did not come to him from human origin.

B) But by DIVINE REVELATION – He didn't learn it in a class

1) or even from talking to the original Apostles – but from JESUS

C) It didn't come out of Paul's head but it came out of God's heart!

Then to emphasize just how radical this was: Paul shares a part of His story – Incredible Conversion

A) We all love God stories – Paul's is one of the best of all time V.13

13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. 14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

B) Paul was a student of students in Judaism – Trained by Gamaliel

C) Gamaliel was The teacher and Paul was his top student – he was a Pharisee –

D) Paul loved God – he loved the law of God
1) He was committed to it - devoted to it –

E) Testimony in Philippians 3 concerning the keeping of the law – blameless

Paul was so devoted that when this new group of people arose –

A) Claiming faith in Jesus is what saves people not keeping the law

B) Paul became a religious Zealot – He sought out to single handedly destroy these followers of Jesus

C) People imprisoned and even Killed –
1) Today we would have considered Paul a religious terrorist – how radical he was

But one day that all changed –

A) Acts 9 Damascus conversion – Light blinded – Voice – Saul Saul.... Me?

B) Though physically blinded – the eyes of his heart were opened – to see It was true –
1) Jesus was real – Really Risen from the dead

C) In that Moment – Paul was converted – Passion and Pursuit –
1) **Who are you Lord – what do you want me to do?**

Notice how Paul explains the story in verses before us tonight 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles,

A) As Paul reflected on his conversion/ over time it dawned on him that this was all a part of God's plan

B) Paul was chosen from his mother's womb to be an apostle of Jesus Christ

C) Brilliant Plan of God – that God would choose one of the most studied men in all of Judaism – A Lover of the Law

1) To Spread the simple message of the Grace of God and the Gospel to the Gentiles

D) As well as to be a defender of that Gospel before the Jews

Now the pattern of the teachings of the OT the Old Covenant that Paul loved and adhered to

A) could be summed up in this statement from the book of Deuteronomy 11:22-23

²²“For **IF** you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him—²³**THEN** the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will possess greater and mightier nations than yourselves.

B) That was the essence of the Old Covenant – God said if you do your part – I will keep my promise.

C) Now Paul will point out here in Galatians that part of the whole point of the Old Covenant was to show that man couldn't consistently do our part

D) We couldn't keep the IF'S
1) We sinned – we failed – the law pointed out our Sin!

The Gospel message – Gospel means good news –

A) Jesus came and he did keep all the if's – he died to be the price for our sins

B) Jesus kept the if's so that we could experience the THENS

C) All the promises of God are yes and Amen in Christ We are in Christ

D) Old Covenant said Do these things and live

1) The NC in Jesus – says It is DONE – SO live in that reality –

So Paul goes from being persecutor to preacher.

A) From one who was ready to Kill Christians to one who was ready to be killed as a Christian

B) From one who saw the gospel message as a threat to everything he stood for.

1) To one who had a vision of the gospel that blew to smithereens everything he stood for as a Pharisee.

C)Now The next thing that Paul mentions is His unique training – V.16b

V.16b I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

A)You would think that a guy like Paul – that Zealous would have been eager to tell everyone about his encounter with Jesus

B)Tell everyone what he knew to be true!

C)But Paul didn't do that – He didn't immediately confer with flesh and blood he didn't immediately consult with anyone -

1)Nor did he go and try to get in with the Apostles in Jerusalem

D)He headed out to the desert for a long period of time to be personally discipled by Jesus!

E)Note a couple of lessons from this

Paul understood something that we often forget – Lesson #1 - The importance of intimacy with Jesus before Activity for Jesus

A)Here this OT Scholar goes out into the desert – to play a version of Bible connect the dots

B)Think through all of the Old Testament passages he probably didn't really understand – 1)now came to realize they were about Jesus

C)Genesis 3 the seed of the woman – Crush... head

1)Isaiah 53 / Psalm 22 – Suffering Messiah

D)See God had uniquely picked this man – who was a scholar of the OT to write 13 maybe 14 – (Hebrews) of the 27 books in the NT

Paul came forth from that time – not just convinced that Jesus was truly the Messiah – but radically in Love with Jesus

A)Paul's writings are marked by – HIS ADORATION for Jesus

B)And Paul's motive for ministry was being blown away – that Jesus loved him and would Choose him

C)So Paul Choose intimacy before Activity – Good Model for us all

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. 19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. 20 (Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)

21 Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22 And I was **unknown** by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. 23 But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy." 24 And they glorified God in me.

A)Lesson #2 - I want you to note is that Paul chose mission over Popularity

B)After 3 yrs he finally goes up to Jerusalem to meet with Peter and James – two pillars of the church – only 15 days

C)Then He was off to fulfill the mission that God had called him to – to take the gospel to the Gentiles

D)Instead of trying to fit in with the BIG DOGS - be someone – Paul was content to being UNKNOWN

1)Do what Jesus had called him to

E)Result – God was glorified in and through His life

Application for all of us –

A)God is the most glorified when we are being what He called us to be & doing what He called us to do.

B)Don't get sidetracked in wanting to be something that God didn't call you to be – 1)or do something Jesus didn't call you to do

C)Be faithful to what He has called you to do and be – leave him to the rest.

D)Now as we enter into Chapter 2 tonight –

E)Now will see the 2nd thing that Paul points to as a Validation of His Apostleship

Then after fourteen years (14 + 3 = 17 years after his conversion) I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.

A) We briefly talked about this last week – Acts 15 there was a gathering in Jerusalem to deal with this controversy of the gospel and gentiles

B) Again remind you – there is no NT yet – many of the Jewish believers were having a hard time completely putting aside – **traditions of Judaism**

C) Some were Laying these trips on the Gentiles –

So the Church leaders gathered together to come up with an official statement and policy

A) They invited Paul and Barnabas to come and share – knowing that they had been being very fruitful for 14 yrs ministering among the gentiles

B) They had first-hand knowledge of the Gospels impact amongst the gentiles

2 And I went up by revelation, (God revealed to him that he should go) 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.

C) Here we see Paul's humility – I spoke with them privately to make sure – **I hadn't been running in Vain**

1) Sharing a gospel that wasn't completely accurate

What Paul shares next is interesting

3 Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. **This is what I found – the apostles were not hung up on Circumcision either – not an issue to them**

Here is what was determined – here is how this whole problem started

4 And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), **Note that - they came by stealth.....**

Came by secret – seeking to bring people into bondage

A) Always leery of people keeping secrets – usually a sign of something not good is happening

B) They were seeking to bring others into bondage

C) Remember what I said last week – Legalism often occurs – because Misery loves company –

D) When we throw our own convictions on others – because if I can't be free to enjoy that –
1) **NO ONE SHOULD**

E) These men – **who had their own hang up with the gospel snuck their own convictions into the Church – 1) to bring people into bondage**

5 to whom we did not yield submission **even for an hour**, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Paul says - They snuck in to spy on us and take away the freedom we have in Christ Jesus.

A) They wanted to enslave us and force us to follow their Jewish regulations.

B) But we refused to give into them for even a single moment – to protect the gospel shared with you.

6 But from those who seemed to be something— whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.

NLT⁶ And the leaders of the church had nothing to add to what I was preaching. (By the way, their reputation as great leaders made no difference to me, for God has no favorites.)

7 But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised (gentiles) had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised (Jews) was to Peter 8 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), 9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace (favor of God) that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

2nd Validation – The Apostles Validated Paul's message and his apostleship

A) Paul says they gave us the right hand of fellowship – They embraced us and our ministry.

B) In Acts 15 – it actually reads that the Apostles referred to Paul and Barnabas **as our Beloved Paul and Barnabas**

C) As we close tonight I want to make a couple of final insights that I find to be encouraging.

1st – How unconventional the Wisdom of God is

A) He selects Paul the orthodox Jewish Scholar to bring the gospel to the Gentiles.

B) And Peter the Galilean – Hillbilly to bring the gospel to the Scholarly Jews

1) Acts 4 they marveled at Peter's wisdom being uneducated and untrained – they knew so much - they could tell they had been with Jesus

C) I find this Ironic – if I was setting this up – I think that I would have been more prone to think

D) Paul would be perfect to reason with the Jews.

1) He could speak their language and reason with them –

E) The impact of his testimony that Paul used to be a Pharisee and now he is a follower of Jesus

1) Wow – that makes sense to me

But that is not what God did –

A) In fact every time Paul tried to reason with the Jews it back fired – Riots and beatings

B) God thought it would be more impressive and effective to take this man who was an orthodox Jew

C) Orthodox Jews believed and taught that Gentiles were only good for one thing – to fuel the fires of Hell

D) God would send a guy who used to preach and believe that message to the Gentiles –

1) to say – God loves you and wants to spend eternity with you

E) Sent Jesus – Jews and Gentiles are made ONE IN JESUS

1) WOW!!!!

And God would use this uneducated and untrained guy in Peter to go and preach to the Jews

A) Who would be amazed at how this untrained guy seemed know the scriptures and understood things about Messiah – the religious leaders didn't

B) God tells us why he does that in the book of 1 Corinthians 1:20-25

Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?
²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. ²² For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Paul continues in V26

Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. ²⁷ Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. ²⁸ God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. ²⁹ As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

God does that so that he gets the Glory – it is obvious – that is a supernatural work of God

1st thing to note is **How unconventional the Wisdom of God is**

2nd thing God's desire is that Jesus would be revealed in Us

Chapter 1 – Notice something that is easy to miss -
15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, **16 to reveal His Son in me**, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles,

**A)It wasn't just that Jesus was revealed TO PAUL
– he was to be revealed IN PAUL**

**B)That is the purpose of Gospel transformation –
Jesus would be revealed in your life**

**C)Jesus has been revealed TO YOU – so that he
can be revealed IN YOU**

**D)ROMANS 8:29 - CONFORM YOU INTO the
image of His Son**

Make you like Jesus – others take notice

**A)Purpose - that I might preach Him among the
Gentiles,**

B)That you can tell others about Jesus as well!

**C)Your life a living breathing testimony to the
transforming Power of Jesus!**