

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 25TH, 2024 // GALATIANS

WHO IS PAUL?

- He was a Jew born in Tarsus (Turkey) as a Roman citizen.
- He was a well-known and highly educated Jewish religious leader.
- He had a dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus and became the primary apostle to Gentiles.
- Killed by Nero in A.D. 68

WHO ARE THE GALATIANS?

- Galatia was a region that stretched through central Turkey.
- The Galatian people were Gauls (Gaul-atia), those of Celtic descent, primarily from Ireland.
- The churches were started when Paul and Barnabas visited the area for the first time.
- The Galatians, even though very sincere and welcoming, were easily swayed.

ABOUT THE LETTER

- Written about A.D. 49.
- When looking at the timeline in Acts, it would have been between chapters 14 and 15.
- The purpose of the letter was to refute the claims made by Judaizers, who believed you must obey the Jewish law to be saved.
- To do this, he taught about the law, faith, freedom, the flesh, and the Holy Spirit.

GREETINGS (GALATIANS 1:1-5)

PAUL, AN APOSTLE

Paul states his authority as an Apostle. He was not part of the original 12 but was called by Jesus to preach to Jews and Gentiles.

- Paul started as an "Apostle of Death" but, through the grace of God, became an Apostle who offered life. **God can do the same for us. Where is He calling us to serve Him?**

GRACE AND PEACE

Paul used grace and peace in all of his letters. It summarized the gospel of salvation he preached.

- Grace is a gift from God to those who don't deserve it. Peace is the result of that gift. **Are we receiving the peace that can only come from having a right relationship with Him?**

DELIVERANCE

Paul reminds them that not only did Christ pay the penalty for our sins, but He rescued them from the power of sin.

- **We have been saved to live for God. Though we live "in" the world, we are not a part "of" the world. Our allegiance has now been changed. Where does our allegiance lie?**

DISTORTION (GALATIANS 1:6-10)

ASTONISHMENT

In Paul's other letters, after his greeting, he would start with a prayer of thanks. Instead of thanks, he starts this letter with rebuke.

- They had been tempted to pay for a gift that was given freely. Today we are offered "different" gospels, all bypassing grace. **Are we living by a "faith +" gospel?**

SIMPLE, NOT EASY

What the Judaizers were teaching was not good news at all. Not only that, but it was confusing to those who believed.

- It can be challenging to believe in the simplicity of the gospel because it has nothing to do with us and is considered foolish by many. **It offends our pride, wisdom, and our knowledge.**

BE ON GUARD

We must look out for all counterfeits. There are going to be people who:

- **Weaken Jesus as the foundation.**
- **Dilute what we are called to in the Word.**
- **Distort the truth of the Word.**
- **Blend authority with other sources.**
- **Poison by mixing lies in teaching.**
- **Deflect to promote their own ideas.**

WHERE IS THE LOVE?

Paul is quick to curse the people who brought the message but not the message itself. Where was Paul's love?

- What was being presented was going to destroy everyone. **Paul's love was for the truth and those who were in danger. Are we loving the people God has put us in a relationship with?**

PEOPLE- PLEASING

The Judaizers had accused Paul of people-pleasing by watering down the gospel. They thought he was making it too easy.

- Even though Paul wasn't distracted with pleasing anyone except God, it can be an easy trap to fall into. **We must resist the desire to please people. We will never be able to meet the expectations of others.**

AUTHORITY (GALATIANS 1:11-24)

ORIGINS

The Judaizers knew that if they could discredit Paul and his authority, they would be able to discredit the gospel that he preached.

- Paul's gospel wasn't one that he made up or was taught by someone else. **It was taught by Christ Himself, the ultimate authority. We must be in God's word for ourselves, with the Holy Spirit leading.**

ZEALOUS

Paul, as a Jew, loved traditions! He was so intense about his passion for "God" that he wouldn't let anyone stand in the way of who he thought God was, so much so that he tried to crush the beginnings of the Christian Church.

- **Just like Paul, we can be zealous for the wrong things. What are we zealous for?**

SET APART

Paul pulls on beautiful imagery from Isaiah and Jeremiah. God had chosen him for His purposes before he was even born.

- At the beginning of Paul's relationship with God as a Pharisee, it was about what Paul did. After Paul's conversion, it was about what God did. **God has a purpose for us as well. Will we trust Him?**

THREE YEARS

To make a point to the letter's readers, Paul points out that he didn't receive instruction from any man but God himself for three years. Then, he came to the other Apostles, namely Peter (Cephas) and James as a peer.

- **Are we content just with drinking milk, or are we ready for food? What are your next steps in your walk with Christ?**

TRANSFORMATION

There was much rejoicing in the churches because of the conversion of Paul, along with his message and ministry. Once a person who opposed the church, he now fought for it.

- The church in Judea praised the Lord for what was done in Paul's life. **When people look at our lives, do they recognize God has changed us?**

CONFLICT

- We will suffer conflict as we follow Christ.
- **We must remember in such times who we are serving.**
- **Will we be tossed to and fro by the demands and expectations of people, or will we seek to serve Christ alone?**

CONFUSION

- The enemy wants the Truth to be distorted to us.
- **Distraction and confusion cause us to be frozen, accomplishing nothing.**
- **Will we fight for things that are important to us, or will we fight for what is most important?**

YOUR STORY

- Paul lived a story of redemption.
- **God has given us each a story of grace and redemption.**
- **Do we truly understand the gift of grace we have received through Christ? Are we going to allow our story to be a testimony to Him?**