

Galatians 1:1-10

Only One Gospel

Introduce home fellowships!

Well, this morning we are going to begin our 10th New Testament book together.

Overall, with the New and Old Testament Books from Wednesday nights we have almost completed 28 books total after we finish Psalms on Wednesday night in a few weeks.

So, we are making some progress here in our Goal to teach through the entire Bible.

We have knocked out some of the bigger books, so we should start moving a little more quickly.

This morning, we will begin our study of Galatians.

This is a very important book, as it deals with one of the most devastating heresies that has plagued the church since its inception, which is legalism.

Paul will go toe to toe with the Judaizers, those who came behind him in almost every church and tried to press upon them this need to conform to the Hebrew Laws.

So let's pray, and we will get into the study...

The title of our message this morning, is "Only One Gospel."

It is important to emphasize here right off the bat, there is only One True Gospel presented in all of the scriptures.

If you read through Genesis to Revelation, there is only One Gospel, and it is centered upon the Grace of God. It was first preached in the Garden of Eden, when the Promise was given that the Seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent.

This same Gospel of salvation that was promised through the coming Christ, this Son born of a woman, is the very same Gospel that was preached to Abraham.

God told Abraham to look at the stars in the sky.

Abraham said, "There are too many to count."

God told him to look to the dust of the earth... which could not be counted either.

The sand on the seashore, once again, innumerable.

Then God promised Abraham, **Gen 22:18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed..."**

Also in **Gen 13:16 And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered.**

Abraham could have doubted, that was impossible, as of yet he had no children.

But the promise from God was believed on by Abraham, his Seed, which is Christ, shall all the nations of the world be blessed.

Church, this is the Gospel, that all the nations would be blessed through Christ, the Seed of a woman, the Seed of Abraham.

The Apostle Paul wrote in **Romans 4:3** For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

He was justified by faith because he believed in the Gospel.

This is the same Gospel message that David believed upon, who carried in him the immoral sin of adultery, and the high sin of murder.

He cried out in

Ps 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

And later in the same Psalm...

Ps 51:16-17

**For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it;
You do not delight in burnt offering.**

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,

A broken and a contrite heart —

These, O God, You will not despise.

David knew that salvation came apart from religious activity, and there can only be one way that a wretched sinner can be purged of their sin, by the precious blood of Jesus...

David looked ahead in faith to this Promised Seed, the Christ, the Son of God, and David rested in this Gospel of Grace.

The Prophet Isaiah peered ahead into time and saw this coming Messiah, when he cried... **Isa 53:5**

But He was wounded for our transgressions,

He was bruised for our iniquities;

The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,

And by His stripes we are healed.

This was the same Gospel the Prophet Jeremiah preached when he said in **Jer. 23:6**

Now this is His name by which He will be called:

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Even the prophet Zechariah looked ahead to the suffering of this Hero of our faith...

Zech. 13:7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd,

Against the Man who is My Companion,"

Says the Lord of hosts.

"Strike the Shepherd,

And the sheep will be scattered;

This was the same Gospel that John the Baptist preached when he said... **John 1:29 "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"**

The same Gospel that this Promised Seed, Jesus preached Himself, when He said...

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Peter preached it in **Acts 10:43 "To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."**

The Apostle John said **1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

Even our Lord's own earthly brother preached **James 1:18 Of His own will, He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.**

John also wrote in **Rev 1:5 To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood**

And finally, it was this same Gospel that Paul declared throughout his own ministry...

Acts 13:38-39 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; 39 and by Him everyone who

believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

There is only One Gospel, and this is vital to all that we do here as a Church...

One message, from the beginning of time to today, that Salvation is found in Christ Jesus, who spilled His Own blood, to make a way for humanity to have fellowship with God.

This is the message Paul had brought to the region of Galatia, and now, others were coming behind him, trying to add to the Grace of God with the bondage of religion.

This is an important letter to know and understand if we are to truly understand the Freedom that we have in Christ.

Martin Luther kept the Book of Galatians close to his own heart, in fact he is quoted as saying,

“The Epistle to the Galatians is my epistle. To it I am as it were in wedlock. It is my Katherine.”¹

It was because of his careful study of the Bible, and that especially of Galatians that Martin Luther discovered God’s plan of salvation by Grace through Faith.

¹ <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1549/1549-h/1549-h.htm>

He also developed doctrines that strongly opposed the 1000 year old Catholic teachings of salvation through works, a more modern form of Judaizers.

There was Freedom from the grip of legalism, as he found this Biblical truth of salvation by Grace through faith alone.

This letter from the Apostle Paul was thought to be written in AD 50...

However, that is hard to accept by some commentators because they think Paul would not have had to have written this strong of a letter after the Jerusalem council that dealt in particular with the Judaizers within the Christian faith.

So others date this letter around AD 40...

But, the fact that Paul can refer to taking Titus with him in the second chapter of this letter, means that he had already completed his first missionary journey and thus the Jerusalem council had already taken place.

Meaning, that these who were pressing circumcision among all the other Jewish traditions were still having a great influence in the churches of Galatia.

The greatest lesson from this letter to the Galatians is it deals with the question, "How can a person, who is sinful by nature, who is separated from God, by his sin, come to God who is Holy by nature."

Coming to a God who is Holy is presented as impossible in the Bible, apart from the Grace of God.

There are two ways that the Bible presents to us in our approach and relationship with God.

Either we are born perfect, and live a life that is absolutely perfect, and never once sin.

Which many of us failed just on the way to church this morning, when you zoomed through that 35 mile per hour zone at 60.

I once had a man who was pretty upset with me, because I was a pastor who admitted that I was sinful by nature, and he was from this sinless perfection camp, who believed that it was possible to live a perfect sinless life... he thought he had attained perfection, and they were in my office for marriage counseling.

He was wife shared with me that he was indeed not perfect... the man lost his temper and started screaming at me, for which I replied, "Anger is most definitely a sin, so you blew it."

He stormed out of the office hot.

Anyway, no one can live to this standard, and for those of us who can admit that we are imperfect and sinners, the book of Galatians is here to help us understand how we can have a relationship with God, who is complete in Holiness.

So, the last thing I want to talk about before we get into the 10 verses before us this morning, is the geography of Galatia.

Paul is not writing to a single Church, like the Church of Corinth.

Galatia was a region, so this would be like Paul writing to the High Desert Churches, a collection of Churches, not just the Church in Victorville.

Galatia was a region in Asia Minor, today it would be in the country of Turkey.

On Paul's first missionary journey, he and Barnabas established four churches in the Southern Part of the Province of Galatia, in four particular cities, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

It is apparent that those churches came to form a regional body of believers.

The purpose of this letter was for it to be read and widely distributed throughout the Galatian region of the Churches.

And this morning, we can be considered to be part of this wide distribution as well, because it is essential for all believers to know and understand the doctrine that comes from this book.

So, let's get into it, look at the first two verses with me...

Greeting

1:1 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:

Right off the bat Paul sets forth his authority for writing this letter.

Remember from our last study, one way that Paul's detractors came against him was by diminishing his Apostolic Authority.

He states right off the bat here that he is an Apostle.

In Ephesians we see that there are different offices presented within the ministry.

Eph. 4:11-12 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ

In the early church this office of an Apostle was very important, but one of the requirements to hold this office was that a person had to see Jesus.

Elsewhere in Ephesians it is written...

Eph. 2:19-20 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles

and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,

So, Paul was an Apostle, not one of the original Twelve that walked with Jesus, but as he described it to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 15:8 ...as by one born out of due time.

And Paul had this special Apostolic Authority during this time in Church History, while the Church was being established.

Now, today it is difficult to make the case that there is a need for this office of Apostle, the foundation has been laid, we have God's Word, we no longer need this office, and it is especially difficult, because no one alive today has seen the risen Lord face to face.

We relate to God through His Holy Spirit, who indwells the believer, and we are waiting for Jesus to return to this world to establish His Kingdom.

Now, there is what is considered a little 'a' apostle, not the office, but one who is sent out, this would be perhaps missionaries today.

But, at the time of the writing of this letter, because of the weight of its content, it was essential for them to know that Paul was called by God to bring this Word to them.

Paul was confident in his calling, he was called and ordained by God, remember as Ananias went to lay hands on Paul and pray for him after his conversion, it

says in **Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.**

Paul had the confidence of this Word, through Ananias. He clung to it when those discontents rose up against him.

I think we should pause here and ask ourselves a question.

What is my calling from God? Paul knew his, I am pretty confident I know mine.

Do you know yours? What has God called you too?

Maybe your calling right now is a stay at home mom, ministering to your kids.

Maybe you are called to be a teacher, to shine the light of Jesus in our ever darkening school system.

Maybe you are a business man called to support the work of the Church, and to be a witness to those under your influence.

Maybe God has been tugging on your heart to join the Ushers or Greeters ministry, or you have been hearing the needs for Children's ministry, and you know God is calling you to step up and serve Him in this way.

What is your calling?

Paul knew his, and the responsibility that came with it, and he served the Lord with a great passion in that calling.

So, his greeting continues on here in verse 3...

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.

So, once again Paul presents the Siamese Twins of the New Testament, Grace and Peace, this is a familiar greeting of course.

Paul took the Greek Greeting Charis and the Hebrew Greeting Shalom, and brought them together, which is very cool, because the Church was made up of many cultures.

Paul used this greeting in 13 of his letters, and he added mercy to the Pastoral Epistles.

Now, the Apostle Paul understood the Grace of God more than most.

He was a testament to how far the Grace of God could reach, even this murderous and vengeful man, an enemy of Christ and His Church, could be radically changed by Grace.

Not only changed but now a mighty weapon for good here on earth.

If Paul could be saved, anyone could be saved.

And this was the point of his calling, he was a trophy of Grace.

Paul knew this, as he used this word Grace 88 times in his writings, that is something, considering that all the other writers of the New Testament together used this Word Grace 40 times total.

Paul truly was an Apostle of Grace.

Grace and Peace from God and Jesus who gave Himself for you that He might deliver you from this present Evil Age.

I like what Pastor David Guzik says here about being delivered.

The idea behind the word **deliver** is not deliverance from the *presence* of something, but deliverance from the *power* of something. We will not be delivered from the *presence* of **this present evil age** until we go to be with Jesus. But we can experience deliverance from the *power* of **this present evil age** right now.²

And you see in this life, there is no escaping the fact that we live in a fallen and evil world.

I look at the news almost every day, and this world is evil and dark.

The pastors and I were figuring just here in the neighborhood there is an average of 1 murder a week, sometimes 2.

² <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/galatians-1/>

We have Planned Parenthood right up the street, and there are few places that are more evil than that place, making money off the murder of the unborn.

We live in an evil and corrupt system, and we are bombarded with this worlds messages daily, all throughout the day, its evil messaging.

And this world enslaves those who are caught up in its darkness.

But, Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins, in order that we might be delivered from the powers of darkness in this evil age.

The fact that Jesus gave Himself for our sins and wickedness is essential to understanding our own salvation and the battles that we contend with every day.

We have the ability to be delivered from the evil by the power of God, which changes our lives.

This is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead as Paul mentioned back in verse 1...

The resurrection of Jesus is what solidifies this power to change us, because Jesus is alive today.

Consider Jesus' own Words in **Rev 1:18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.**

And to the Church of Smyrna He said Himself,

Rev 2:8 These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:

Jesus is alive Church, and this is why we follow Him and not Mohammad or Joseph Smith or even Charles Russell of the JW movement.

Those men are all still dead.

The fact that Jesus is alive today means the same power that raised Him from the dead is the same Power that delivers you and me in the midst of such evil.

Now, many of you are a testimony to this power, for many of us were once bound to our sins, in a struggle between life and death, and we reached out for that Amazing Grace, and in faith we received a pardon from our sin, and in that moment the Power, the Dunamis Power of God came in and changed our lives.

This is why the bulk of us gather every week together, to worship the God who did what no one else, or nothing else could do in our lives.

I have seen wicked men delivered by this power, who seemingly had no way out in their lives, and our God who is rich in Mercy set them free.

This is the Power of the Gospel Message, this is the strength of the Gospel Message; that people are set free by it.

Paul will write later in this letter about this Freedom...

Gal 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

He wrote in the last letter we studied...

2 Cor. 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Paul wrote to those in Rome...

Rom 6:22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

This is the reality of the Gospel that was preached wherever Paul went, that its power freed those who received it.

When Paul first preached in Galatia he preached this Gospel, they had witnessed its power to break chains of sin and darkness.

Paul is pointing them to how it all began...

And, I would like to mention here, sometimes, when we are studying the Bible, there are times that what is not written in the text helps us to understand the text.

This is one of those portions of scripture...

In Paul's other letters he put forth a pattern, he would greet the Church, present his thankfulness for them, give a few commendations, and mention his prayers for them.

Yet, this is missing from the Galatian letter, and this is important, because it speaks to the urgent problem that Paul needed to address.

What was happening there was too serious for all the customary formalities, the Galatians were saved by this wonderful Grace, and others had come behind Paul to teach that Grace was not enough, that they needed to do some religious things if they were truly going to be saved.

So Paul has given his authority by which he writing, and now he is not going to waste any time here, and he is going to go to battle for their liberty in Christ.

Verse 6 now...

Only One Gospel

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.

So, Paul marvels as news has reached him that they are already turning away from the Gospel Message that he brought them.

Paul mentions that it all happened so quickly.

This word Marvel seems to imply that he did not expect this to happen, when he left they were grounded in the truth of the Gospel, but these religious imposters were so clever and good with their words,

that the Galatians were being drawn away from the Grace of God.

Listen to this from the Vines Expository commentary when Paul says "(I marvel that) you are turning away or removing," = the present tense suggests that the defection of the Galatians from the truth was not yet complete and would continue unless they changed their views. The middle voice indicates that they were themselves responsible for their declension, rather than the Judaizers who had influenced them.³

So, in real terms, they were in this process of following after these Judaizers who had come on the scene after Paul left.

And words were super important to the Judaizers.

They were careful not to challenge Paul on the facts of our faith, especially the Resurrection... Remember there were over 500 witnesses to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So, in their crafty words, they brought the message of the Law back into focus for the people of Galatia.

They preached that Jesus died and rose again, but in order to keep your salvation you had to also keep the traditions of the Law.

³ Vine, W. E., Hogg, C. F.. Vine's Expository Commentary on Galatians. United States: Thomas Nelson Incorporated, 1996.

And understand something Church, this is one of the oldest and seemingly most effective heresies in the Church, and still impacts the Church today.

If a person or group of people add anything to this Gospel of Grace it is heresy, or a false teaching and it should be avoided at all costs.

You see it is a slippery slope to go down, and this is why Paul has such an urgency in this letter.

The Galatians were slipping into heresy, believing the law had something to do with their salvation.

Remember the Gospel in its simplicity as Paul gave it in 1 Cor. 15:1-4 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures

This is the same simple message he brought into Galatia to start the churches there.

And the Bible is very clear, as I opened this teaching with, there is Only One Gospel.

Think about when Paul was in Philippi, he was imprisoned, him and Silas had a worship service in chains, and a great earthquake took place and the

foundations of the prison were shaken, and so was the jailers faith.

Acts 16:29-31 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Notice Paul did not say that he needed to believe in Jesus then go and study under a Jewish Rabbi, and learn the law and then he would be saved.

No, it is simple, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

This is salvation by Grace through Faith.

We believe in Jesus and what He has done for us, and that is the basis for our salvation.

Faith in Jesus and Faith alone, this is how the chains of addiction and the bondage of sin is broken.

This is how we are transformed and empowered to live differently than we did according to this world.

This is how we are delivered from the evil forces of this world.

So, Paul warns in verse 7 that there were those in this region who were bringing another gospel, which Paul says is not a gospel at all.

They were troubling them and perverting the true message of Grace that sets a man or woman free from their sin.

The Gospel means Good News, and it is Good News that a sinful person has a way to have a relationship with a Holy God.

It is not Good News to be told that what Jesus did was only the beginning and now you must toe the line and adhere to a religious set of rules in order to maintain that salvation.

That is not good news at all.

It is through Jesus and only Jesus that a person can be saved.

The Law, we will see later on in this letter, was given to lead us to the sufficiency of Christ, it was never there to bring salvation or even enhance our own righteousness.

Paul said in...

Rom 11:6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

So, these Judaizers showed up and were perverting the simplicity of salvation by adding to the Gospel Message and making a false gospel.

These men were a thorn in Paul's flesh throughout his ministry.

We see in Acts, right before the Jerusalem Council.

Acts 15:1 And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

And understand, this is still a problem today, there are those who are passionate about the Law today.

But even the most zealous of the Judaizers today, the Law is just too great for them... they still come up short, so short, and the seemingly pick and choose what parts of the Law they adhere too.

And it can be a huge source of pride... Yet this legalism always leads to bondage, the very bondage that Jesus came to set us free from.

The Good News is that Jesus and Jesus alone made a way for us to find salvation.

John 8:36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

So Paul's warning becomes even stronger...

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.

Paul lays out a double curse here for those who would change the simple Gospel Message.

He says something here that really stands out to me as a Pastor, he says, “Even if I come to you and preach another Gospel,” or his ministry team, they fall under this curse.

This is important... Some ministries hold that the words of their leaders are like that of God Himself, and they have authority over people and the doctrine they believe.

But understand, this is the severity of it all, the message in God’s Word is the Authority over any man. If I ever get up here and teach you all anything but God’s Word, I would be in danger of this curse.

Paul says even if something as supernatural takes place as an angel appearing here in the Church, and alters this message, we are to reject it!

I have heard pastors talk about their angelic visitors telling them special messages, even cults have been built around angelic messages.

Like Moroni for the Mormons, but the message contradicts the pure Gospel from the Word...

The Authority here in the Church is God’s Word.

There are so many false messages today that come from something other, a new philosophy, our culture, even our emotions, but it is all to be rejected if it counters this Tried and True Gospel message.

Every other belief is works based, that you must improve yourself to be accepted by God.

But True Faith says you cannot improve yourself enough to erase even one of your sins, let alone all of them, the barrier between man and God is too great.

Yet, Jesus died to bridge that gap between us and God, to give us full access and an eternal relationship with the One True and Living God.

There is no other Gospel.

So, why do people gravitate toward religious works, and legalistic mandates?

Well, a religion of works is more appealing to our pride, if I can do a little more good than you, and post it all over my Facebook than I can feel better about me.

Faith in Jesus requires humility and repentance, owning up to our shortcomings, lowering our opinion of self, and lifting up the wonderful name of Jesus.

If religion can be reduced to some institutional regulations, I then can feel good about what I accomplish, and the sacrifice Jesus made is belittled.

Our society is reward centered, do good and get a cookie kind of thing, work hard and be rewarded...

Because there is nothing free in this world, it is hard for us to accept that salvation is free.

Legalism is more manageable, it is easier to measure ourselves, and it is easier to control.

But outward restrictions are ineffective in creating moral living, because we all come up terribly short, and it creates guilt and woes.

But a change that comes to a person from inward convictions and come from being empowered by the Holy Spirit; that is lasting change.

We are able to, by His Power to live this New Life we are called too, there is a supernatural change that takes place.

So, Paul here gives his strongest worded warning out of all of his writings, the person who changes this message will be accursed.

Adherence to the true Gospel is the final and ultimate test of true authority.

Paul put even his own Apostolic Authority on the line over this.

Listen now to this final verse...

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 preached the True Gospel, the real Good News, and this fulfilled his calling before God.

And this is important for any minister of the Gospel, we cannot be man pleasers, but God pleasers.

Paul said something similar to the Thessalonians...

1 Thess. 2:4-5 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. 5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness — God is witness.

His concern is being faithful to his calling before God. And this should speak to us about our service to our Lord today.

We should aim to please God over being popular with man...

So, the message for us today is super simple, there is Only One Gospel, so be warned this morning to not entertain any other plan set forth by man.

God's Gospel is the only Gospel that saves and transforms lives.

It is inevitable when someone sets out to go after the Law, that it is only a matter of time before they find themselves guilt ridden and shame filled.

This is the laws intent, Jesus delivered us from these things.

So, do not be deceived, stay firmly planted in Jesus, and live your life to bring Freedom to others with this message of Grace.

And listen if you are not a Christian today, you have heard the Only True Gospel, come to God through His Son's sacrifice, and find True and Lasting Freedom.

Let's pray...