

**Galatians**  
**“Living Free”**

**Main Teaching: 1:10-6:10**

**1:13-24**

**“Divine demonstration”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 13-14 The Persecutor**

**III. Vs. 15-16b The Believer**

**IV. Vs. 16c-24 The Preacher**

**I. Intro.**

Paul set forth that this gospel that he proclaimed didn't have its source in men but in God but how's he going to prove it to the Church? The answer was for Paul to share his personal history (*the three stages of his life to illustrate the continual power of the gospel for transformation*) his condition before his conversion, immediately after his conversion and since his conversion.

**II. Vs. 13-14 The Persecutor**

Vs. 13-14 **The Persecutor**: Paul begins this section of the power of the gospel by retelling his life prior to his encounter with the gospel of Christ. Acts chapters 9, 22 and 26 give this story in greater detail. The story of Paul's transformation from Christian persecutor to Christ follower was well known especially among the churches he had served and founded as he no doubt shared his testimony. One of (if not THE) most effective evidences of the truth of the resurrection of Jesus is our own personal transformation from as Col. 1:13 says "*the power of darkness ... us into the kingdom of the Son of His love*". Paul was not seeking a new spiritual truth when he was first confronted by Jesus. He describes his Judaism as "*former conduct*" and the Greek phrase

means “*way of life*”. Paul says that his Judaism was not just something that he donned of the Sabbath or on holy days, it involved his life 24-7 365 days a year. This was seen in two things:

- a. The Church: Persecuted and tried to destroy it as he saw it opposed to his way of life.
- b. Judaism: Advanced beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

Paul mentions this to say that **he wasn't looking for a way out he was concentrating on a way up** and these words sets the stage to marvel at the fact that God would save such a sinner as he.

### III. Vs. 15-16b The Believer

Vs. 15-16b **The believer**: Something happen to Saul of Tarsus, “*the persecutor*” and as we read in Acts chapter 9 the change was not gradual, it was sudden and without warning. He was on his way to Damascus because he had run out of Christians to persecute in Israel and a few days later he was in Damascus proclaim to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. How could these Judaizers explain such a transformation? Saul's conversion was an embarrassment to them so how could these same folks claim that he was an imposter now, they knew the story? What had caused this about face, Paul's answer is God! He was only preaching the same message that had caused his transformation. **Paul reveals five things about his conversion and indirectly every conversion:**

- a. Vs. 15a, 16a God did it: “*It pleased God...*” Whenever Paul wrote or spoke of his conversion he always emphasized the fact that God did the work. Paul says that

his transformation was ***not*** at the pressure of men, nor was it because God lacked something that He believed would be fulfilled in choosing Paul. No, it was because God saw a lost soul that He could lavish his love upon even though his hatred towards His only Son caused him to persecute those who had received the very love that was being offered to him. Paul says that he first received that call from his “*mother’s womb.*” What an amazing statement as it not only says that such a call had nothing to do with us it also reveals how God see’s all of humanity, in need of salvation.

- b. Vs. 15b By grace: “*and called me through His grace*”. His salvation like every other salvation was not based upon his effort or character but solely upon God’s. After our birth into this world we are all too quickly ushered into a life of self worth based upon performance. Paul says for him it was: “*I persecuted....tried to destroy...and I advanced in Judaism beyond my contemporaries.*” But notice the difference after Paul became a follower of Christ as he writes: “*when it pleased God who separated me...and called me through His grace...revealed His Son in me*” here the emphasis isn’t upon what Paul had done but upon what God had done! Here then is the amazing truth that all of fallen humanity needs to understand with regards to God’s call: It is certain that God didn’t call us on account of our holy life and goodness and it is equally true that He didn’t **NOT** call us because of our sinful life. So then what prompted God to call us has nothing to do with what we are or aren’t and everything to do with **WHO HE IS!** Thus we are called only in His amazing grace.

- c. Vs. 16a Through Christ: “*to reveal His Son in me*”. Read this verse very carefully it **DOESN'T SAY**: That God revealed His son **TO** me; it says that He revealed His Son **IN** me. “**TO**”, would suggest that this revelation was from the outside on the surface. But “**IN**” tells us this revelation is from the inside out as the Son dwells in us and become the habitation of the Holy. In Philip. 3 Paul said that as an unsaved person he had plenty to boast about, religion self-righteousness, reputation, recognition but none of those mattered because the one thing he didn't have was the only thing that mattered, he didn't have Jesus. All of things that he used to brag about before Christ he now saw as a pile of manure when he compared it to the one thing that he had now, Jesus. As we look at Paul's life we see the difference that Jesus makes as he was revealed three ways IN, TO and THROUGH Paul.

#### IV. Vs. 16c-24 The Preacher

Vs. 16c-24 **The preacher**: Here we get a glimpse into **Paul's preparation in ministry**. First he says he made no personal contacts with the leaders of the movement until 3 years. Secondly we note that his education where he received his D.D. (*doctorate in the desert*). Then he went back to Damascus where instead of just being able to proclaim Jesus as the Christ he could now prove Jesus as the Christ. Next, he did go up to Jerusalem as a tourist not to be questioned and not to question for 15 days. Finally he went back home to Tarsus for as much as 10 years no doubt sharing Jesus with everyone he could. Dear ones the next time you are going through a “*dry spell*” consider this that perhaps you are getting your degree as God wants to refresh you in your desert with “*Living Water*”. That is what happened to the apostle John when he was on his deserted

Island of Patmos and had a fresh unveiling of Jesus Christ, you can read all about it in the 22 chapters of his book called “Revelation”. It wasn’t until three years later that Paul met Peter, and James the half brother of Jesus. What is remarkable about this statement is that one would have expected that a new convert, especially one who had been the foremost persecutor of believers, would have touched base with those he was not aligned with if for no other reason than to make sure he understood the Christian movement, but Paul didn’t do this for three years. This reveals two things:

1. That as far as Paul was concerned he knew all he needed to know with regards to the gospel and that no one else could have added anything further.
  2. That the early church founders didn’t feel the need to examine Paul and didn’t summon him to Jerusalem he came as a tourist on his own accord.
- d. Vs. 16b For others: “among the Gentiles”. **God’s calling didn’t just include his salvation it was to save him in order to use him to reach others.** To give us a practical understanding of the difference between “TO” and “IN” Paul goes on to say what this IN was able to do: *“That I might preach Him among the Gentiles”*. Having Jesus revealed in him was able to produce a transformation so amazing that it was able to change a man who had for his whole life hated Gentiles, preached against Jesus to a man who loved the Gentiles enough that now he preached the One he hated formerly preached against in order to save them. *God has a great sense of humor as he chose to use the very man who hated Gentiles to now reach Gentiles. Seeing Paul spend time with Christians’ would have been comparable to seeing Hitler attending a synagogue!*

- e. Vs. 24 For His glory: “*And they glorified God in me*”. Prior to his conversion Paul was up and coming, famous and though he told himself it was for the glory of God in reality it was for his own glory. But afterward his service was with one aim to glorify God and here were these Judaizers now doing just as he had prior to knowing Christ they were doing so as knowing Christ. It seems as though what got Paul’s foot into the door of the churches of Judea was his testimony as all they knew was that “*He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith he once tried to destroy.*”

Though they glorified God for his radical transformation he was to them just a normal follower of Christ and the work to which Paul had been called to wouldn’t develop for another 13 years. And during those years he was not famous he served in human obscurity as God continued to work his calling in his life.