

Galatians
“Living Free”
Main Teaching: 1:10-6:10
1:10-12
“Divinely certified”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 10 Nonconformity

III. Vs. 11-12 Testing origin

I. Intro.

We live in a world of conformity, every human attempt at being nonconformists turns into others conforming to their nonconformity. A philosopher once said, “*We forfeit ¾ of ourselves in order to be like others.*” At the ordination of men for the ministry a bishop was heard praying, “*O lord, grant that these brethren never want to be like other people.*” Paul’s nonconformity threatened the religious Jews who had converted to Christ. They were quick to point out his nonconformity as a reason why the gospel of grace was not to be believed. Paul declares that his nonconformity was divinely inspired and deliberately followed. The question of authority is always the first attempt at settling a conflict. Imagine watching an Olympic competition where there are no judges or referees, how would a winner be declared? But when we get into religious beliefs most people make their adherence based upon subjective feelings. Paul makes a claim to the Judaizers that the gospel he proclaimed had divine origins but how can we know? What about other religions that claim divine origins? Is the way we determine divine origins of sacred texts based upon the number of followers or the beneficial results of those who follow the truth?

II. Vs. 10 Nonconformity

Vs. 10 Paul says that their question of authority based upon his nonconformity reveals that he is God's servant and not a man pleaser. There was no attempt by Paul to alter the message in order to ingratiate himself to the audience and their attack of him was proof. He could either be a servant of Christ or a popularity seeker but with the message of the gospel he couldn't be both. There are few things more tempting to the servant of Christ as the lure of popularity and many a servant of Christ has been ruined by chasing after it! Paul's opening statement is that what he preached had nothing to do with trying to get people to believe what he taught instead he only taught to an audience of One, the Lord.

There are two parts to what goes into a message:

- a. **Preparation**: This has to do with the **study of the text**, the work of reading and rereading the passage in the Bible. And Paul says that he did so only to hear from the Lord. One of the best things pieces of advice I ever received was, "*Never study to teach, always study to learn!*" We need to approach our Bible bathed in a

threefold prayer:

- Lord, reveal Who you are to me, I've come to see you.
- Lord, reveal who I am, how you see me, not the way I see me, or the way I want others to see me but who I really am to You.
- Lord, make me the person you want me to be.

I have spent countless hours in the Word with only that aim, to hear personally from the Holy Spirit through the Word of God so that there may be more of Him and less of me.

- b. **Impartation**: The 2nd part of teaching is **communication** and Paul says, "*Or do I seek to please men?*" The insinuation was that Paul was pandering to the audience

saying things that would tickle their ears. There have always been those that sought to be “*famous*” instead of “*faithful*”. Paul says, “*For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bound servant of Christ.*” There are two things that startle me in this statement:

1. “*If I still pleased men*”: His confession that at one time he did seek to please men instead of Christ. And I believe that is a reference to his activities prior to coming to faith in Jesus.
2. “*I would not be a bound servant of Christ*”: Paul saw these two (*pleasing men or being a bound servant of Christ*) as mutually exclusive! The word “*servant*” here means a slave whose life is not their own but belongs entirely to his master. The most important person that needs to be reached today and everyday is me.

III. Vs. 11-12 Testing origin

Vs. 11 Having defended the way he studied as well as the way he communicated Paul moves to a natural question of origin. You can be 100% faithful in your preparation and impartation but that would be only as good as the material you began with. The phrase “*I make known to you*” is literally I “*certify*”. Paul was “*certifying*” that the saving good news was not to be measured or accounted for by human standards in its origin or development! “*What is the origin of Paul’s gospel that it should be considered the standard by which all other messages and opinions should be assessed and judged?*” Paul said that though he proclaimed the gospel he was not its author or originator! There are only three possibilities with regards to religious material it is either:

- a. Invention: Fabricated by the mind
- b. Tradition: Handed down from person to person

c. **Revelation**: Made known by God

Paul declares that it was neither his *invention* nor a *tradition* but that Jesus took him into His class room. It was not his message it was God's message and God's words! Paul denies three possible origins with regards to the gospel he proclaimed:

1. Vs. 11b "*Not according to man*": The phrase "*according to man*" can mean not according to human authority or it can mean not "**made up by man**" which is probably what Paul is referring to. The cross and resurrection of Jesus do not figure in any man made religion as they always prefer that which flatters their good work and personal goodness.
2. Vs. 12a "*Neither did I receive it from man*": Not only was in not "made up by man", Paul says that he did not gather the information being passed down from generation to generation with oral traditions. He is not saying that such teaching is wrong or can't be trusted he is simply saying that he didn't receive the gospel by this method. In fact Paul was passing on the gospel to those that he spoke by this method so clearly he wasn't speaking against this method.
3. Vs. 12b "*Nor was I taught it*": The phrase denies instruction as the channel in which he came to possess this truth. This is the normal method which we come to truth and the very one we are using now but nonetheless it was not the way in which Paul himself received the truth of the gospel.

Paul's declaration with regards to the gospel is that it came to him by way of personal revelation from none other than Jesus Christ himself. This experience can never be our experience with the gospel and is unique. **There are many who claim that their message has divine origins but how can we tell? What test can we apply to determine if the**

message we hear is nothing more than man's quest for his creator or something worse, his human invention? There is a **fourfold test you can apply to determine divine**

origin:

1. ***Reliability of the text:*** By studying and comparing the proposed divinely inspired text to other known ancient documents with regards to people, places and events we can see if they are in agreement. Archaeology has consistently confirmed and supported the Biblical record in fact there has never been a single contradiction.
2. ***Continuity of the text:*** The Bible is unique among every book that has ever been written: Although written over a period of 1600 years by over 60 generations, by more than 40 different human authors, on three different continents, in varying circumstances and situations, in different places and times, in three different languages and communicating on countless subjects it has done so **with one voice!**
 - It is unique in its **circulation**, being the most published and popular book in human history.
 - It is unique in its **translation** being the most translated book into other human languages in human history.
 - It is unique in its **survival**, having survived time, transcription, persecution and criticism.
 - It is unique in its **honesty**, as it deals with sin and failures of its hero's in a manner unknown among ancient literature.
 - Finally it is unique in its **influence**; it has had the single most influence of any literature in human history upon every culture and society it has been involved in.
3. ***Predictability of the text:*** Predictive material can be found in passages from Genesis to Revelation. 28% of the Old Testament is predictive and 21% of the New Testament is predictive. Of the 31,123 verses of the Bible 8,352 of them or 27% contain predictive material. As divinely in origin it would have to be 100% accurate in its predictions. The only way that could be possible is if the One who authored it existed

outside of time, space and matter. For instance there are over 108 specific prophecies in the Old Testament about the first coming of Jesus and in all 108 we can verify their fulfillment in the New Testament. The odds of all 108 of these being fulfilled by one person are beyond the realm of probability! Another example of this is the prediction of the rise and fall of four world empires (Babylonian, Persian, Grecian and Roman) and all the critics can do is claim that the prophecies were written after the events which can be proven is a false assumption.

4. **Functionality of the text**: The final test is to look at what the divinely originated text does in those who have read it? Applying the multiple variables in the millions of readers, with the different times in which people read the text, their different cultures, social standing, age, ethnicity, geographical locations etc. All those who have trusted the words of this document singularly proclaim to have had the same transforming encounter! Where the text has been applied by each and every individual in the above variables every aspect of their lives has been made better!

Any belief system that proclaims divine origin must be able to stand up to **all four** of these criteria. If they can't then they would be only believable by their followers based upon "*feelings*" alone and not upon facts! Though the critic may still be able to claim that this fourfold test doesn't prove divine origin it does tell us that such a belief need not be "blind faith". Instead is a step that is intelligent, informed and can stand continual scrutiny! Friends Christianity is only valid if what Paul says about its divine origins is true. Because what is known about the person and work of Christ is made known in the Bible without the assurance of divine origin we have good morals to live by and lively stories to read but we don't have absolute truth to follow!