

Galatians: Introduction and Greeting

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[0 : 00] I know, I've been having you turn to Job for so long, and Pastor Bennett's been having you turn to Exodus for so long. And so we can look at the book of Galatians.

I want to read the first five verses this morning. That's all we're going to cover. We're going to dip into some other passages as we look at this book. As we begin to look at this book, let's read Galatians 1, 1 to 5.

Paul, an apostle, not from men, nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead, and all the brothers who are with me, to the churches of Galatia. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from this, from the present evil age according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever.

Let's pray together. Father, I thank you for being able to begin to look at this book. And Lord, I've always liked this book.

[1 : 26] But Lord, the things that you're beginning to show me, I can say now that I have loved this book more than I ever dreamed I would. And I thank you, Father, for it.

I pray that you would be with us. Lord, there are truths in this book. In fact, the theme of this book is so relevant to today. And I'm asking at this very beginning that you would start and through this whole series that you would open our eyes very clearly to the proper understanding of the gospel in our lives and how we stand and how we live and how we grow to be more like Christ.

I pray that you would be with us, that the truth would be ground into us in such a lovely and beautiful way, that we would be people who would be able to stand against this heresy that Paul was dealing with, a heresy that is indeed prevalent through all of time and is very prevalent today.

I pray that you would be with us. Be with your church. Be with those who don't know you, that they would come to know you. And I pray that you would bless your word today in Jesus' name. Amen. I debated how I was going to go through this book. And basically, I've just decided that I'll just start in the first verse and deal with topics as they come up.

[2 : 51] And so we're going to start right in verse 1. You might have noticed I read it kind of oddly. And there was a reason for that. We'll get to that in just a second.

But I didn't want you to think that I was hiccuping or anything like that. We're going to see something in particular. This first verse, it starts out saying, Paul, an apostle.

And so right off the bat, and most all of the letters that Paul writes, he begins in the same manner that's typical of the writing of the day.

The letter starts with who's writing. We start a letter with who we're addressing it to. But those letters were written with who's writing.

And then who it's to. And then goes into a greeting. And some thanksgiving. And some praise. And then into the meat of the letter that's sent.

[3 : 53] Paul does this one a little different. It's probably his first epistle. There's some argument about that. But it's probably his first epistle. And he does not follow. He follows the main part of this pattern.

But he doesn't follow this pattern for the most part for the rest of his epistles. Again, starting out, what is normal? This epistle is from Paul.

And he says an apostle. And that's a big thing. Because in that situation, the situation of Galatia, they would have known him to be an apostle. Because he would have explained that to them.

And an apostle is a person who's been sent by Christ to bear witness of his resurrection. A person sent by Christ to bear witness to his resurrection.

Now, we are messengers. We can be ambassadors. But we've not witnessed his resurrection. So we cannot be apostles.

[4 : 53] There are no more apostles. And I know if you're like me, you drive around and you see billboards. And sometimes you see apostle so-and-so and his wife. Apostle so-and-so.

And I'm like, whoa, wait a minute. That's not Bible. The definition of an apostle is someone who has seen the risen Christ and has been charged to go bear witness of him.

And so Paul is right at the beginning saying, this is Paul, an apostle. Now, he doesn't do that with the rest of his epistles.

Not so much. But there's a situation brewing here that we'll deal with in just a minute. More of the details. But the Galatians had known him as an apostle.

And in the situation we'll explain. It's come to their attention that he might not be an apostle. And people had come along and tried to cast doubt on Paul's apostleship.

[5 : 54] We'll get into who and why in just a little bit. But so the people he had been with, we'll explain that more in just a minute, who had known him to be an apostle, were hearing things.

We're saying, well, you know, maybe this Paul really isn't an apostle. And so Paul starts right out. This is the boldest. This is the most blunt. There's vim and vigor behind these words.

He's not saying, Paul, an apostle. And I read it that way. Paul, an apostle. Not from man. Because he is making, the Greek is making that definite emphasis.

He's saying, I am an apostle. And he's going to spend two chapters arguing that. Proving that. We'll deal with it just a little bit. But from the very get-go, in mentioning to these people who he is, he says, I'm an apostle.

And I'm an apostle not from man. He's beginning to lay evidence out from the very, what? Fourth word.

[7 : 03] Fourth word. He's starting to lay his argument out. And again, as I mentioned, the original was written to show Paul's sternness of tone as he's saying that. His apostleship, as I mentioned, had been called in question by a group called the Judaizers.

That's a word we're going to use a lot in the next months. The Judaizers. What are the Judaizers? We'll get into it more as we go on. In fact, even more in the sermon here.

They're, let's just say for this moment, they're a group of people who are working against by grace alone through faith alone in relation to salvation.

You say, what are you getting at? I will make that plain. The Judaizers are people who are trying to add to the gospel. And they were a people who were calling Paul's apostleship in question.

And so he's saying right in the beginning, I am an apostle. I am not from man. And it was not through man. And it's interesting that he makes these two distinctions.

[8 : 11] Not from man, not through man. It wasn't that the church got together and said, yeah, Paul would be a good apostle. And that's not what's going on. And it's not through man.

Now, I thought about reading it, but praise the Lord in his sovereignty, it worked out that it was read this morning. And that is the account of Matthias becoming an apostle this morning.

It was read this morning. He was made an apostle this morning. He was made an apostle a long time ago. But Matthias was an apostle called through man. Now, I want to be careful. He was truly an apostle.

God called him through the process that they used. But it would be easy to say, well, seeing how the group of apostles got together and they said, we need to fulfill scripture, which they did need to. And we're not even going to get into the argument of should they waited for Paul. I don't think that's what they should have done. But as a kid, I used to say, well, did they get that wrong? Was Matthias not supposed to be apostle and Paul was supposed to be the 12th apostle?

[9 : 13] And I don't believe that that was the case. I think there were to be 12. I think the scripture, they follow the scripture and God blessed their following the scripture to put Matthias in as an apostle as God would have wanted.

But he was an apostle called through man. Now, he never had to doubt his apostleship. He had seen the risen Christ and by lot chosen to be an apostle.

So he was still God's selected apostle for that time. But that's not how Paul became an apostle. And it's important for his argument because these people were downplaying his apostleship and trying, therefore, to ruin what he was teaching.

That's what they were getting at. These people were trying to downplay Paul's apostleship because they wanted to do away with what he was teaching because they were much more comfortable with what they were teaching.

They were much more comfortable with their thinking and their thinking was a heresy. So Paul says, I am an apostle or Paul an apostle, not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God, the father who raised him from the dead.

[10:25] So he goes on to say that he, his apostleship was through Jesus Christ. And what Paul's getting at, and I'm just going to touch on some scriptures here because Paul is really going to elaborate this.

He's going to, he's going to, um, give a description of part of how the Lord worked to save him and call him. But I do, I want to take just a minute to touch on a couple of passages in the book of Acts because Paul does it right at the beginning.

From, from the fourth word in, he's already making his argument that I am an apostle and I was made an apostle through Jesus Christ. So he was made an apostle through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ himself, himself after his resurrection, met Paul on the road to Damascus and revealed himself to Paul.

Acts 9, 3 through 6. Now, as he went on his way, he approached Damascus. This is speaking about Paul. He was called Saul at that point. And it says, And suddenly a light from heaven shone around him and falling to the ground.

[11:38] He heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? And he said, Who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.

But rise and enter the city and you will be told what you are to do. And so Jesus Christ himself was there present, spoke to Paul.

So Paul had seen the resurrected Christ. Going on a couple verses later down in chapter 9 and verse 10. It says, Now there were, there were, now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias.

The Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Here I am, Lord. And the Lord said to him, Rise and go to the street called Straight.

And at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. For behold, he is praying. And he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and laying his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.

[12:39] But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has the authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.

And the Lord said to him, Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and to the children of Israel. And so here, the Lord gives revelation to Ananias to go and to speak with Paul and to say, You're chosen to go to bear his name.

So saying that he is an apostle. Now, I looked later in the book of Acts and I found another account of this.

And I like how plainly it's let out. So I'm going to read a couple more verses. Acts 22, 12 through 16. And this is Paul recounting again. Now, it's not that he got the first account wrong.

He's filling in more details. He's giving us a more thorough explanation of what went on. The first account was to show how God had done this and what God was doing in the church.

[13:56] And here, Paul is giving a testimony of himself and his conversion. And he relates more of the things here. So Acts 22, verses 12 to 16. And one Ananias, a devout man, according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me and standing by me said to me, Brother Saul, receive your sight.

And at that very hour, I received my sight and saw him. And he said to me, Now, why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name. And so a more thorough account shares that that is indeed what the Lord told Ananias to tell Saul.

You are called by me to go and bear witness of this righteous one. And then down the next verse. When I had returned to Jerusalem, was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw him saying to me, Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.

And I said, Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another, I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. Trying to argue with the Lord that they should believe him, because he was working with them.

[15 : 29] And when the blood of Stephen, your witness, was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watched over their garments of those who killed him. And he, the Lord, said to me, Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.

And these are just a couple of the instances where Paul has recounted his testimony. And here in these, the one being told about him, this one being told by him, saying, I have been told by the Lord, whom I have seen as the resurrected Christ, I have been told to go and to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, to go to the nations, also to go to the Jews and to those in the other places.

So, we're going to get into a whole lot more. But right off the bat, as Paul is writing to these people, people he knew, people he loved, he's having to defend that he had the right to speak what he was saying.

Not only had the right to speak it, he had the true gospel from the Lord himself. We'll see that more as he goes on. He doesn't receive what he teaches from Peter, or James, or John, or anyone else. He receives it directly from the Lord. And he's arguing with these people whom he loved, I am an apostle. And he doesn't do that because he's so self-protective of his image.

[16 : 57] He does that because he's protective of the gospel. For them to demean his apostleship is to take away the truth that he spoke concerning the gospel.

Now, well, I'll get ahead of myself. So, Paul says, I have been called an apostle through Jesus Christ himself.

And it goes on to say, and God the Father, the one who raised him, Jesus Christ, from the dead. So, in the course of all the events, how Christ was sent, how Christ came and spoke to Paul, and spoke through Ananias, and gave testimony to who he was, and then this vision that the Lord himself gave to Paul, in the last verse I read, God the Son, and God the Father, in their co-equality, had called Paul to be an apostle.

So, he was indeed an apostle. And I've hit on this, but let me just emphasize this a little bit. Paul spoke like this. He spoke with this passion. He spoke with this strongness, this sternness, that wasn't going to let them get away with what they were doing.

He spoke with this because his apostleship had indeed been called into question. They had tried to go around, and this is what they did.

[18 : 22] These Judaizers would go to places, and say, to these places where Paul had been. They literally followed Paul, far enough away that they weren't with him, but they followed Paul to where he had been, and their thinking, or their argument was, you know, Paul, I don't remember, I was in Jerusalem when Jesus lived, they could say.

I walked those streets. In fact, I heard Jesus talk, and you know, as I stood and looked around, I never once saw the apostle Paul there. And maybe one of them can say, you know, and I don't think this was the case, but for illustration's sake, maybe one of them could say, you know, I snuck out with the disciples to that mountain just before Jesus went to heaven, and again, not a true situation, but one of them could have said, and you know, I was looking around, and I saw 11 people, and not one of those people was Paul the apostle.

And so they were going around trying to diminish his authority. He had said he was an apostle, and they were going around trying to say, oh, he's not part of the original 12. Must be Ananias made him an apostle.

Must be some other church. The church in Antioch of Syria made him an apostle. And this whole thing was to invalidate his preaching of the gospel.

Now, why is it so, I mean, they still had the preaching of Peter and all them. Why would they try? Because Paul was going to the Gentiles.

[20 : 05] Paul was going to take the gospel further. And actually, it really did impact the Jews. In fact, the nut of the argument that the Judaizers were trying to persuade people was something that was very Jewish, and it needed to be dealt with.

So Paul was an apostle, but Christ called him. And the phrase goes on here in verse 2, and all the brothers who are with me. So, the logic of what's being said here is Paul an apostle, not through these situations, but because Christ made me apostle.

So, he says, I as an apostle am writing to you, and all the people who are with me are in agreement with me as I write to you. He's saying, these brothers, these fellow workers, these believers gather around Paul as he wrote this letter, probably from Corinth.

That's a little in dispute. But as these brothers were gathered around fellow servants, they could give testimony that indeed, Paul was coming to them as an apostle, and what he was about to share was indeed what they needed to hear.

It was the truth of the gospel that they needed to make sure to get right. So Paul is saying, I'm an apostle. Christ made me an apostle. I come as an apostle, and I also have the witness of all those who are working with me as I come to bring you or to send you this epistle.

[21 : 38] So who's the epistle written to? It says, to the churches of Galatia. Galatia. Where is Galatia?

Well, the quick, easy, simple question or answer for that question is, today would be modern Turkey, a part of modern Turkey. So, when you get home today, you can look up on a map, or, when we're done and you're fellowshiping, there is a world map, oh, I can't remember which side it's on, this side, and you can find Turkey on it, and you can have an idea where Paul was writing to and where the Galatians were.

Now, modern scholars wrestle with, with, is it the northern part of what they talked of as Galatia was a southern part? I think it was a southern part.

I think the evidence is pretty strong for the southern part. There are good people who think it's the northern part, and it doesn't matter. It fits well with scripture and ties some things together better with the southern part, but it really doesn't matter.

It doesn't change the message of Galatians at all to say whether it's the northern part or the southern part. Who are the churches of Galatia? Notice it's the churches.

[22 : 57] So, you need to keep this in mind. When we think about the book of Galatians, it's written to a region of churches, a set of churches in an area.

The book of Thessalonians is written to the churches in Thessalonica, to one city. It may be more than one church, or it may be just one church. We don't know.

But, I think it does say the church in Thessalonica. But this is written to several churches, to a group of churches. And those churches, there may have been some along the way, but basically these churches were in Antioch and Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

Okay? So, this is the result of Paul's first missionary journey. Okay? I'm going to try not to use my hand as a map.

I do that too often. But, what happens is, Paul left from a city north of Jerusalem called Antioch in Syria. And he left there, the church sent him out to go on a missionary journey.

[24 : 09] And he got on a boat from Antioch in Syria and went to Crete. Landed on the nearest edge of Crete, worked his way, gospel work, his way, across the island of Crete, got on a boat on the other side of Crete, sailed back up into what would be the bottom of sort of modern day Turkey, and landed in a place, they call it the city, Phrygia, Phrygia.

And, and, he had to go up into the land a little ways to get to the city of Phrygia. And he landed there and from there he made a hundred mile beeline to a city called Antioch in Pisidia.

And he stayed there a while and preached the gospel. First day, he went into the synagogue, preached the gospel, people were like, hmm, that's interesting, yeah, that's good. And we'd like to hear more about this.

And he goes back the next day and now he had preached to Jews and Gentiles and the next day there was a ton of Gentiles and the Jews began to be jealous.

And, I know this isn't the Judaizers yet, this is just the Jews. They may have had some leanings towards the Judaizers but we don't know. But the Judaizers get jealous and they begin to persecute Paul.

[25 : 33] And Paul says, I'm going to the Gentiles. And so he works there for a while until the persecution becomes such that he feels he has to move on. So, he's made his way over to the island across, up into Pisidia or Phrygia.

He makes his way up to Antioch and Pisidia and from there he travels, I think it's 70 or 75 miles to a city called Iconium. And he's there for a while.

And, he preaches there, same story. Some of the people believed. I didn't mention about this, about Antioch in Pisidia that the church, there was a church established at that time.

Paul and Barnabas were persecuted and they moved on. They went to Iconium. Same thing happened. They went and preached in the synagogue. The Jews didn't like it. Several Gentiles come to know the Lord.

There were some Jews who came to the Lord, know the Lord and the church was established and in Iconium persecution began to break out. They had been there a while. Persecution broke out strong so they ended up going on and from there they went to Lystra.

[26 : 45] And again, the same story. They went to synagogue. They preached. Few heard and understood and believed. Gentiles came. A church was, and Gentiles came and believed. A church was established and persecution began to break out.

But this persecution was different. Lystra was different in that the persecution became so strong that the people stoned Paul and drug him out of the city and left him for dead.

And I could just picture the believers going, I can't believe that just happened. They stoned him. They dragged him out and they're just sitting there as the persecutors walk away thinking, ha, he got what was coming to him.

And as he's laying there, Paul, oh, oh, and he wakes up and he gets up and it says he walked that day the 40 miles to Derby and preached the gospel.

And so he went to Derby and the same thing happened. We don't hear as much about persecution in Derby, but the whole area was like that. So he preached in Derby for a time.

[27 : 54] And after a while, he and Barnabas says, let's go back and strengthen the churches. So what does he do? From Derby, he goes back to Lystra and strengthens the church.

And it says, and ordains elders there. And he goes back to Iconium and strengthens the church and ordains elders there. And then he goes back to Antioch and Pisidia. Again, strengthening the church, ordaining elders there.

And then he goes down to Phrygia, gets on a ship, but doesn't go back to Crete and flies. He sails back to Antioch and Syria.

So that was the first missionary journey. And as we're looking at this epistle, we're looking at those people he ministered to. He suffered a lot there, but we're going to see this very plainly through the book.

He loved those people. He loved those people to the point he was willing to endure persecution for the sake of the gospel. Again, this wasn't the Judaizers.

[29 : 00] It was Jews mainly, but it wasn't the Judaizers. For the sake of the gospel, Paul was persecuted, but he went on and preached the gospel. He was persecuted and he went on and preached the gospel.

He was persecuted and he went on and went back to encourage the people amongst the people that persecuted him. He loved these people. He had a great desire for them and he had spent, I don't exactly know how much time, Scripture doesn't say, in each place where he went, how long he stayed.

It just says he stays for a while. And he loved them and he really wanted to see them grow and when he left, I think he was encouraged because as we get into what will be our next message, he is shocked because they weren't what they were.

Things had changed. So when did he write this? Probably during his second missionary journey and probably, there's some discussion about this, but before the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, you say, why do you mention that?

I think it's important because the issue that the Galatians were dealing with, the Judaizers, had not just infected Galatia, it had infected Antioch of Syria, his home church.

[30 : 18] And we're going to see that here. Oh, it's going to be, oh wow. Because remember how Paul rebuked Peter? That took place in Antioch of Syria, if I'm understanding right.

And the Judaizers had infected that church and it infected the whole world so that they had to have a council of the apostles and elders of the church.

And they came together and decided what was going on. So I think this was written just before that. That's my opinion. Many believe the same, not all. Why did he write this?

Why did he write this book? Well, I've given you some of it. Let me clarify. This is where I'm going to explain the Judaizers a little bit. The Judaizers. The Judaizers. Who were the Judaizers? They were basically Pharisees.

That meant they were Jews. But they were basically Pharisees. Maybe others had joined it. But they were basically Pharisees who had claimed to come to Christ.

[31 : 22] Claimed to be trusting Christ as Savior. They were legalists. And they said, you must keep the law, especially circumcision, to be able to be saved.

And I don't think, I think this happens a lot in different ages. I don't know as the early church caught this as quick as they could have.

And this is just my opinion. Maybe I'm way off the base. But I don't think they caught it as quick as they could have because the church started in Jerusalem. Everybody was already circumcised. Everybody was used to keeping the Jewish law.

It wasn't even thought of when somebody said, oh yeah, but you got to make sure you're circumcised. They didn't have to address that. Everybody was circumcised. But when the gospel started going out to different places, to places where God did not call them to be circumcised, to be in their nation, then the Judaizers would start with their legalistic tendencies and say, look, all you Gentile people, if you're going to be a Christian, all the men have to be circumcised.

And not only that, you have to keep the law, all the law, just like we did. And so, sorry, somebody is calling me.

[32 : 45] So, here, these people were going out and trying to push this, you've got to keep the law in order to be saved. And the Judaizers spread.

They spread from Jerusalem to Antioch and Syria, Paul's home base. And then, they basically, and like I said before, I don't think that they were within sight of Paul, but they certainly followed Paul because they went to the same areas that Paul went.

Antioch and Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. So, for the Judaizers, and again, we'll talk more about this, but for them, the work of Christ was not enough.

If you're going to be saved, if you're going to be a good child of God, you have to keep the law. You have to keep all the law, but especially that part of the law.

But I want to remind you, and this is, this is the crux of the book of Galatians. To try to keep any part of the law as part of our salvation is to reject salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone.

[33 : 58] And, and, and I want to make this plain as we go through the book. I'm not going to deal with it so much here today, but this is an issue that is very prevalent today.

If you're going to be a good Christian, you can't eat ham. If you're going to be a good Christian, you can't do this, or you can't do that, or you can't, or if you're going to be a Christian, a good Christian, you have to do this, and you have to do that.

And, and people add to the law and say, it's Christ plus making Christ Lord of your, your life. It's Christ plus doing this, or Christ plus doing that, or it's Christ, it's setting up these, these standards where you must follow, yeah, yeah, except Christ, but you've got to do this too in order to be, to be saved.

And, and Paul is furious from out the gate. That's not the gospel. And so from the very greeting, he says, grace and peace from God, our Father, and Lord Jesus Christ.

from the very beginning, he's beginning to share the gospel. Now, he uses a greeting that he uses frequently. And the part that I've read so far is, is the greeting you'll find in most of his epistles.

[35 : 21] Grace and peace from God, our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Before we get into more of what's going on here, I want us to note that as Paul says this greeting, I want you to see, he's not looking at them and saying, well, Galatians, I thought you were Christians, but it's obvious that you're not, so I'm going to write to you as heathens.

He doesn't. He says, grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. He's writing to them as Christians. He's writing to them as his brothers.

But he's saying, you're right on the edge. You're about to fall into something that can ruin your spiritual walk, ruin your salvation, not that they would be saved and lose it, but mess up how they were trusting in Christ.

And so he says, grace and peace. And just a little bit, I won't take a lot to mention this. Grace and peace, grace is God's, Hendrickson was mentioning this, grace is God's unmerited favor and strengthening love in action.

And I think what's going on here in pronouncing grace and peace to the Galatians, it's just normal greeting, but I think Paul is asking that God multiply his grace and peace to these people, especially as they take in the contents of this letter.

[36 : 40] I think this is Paul writing to them and he says his normal greeting, but as he says to them, grace and peace from the Lord Jesus Christ and from God our Father, I think he's saying, Lord, please help them, give them grace to understand what I'm about to get into.

It's life or death, it's spiritual hell or heaven, it's not just a light matter, it's not just a matter of saying you believe what you believe and I'll believe what I believe, this is critical to the gospel and the same is true today.

So he's pronouncing grace and peace, but he does something different in this salutation to the Galatians that he doesn't do in any other epistle. So here in just a few sentences into his epistle, he is reaffirming the sufficiency of the gospel.

He says, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins to deliver us when we are circumcised from this present evil age.

Again, it's not what's written. He writes the truth of the gospel who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age. Full stop.

[37 : 53] Christ's work is what it takes to provide salvation for his people. Full stop. You don't have to keep the law to be a Christian.

Now, we're going to see in this epistle later, you will want to keep the law because you're a Christian, but you don't have to keep the law to be a Christian.

So, he gives this gospel that is the full gospel. Full stop. Right to the beginning. Jesus Christ, from whom grace and peace are coming from, is the one who has given himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age according to the will of the Father.

He's given himself. Christ has given himself. There are no other requirements. This is the Father's will. Law-keeping will not do. And it is not God's plan to add and plus do this.

Paul ends his salutation by giving glory to God, giving glory to the Father for being willing to deliver up his Son to deliver us. The full salvation is done by Christ.

[39 : 05] And he ends his salutation saying, I am so, I praise God that he was willing to send his Son to pay for salvation in full. It's done.

God is so gracious that I don't have to be a person who knows what Sabbath days to keep in order to be a Christian. I don't have to know what Jewish sacrificial laws I have to keep to be a Christian. I come to Christ. He's done it all. He's paid it all. God has been so good to provide me a salvation that depends on me not one whit. But it's all on Christ.

And I don't usually do this, but I'm going to mention what's missing. What's missing in this gospel or in this epistle? Well, truly nothing. But something is missing from the average epistle.

There's no praise or thanksgiving for the church in Galatia. Galatia. Now, that doesn't mean he didn't love them. This is the only epistle without any praise or thanksgiving.

[40 : 19] You will, you cannot be helped but be convinced in this epistle that Paul loves the people of Galatia. He is absolutely in love with them.

But they are on the edge of such a dangerous precipice. He didn't want them thinking, oh, they've almost got it right. No, they need to deal with this now.

And so he jumps in to this exhortation quicker than any other epistle. This is dangerous. We have to deal with it. And he begins verse 6, which we'll look at, Lord willing, next week.

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you into the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel. So it's away with the niceties.

Let's get down to business. This is dangerous. We need to deal with this. So it's a quick entrance into dealing with that problem. We cannot mix law and the gospel.

[41 : 20] It kills the gospel. Adding requirement to the gospel will kill the gospel. So Paul cuts right to the chase. So I just want to paint some pictures for you and make some conclusions because even as I looked at this, I thought, boy, how am I going to make this something that's encouraging?

So there's some things here that I think that would be encouraging. I want you to see, first of all, four pictures of God or four facets. First, God is very jealous of his people.

He hates it when wolves attack his sheep. And that's the tone of this book. God hates it when wolves attack his sheep.

God is very gracious, very jealous, rather, of his people. Secondly, God's people are very, God is very gracious to his people in that he gives Jesus for our sins to deliver us.

So we've mentioned this, but I want you to think about it, and you sort of would have gotten it already, but I want you to see that clear picture of the wonder of God doing everything. Okay?

[42 : 39] So we have this picture of a God who's jealous of his people. No. No one attacked them. No one. And of course, he allows things for their good, and he deals with it, but he's jealous of his people.

And then to step back and look and say, but look what he's done. He's provided the whole package. It's all of Christ. It's all. Jesus has done it. He's done everything.

And he's done it to deliver his people from this present evil age. In Christ being delivered, being given up to deliver his people from every evil age, it includes the Galatians.

And Paul, by God's grace, wrote this book so as to deliver these people from that present evil age, from these people who would try to mess the gospel up so that it would be no gospel.

And so God is very gracious to his people. Now, this is just a general principle because it mentions how Christ was given for us, but I want you to see that God loves his people and brings them to himself, even though they are rebellious dead sinners.

[43 : 44] And so we can think of ourselves and remember God is this gracious God because you think about what we were and we didn't get into it, the immorality, the degradation of people of that area of the day.

I didn't get into that at all. God was gracious to them. Same thing is true of us. All of us are fallen sinners. God has been gracious to save us.

And you think about one of the things that's hard for us as people is we think about people that we want to help. What if we help someone and we give our lives for them, we suffer for them, and we see them begin on a path.

And then for some reason, a month or two down the road, they totally turn against us. And they run the other way and they spite us and they say, you're nothing.

And they walk away. How do we feel to those people? If we knew that was going to happen, would we have invested in them? But God in his grace, knowing these people he would save, he knew that there were people coming along who would try to turn them against Paul and actually end up turning them against the gospel.

[44 : 59] And yet God loved them enough to give up his son to die for them. You think about the ups and downs of your own Christian life.

How many times can you say, you know, I remember when I was 14, I was just in a time of my life where I just loved the Lord. Reading the Bible was amazing. And you think back to a time when you were 21.

And you think, oh, I was in 21, I was just finishing up college, I'd had some awful professors. I doubted everything about God. And then, oh, when I was 25, I'd gotten these things straightened out.

And, you know, my life was and I was loving the Lord. God loves us through all of that. He gave his son for us through all of that. God loves and brings people to himself, though they are rebellious, dead sinners.

And this last picture of God is when God's people are attacked by false doctrine. And he sends under shepherds with strong words, words of rebuke, words to instruct, words to encourage to deal with his people.

[46 : 11] And that's exactly what he did with these. This is a God who loved the Galatians. We've talked about Paul's love and we've talked about God's love in a way. But this is a God who loved the Galatians so much that he initially sent an apostle to share the gospel with them.

And then when someone tried to mess it up, this same God sent that apostle like a sheepdog with fangs bared and saying, no, don't do this.

This is going to hurt you. And he deals with the sheep and even addresses the wolves later in the book. And what a praise or what a glorious picture of God that's there before us.

Now, a couple of things I won't take much longer, but let me just mention a couple of things. One of the things that's a problem about the Judaizing thing is that man by nature wants to earn his standing before God.

So what Paul deals with here that the Judaizers are doing is something that he has to deal with all Christians about. We're all people who want to do our part and make ourselves just, you know, God, I love you and I thank you for dying for me.

[47 : 38] And, and, you know, you know, I, I've kept the law so that you'll like me the better. And we can't do that. Man, man by nature does that.

We frequently try to do something or try to claim something that would make us feel more accepted in God's eyes. Here, God is sending a man appointed to point out that error and points to the truth you and I need to stand on.

Christ paid for our sins. He earned a righteousness that makes us acceptable. He's provided inheritance. He's done everything.

We only obey out of love to him, never out of trying to please him to earn anything. And so God expects us to listen to people like Paul here.

Let me just close with some exhortations. First to the church. I think the way Paul addresses this bears out this kind of encouragement to us.

[48 : 47] First to us as a church, don't despise what is being taught by your elders. Don't be quick to throw it away.

God has chosen them to watch over you. Paul was sent by God to evangelize them and then to establish a church, to disciple them and establish a church. And here, in the short period of time, others had come along and they were pretty quick to be, eh, I don't know about this, Paul.

I don't know. Don't despise what your elders, what's taught to you by your elders. Stand only in Christ's work for your salvation.

Be on guard against those who pervert the gospel. And I really want to herald this idea right here. Be on guard against those who would pervert the gospel, especially in an age when you can hear and read things from so many different places.

I probably listen to, and I'm trying to be very careful with this, I probably listen to, I don't think it's hard to say while I'm working window cleaning, 60 podcasts a week.

[49 : 59] That's a lot of different preachers. And I need to be careful. You and I are in that kind of situation, whether we listen to podcasts or we listen to Christian radio, or we listen to unchristian radio, or whether we watch television, or whether we read books, or we, what do you call that?

Scrolling through face page and iBook, and I'm perverting them on purpose. There's all kinds of things out there.

The first place you should take your grounding from should be the Word of God. But beyond that, go to your elders.

Joe Schmo and Kokomo with a podcast is not the primary authority you should have for what you believe. You've been made a part of a local church.

Be careful. There are good men out there. There are great men out there who will help you to grow. Be careful. I would encourage you to ask if you don't know who might be good to listen to or to look at or to read.

[51 : 08] Ask. I was talking with somebody just this last two weeks ago talking about some of the things that are really right down to what the Galatians were dealing with. And I mentioned two preachers and they're like, really?

And we might get into that as we go on. It's not right yet. Really? They preach that. And so we need to be careful. So that's to the church and sort it to you as individuals.

But let me address you as individuals. When you hear something you've not heard from your elders, ask about it. One of the saddest things to go through as an elder and unfortunately I've experienced it.

All the elders here have experienced it. Pastor Tripp has experienced it probably more than any of us. Is to have someone come to you and say, I've learned about this and I'm leaving the church and you're going, this is the first I've heard of this.

And inside I'm going, you have no idea what you're talking about. You have no idea what you're standing on. You don't know where this person is headed in his theology.

[52 : 29] So I'm going to implore you as an individual Christian, don't depend on yourself for the final judge of what's right and wrong.

Bring it to the church. Bring it to your elders. Yes, we can understand God's word, but there's so much that's so easy to get wrong. Don't depend just on yourself.

Come, ask people. Children, you may be in school and you may hear things that you're like, what are they talking about?

Ask your parents. Take it to your parents. And maybe they'll bring it to the elders or to other godly people in the church.

Don't let things that you don't understand take you in directions that are not according to the gospel. Be people who look, who ask, who find out.

[53 : 32] Kids, I want you to know, and the younger you are, the more surprised you'll be about this. There are people, people you like, who want to teach you wrong things on purpose.

Be on guard. Ask mom and dad. Ask the elders. Ask godly people. Don't let them take you down. I just wonder if there were some people in Galatia going, did you hear what that guy said?

That doesn't sound right. Let's fire off a letter to Paul. But apparently they didn't. So ask someone who knows. And finally, I want to encourage you, if you're here and you're maybe in the process of things you're thinking about, well, he's talked about sin a little bit.

You've talked about what Christ has done. And in the process, you've realized, or maybe you've realized through your whole life, I'm a sinner and I don't know what I'm going to do with my sin.

And I can't seem to get ahead of it. I know there's nothing that will pay for it. I hope I can do better. You can't do better. You can't do enough. You can't earn your way to heaven.

[54 : 45] God said, you have to keep absolutely everything, which we can't do. Or you go to hell. But there is a remedy. Christ gave up his own son to die for our sins and to live a righteous life for us.

And if we trust in the work that he's done for us, he will save us, give us his righteousness, and bring us to be with him for all eternity. Let's pray together.

Thank you, Father, for your word. Thank you for the patience of these people. I pray that you would be with us as we start the book of Galatians. That you would equip us to be people who see the gospel and are just ever vigilant to be careful of that which people try to add to the gospel.

Help us to stand against it. Help us to see where we try to add to some acceptance before you by means of what we do. Lord, help us to be people who just rest in Christ, serve you because we love you, and I pray that you would make us into the image of Christ.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.