



Lazybrook Baptist Church

GALATIANS: FREEDOM THROUGH CHRIST • NO OTHER GOSPEL • GALATIANS 1:6-10 •
6/15-20/2020

MAIN POINT

When we live only for God's approval, we can stand up for the faith without fear.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What are the standard things that keep Christians from standing up for Christ? What is most likely to keep you from standing up for Christ?

Why is approval from other people such a large obstacle to standing up for Christ?

Sadly, many Christians are afraid to stand up for the gospel of Jesus Christ. In today's passage, Paul urges the churches of Galatia to not be swayed by false teaching or the approval of man, but to stand firm on the gospel alone.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 1:6-9.

Verse 6 talks about the Galatians deserting the gospel. How have we done the same thing?

Why do people accept beliefs that are perversions of the gospel?

Why did Paul hate false gospels? What makes them so dangerous?

Any proclamation of salvation that adds to or denies the gospel of grace through Christ is to be rejected because it is not genuine. False teachers were trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. They were taking the genuine gospel and twisting it into something completely different. Instead of accepting that salvation is received solely by grace through faith in Christ, these people wanted to add requirements of the law such as circumcision.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 1:10.

What do we learn about the gospel from this passage (Galatians 1:6-10)?

If someone from another religious background were studying Christianity and asked you to define “the gospel,” how would you respond?

In the New Testament, the term gospel refers to an oral message regarding the good news of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Only later did the term designate the first four books of the New Testament. Paul summarized the contents of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. First, “Christ died for our sins.” He became our substitute on the cross. When we accept Him as Savior, we are delivered from eternal punishment in hell. Second, “he was buried.” His burial confirmed that He indeed had died. Third, “he was raised on the third day.” Furthermore, He appeared to His followers. He also appeared personally to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. The resurrection of Jesus Christ proclaims His power over death and affirms the truth of all He claimed to be and to do.

Why is the gospel not a fabricated belief? Why could it only have come from God? Why would such a belief not win the approval of men?

In what specific ways do we find ourselves trying to win the approval of man? What concerns about others’ opinions might keep you from standing up for the gospel?

In the face of personal attacks from the false teachers, Paul defended his motives. Was he a flatterer, trying to win the approval of men? Evidently his accusers claimed that Paul was self-serving and insincere. Paul declared such accusations nonsense. Rather, the apostle was a servant of Christ. He had surrendered personal ambition in favor of pleasing Christ. In seeking to win the approval . . . of God, Paul did not mean that a relationship with God can be won by human efforts. Instead, he referred to a desire to please Christ that grew out of his relationship with God, a relationship granted through grace, God’s unmerited favor. The apostle rejected unworthy motivations for ministry.

This boldness was foundational to his ministry. Paul teaches further on boldness for the gospel in his letter to the church at Thessalonica.

| HAVE A FINAL VOLUNTEER READ 1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-8.

How does this passage relate to Paul's words in his letter to the Galatian churches?

How did Paul show boldness in teaching the gospel?

Why had Paul not caved in? Why did persecution not stop him? He had been emboldened by our God! Divine aid, not mere human strength, enabled him to keep on teaching and preaching. The verb emboldened suggests fearlessness or confidence, and it often occurs in Acts and in Paul's letters to describe oral proclamation of the good news.

How has someone been bold in teaching you? What evidence exists that you are bold in your own sharing of the gospel?

How can we be sure our attitudes toward others reflect the love Paul demonstrated toward the Thessalonians?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How can our church be prepared to guard against false gospels?

How, in your own life, have you seen that holding on to the message of salvation by grace through faith is difficult? What should you do in response to that difficulty?

Are you having gospel conversations with people? Why or why not? Stop and pray for someone who needs to trust in Christ alone for salvation?

How do Paul's words about pleasing Christ, not men, affect you? Do you struggle with the desire to please others rather than Christ? What might you do to fight this sin effectively?

Note: A great resources for battling 'fear of man,' or striving to please others above God, is *When People Are Big And God Is Small* by Ed Welch.

PRAYER

As you close, ask God to continually remind everyone of our personal, intimate relationship with Jesus and all the implications of His living in and working through us. Pray that we would live lives marked by the gospel every single day. Confess that we so easily turn to false gospels and

care too deeply about what other may think. Pray for boldness to stand up for the gospel this week.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Click here for a podcast providing a great overview of Galatians.](#)
- [Click here to listen to 'Children of the Free,' a CD that walks through many of the themes of Galatians in song.](#) (Note: This CD was produced by North Wake Church where Pastor Zach and Melody attend while at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) and includes a number of their friends from seminary)
- [Click here to purchase an excellent commentary on Galatians by David Platt and Tony Merida](#) (Note: Tony Merida was Pastor Zach's preaching professor at SEBTS)

COMMENTARY

| GALATIANS 1:6-10

1:6. Verse 6 is abrupt. Paul was amazed at the Galatians' defection from the gospel of grace. To reject the gospel message is the same as rejecting God. After Paul left Galatia, the Galatians thought they had heard and responded to a different gospel that was better, but it was actually no true gospel.

When Paul described himself as astonished, he used a word that could indicate irritation as well as surprise. Paul was shocked to learn that the Galatians were turning to another gospel which was in reality no gospel at all. To describe what the Galatians had done in returning to legalism, Paul used the word translated deserting, a strong Greek term with a root meaning "to transplant" or "to change." The verb was employed to describe those who changed political allegiance from one country to another. In other words, Paul was accusing the Galatians of being spiritual turncoats or traitors. The form of the Greek verb indicates the Galatians were in the process of deserting the true gospel but had not yet completely done so. Moreover, their desertion was occurring quickly. Though we do not know exactly how much time had passed since Paul had been with the Galatians, the apostle probably wrote this letter shortly after he returned from his first missionary journey and prior to the meeting of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). Therefore, probably only months had elapsed rather than years since Paul's visit to Galatia.

1:7. Paul never specifically identified by name those whom he referred to as some people, nor did he address them directly. Judging by the false teachings that Paul refuted, we can surmise that they were Judaizers (JOO day ighz uhrs)—strict Jews who professed to be Christians. These

false teachers had infiltrated the Galatian churches soon after Paul and Barnabas had left the area. Paul brought two charges against them. First, they were throwing the Galatians into confusion. In other words, they were agitators stirring up trouble. The Greek verb translated “to throw into confusion” conveys the idea of agitating to the point of causing perplexity and fear. The cause of this agitation involved Paul’s second charge. The false teachers’ intent (they were trying) was to pervert the gospel of Christ. They were taking the genuine gospel and twisting it into something completely different. Instead of accepting that salvation is received solely by grace through faith in Christ, these people wanted to add requirements of the law such as circumcision.

We are not sure why the Galatians were so easily swayed by the false teachers. Why did these recent converts fail to stand up for the gospel? Since most of the Galatian believers had a Gentile background with exposure to locally popular mystery religions, perhaps the false idea that they could achieve a more elevated spiritual status by adhering to certain laws and rites appealed to them. Furthermore, as new Christians, they were not yet deeply established in the Christian faith. Whatever the reason, the “different gospel” (v. 6) had just enough truth to seem acceptable to these new Christians. The false teachers still focused on Christ in their messages, but only as a supplement to the law.

1:8-9. Paul’s concern was the integrity of the gospel, that is, the unchangeable message of who Jesus Christ is and what He did to bring us salvation. Using the strongest language possible, Paul declared a curse on anyone, including himself, who might proclaim a counterfeit gospel. Why Paul chose to refer to an angel from heaven is not clear. In their attempts to enhance their legalistic demands, perhaps the Galatian agitators had cited the role of angels in delivering the law (Gal. 4:19; see Deut. 33:2). Perhaps the kind of angelic worship Paul confronted at Colossae was included in the false teachers’ message to the Galatians. Whatever the reason, Paul unleashed one of the harshest statements in the New Testament, a pronouncement that is difficult to imagine in our age of tolerance.

Yet, a subtle difference characterizes the way Paul wrote the curse each time in the Greek language. In the first expression of the curse (v. 8), Paul constructed the sentence in such a way as to suggest that the preaching of another gospel was so unthinkable, it was highly improbable, though possible. The way Paul worded the second expression (v. 9) indicated that the preaching of another gospel was not only possible but also was occurring in Galatia. Paul did not hesitate to unleash such a severe expression of judgment when he believed the integrity of the gospel was at stake. Paul knew that he had laid a solid foundation when he and Barnabas had preached the gospel to the Galatians on the first missionary journey. Paul wanted the Galatian believers to hold firm to that foundation. Therefore when Paul wrote to them, the apostle

emphasized that any concept of salvation that adds to the gospel of grace through Jesus Christ is a perversion.

The purity of the gospel is so important that even the apostles or an angel should be cursed eternally (Gk anathema) if they tampered with it.

1:10. In the face of personal attacks from the false teachers, Paul defended his motives. Was he a flatterer, trying to win the approval of men? Evidently his accusers claimed that Paul was self-serving and insincere. Paul declared such accusations nonsense. Rather, the apostle was a servant of Christ. He had surrendered personal ambition in favor of pleasing Christ. In seeking to win the approval . . . of God, Paul did not mean that a relationship with God can be won by human efforts. Instead, he referred to a desire to please Christ that grew out of his relationship with God, a relationship granted through grace, God's unmerited favor. The apostle rejected unworthy motivations for ministry.