

Galatians
“Living Free”

Introduction: 1:1-5

“Grace declared and defined”

I. Intro.

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I. Intro.

In span of 30 years which made up Paul’s conversion outside of Damascus and his imprisonment in Rome, he traveled thought the Roman empire as an ambassador of Jesus Christ. This included three famous missionary journeys where he preached the gospel and planted churches but he didn’t just leave them he returned to check on them and wrote them letters. Many believe that the earliest letter that he wrote was this one somewhere around 48 AD. This letter is address to a people originally from Gaul (present day France) that migrated south, settling in present-day Turkey. The name Galatians is a compound word made up of their ancestry being Gaul’s and their geographical location in the area inhabited by Grecians, hence Gal--atians. Galatia was not a city but a region 100-175 miles wide east to west by 250 miles long north to south. Although they had been dwelling in this area since before 230 BC when they were conquered by Rome in 189 BC they remained loyal to Rome and were eventually awarded this area. Paul first encountered these people on his first missionary journey when he visited the southern cites of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Derbe and Lystra, (Acts 13-14). Julius Caesar reportedly said of the Galatians that they “*Were, fickle, fond of change, and not to be*

trusted.” Something if you have read the account of Luke in Acts 14 Paul could no doubt personally attest too. In that chapter after Paul healed a lame man in the morning the people worship he and Barnabas as a god’s in the afternoon only to pick up rocks and leave him for dead outside the city in the evening. That is followed up by Paul going back into the same area preaching the gospel where many come to faith in Christ. Not only were they fickle before they were believers they become fickle afterward as Paul is now addressing those who “*having begun in the Spirit were now believing they could be perfected by the works of the flesh*” (3:3).

II. Vs. 1-2a Paul’s ministry

Vs. 1-2a Paul starts with three things about him in the first 5 verses:

1. Vs. 1-2 ***His ministry***: He identifies his ministry as an apostle “*not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ.*”
2. Vs. 2-4 ***His message***: His message was and would always be about a person--- Jesus Christ.
3. Vs. 5 ***His motive***: “*To whom be glory forever and ever*”. The false teachers were after the praise of man Paul was seeking people to praise God.

When Paul introduces himself in his letters he always does so one of two ways:

1. To the Romans, Philippians, Titus and Philemon: He calls himself either a ***servant or a prisoner of Christ.***
2. To The Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, Galatians, Timothy: He calls himself and ***apostle.***

For the most part the reason for this can be picked up in the overall tone of the letter as those who embraced and welcomed his ministry, he was a servant but to those who challenged his authority he was a person sent out by Jesus Christ. There will always be those opposed to the simplicity of the Gospel according to grace. You can always recognize them despite their many forms because they major in the “*Three R’s of religion*”: **Rules, Regulations and Rituals**! The attacks of the religious upon those who desire to “live free” generally follow a three prong attack which can be easily seen in the outline of Paul’s defense in this letter.

- a. **1:10-2:21 First line of attack is aimed at the messenger**: Thus Paul is forced to defend his right to speak the message.
- b. **3:1-4:31 Second line of attack is aimed at the message**: Thus defends the truth of the message, practically, logically, historically then compares what the false teachers taught next to what he taught.
- c. **5:1-6:10 Third line of attack is aimed at what they believe disproves the message**: Thus Paul responds by demonstrating what grace looks like in everyday life.

So Paul states he was “*an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)*”. Paul’s enemies were those who said he had no credentials; he wasn’t an eye witness of the resurrection etc. There is nothing in scripture that says that a person’s calling and service can be instilled, educated and passed on by man. The only thing a human institution or organization can do is recognize what God is doing, help equip and encourage those called. Our authority like Paul’s cannot come from the state or school but only from Jesus Christ. Paul will take the

opportunity to share how that was witnessed both in the other apostles as well as in the Church in Jerusalem and was seen on equal footing when Paul corrected Peter when he had been covered into siding with the legalists. I can't help but think that the statement "*and all the brethren who are with me*" also substantiates the truth that others recognized the calling and authority of Jesus upon his life.

III. Vs. 2b-3 Paul's message

Vs. 2b-3 There was a wide difference between North and South Galatia in respect to language, occupation, nationality, and social organization. The northern region of Galatia was made up of small cities and mostly agricultural development. The southern region of Galatia was full of cities and commerce. Paul was in southern Galatia on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:13-14:23), he went through northern Galatia on his second (Acts 16:6) and third (Acts 18:23) missionary journeys.

Paul often linked peace with grace because no one will ever truly know peace until they first experience grace. In his writings he uses the word grace 100 times and among all the other writers of the New Testament, it is only used 55 times. Grace is unmerited favor or "God's riches at Christ's expense." As such we are gifted God's riches by simply trusting in Christ's work on our behalf alone. **Rules, Regulations and Rituals** we don't need **Rules, Regulations and Rituals** they offer us nothing, they won't make us more right with God, they won't contribute anything of a more productive joyous life. In fact that will rob us from the peace that only grace can provide!

IV. Vs. 4-5 Paul's motive

Vs. 4-5 Think of verse 4 as a simple definition of grace, a summation of grace if you will. Jesus giving Himself for our sins, that in so doing He might deliver us from the power

and penalty of this present evil age. The verb “*deliver*” strikes the keynote in this letter as the Gospel is a gospel of rescue and; “**emancipation** *from a state of bondage.*” The idea behind the word “*deliver*” is **not** deliverance from the presence of something, but deliverance **from** the power of something. And what are we rescued out of? “*this present evil age.*” 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. **He doesn’t take us out of the world He takes us out of the evil that is in this world!** Jesus’ death **isn’t just** that we would be forgiven from our evil but that having been forgiven we would live a new life amongst those still dwelling in this evil age that we may be living what we are proclaiming that those still held in this evil age may be free!

But why does Paul say “**might deliver**”? Why the uncertainty of the deliverance?

- Is it because of some lack in Jesus who gave Himself for my sins?
- Is it because my sins may be so great or of such a kind that even His giving of Himself may not be enough to deliver?

Listen carefully: The uncertainty lies not with Christ’s ability or willingness but with our willingness to simply receive His gift. And in receiving His gift we must do so without strings attached, without declaring that we will do better next time, without saying that we will work hard to earn His approval from here on out! The fact remains that many will not receive the gift because they would rather be deserving of it. We humans love to be able to stand on anything no matter how microscopic it may be that says that we have something of value and worth that makes us worthy. In the movie “*Saving Private Ryan*” in which eight men lose their lives to return the only surviving brother out of four back to

his mother. At the end of the movie Captain Miller on his last breath says to private Ryan, “*Earn this. Earn it.*” The last scene of the movie is Private Ryan visiting the grave of Captain Miller as an old man and asking his wife, “*Tell me I’ve led a good life. Tell me I’m a good man.*” Though we may look at that as some motivation to “***earn it, to live a good life***” no matter how good a life we may live we would never be able to earn Jesus gift because it wouldn’t be a gift it would be works. In Romans 5:7-8 Paul wrote, “*For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*”

Don’t be tempted to move to fast when you read the little doxology of Paul’s “*to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen*” You see the context of that burst of praise has to do with the gift of Jesus and if we could claim even a smidgen either before or after His sacrifice then we couldn’t say that doxology because we would be able to say some of it had to with us. So we can say this because He alone has delivered us this present evil age, only He could of done that and He could use any of my goodness or work as credit afterward. Wiersbe says, “*Galatians is a dangerous book. It exposes the most popular substitute for spiritual living that we have in our churches today-----legalism.*” He went on to say, “*Millions of believers think they are “spiritual” because of what they don’t do--or because of the leader they follow----or because of the group they belong to.*” “*When the Holy Spirit takes over, there will be liberty, not bondage---cooperation, not competition—glory to God, not praise to man.*”