

Ga 1:6–10 (ESV) I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—⁽⁷⁾ not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁽⁸⁾ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁽⁹⁾ As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. ⁽¹⁰⁾ For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

1. As we've seen Galatians is a very confrontational book

- A. It lacks the warmth of Paul's other epistles
 - 1). Even the letter to the church at Corinth that was so characterized by carnality
 - a). Paul still thanks God for them and praises them for the good he saw
 - 3). There is nothing like that in this epistle
 - a). At this point after salutation – when you'd expect to see usual Pauline encouragement
Instead he immediately launches into accusation and confrontation

Question: What's happening in Galatia that would create this urgency in Paul's mind?

- A. The Galatian churches were in the middle of a crisis
 - 1). A group of Jewish false teachers had come in distorting the message of grace
Teaching that salvation came through faith in Christ PLUS keeping the Mosaic law
And the Galatians had begun to embrace this heresy
- B. Paul is stunned and outraged - the truth of the Gospel is under attack
 - 1). And so he writes with a great sense of urgency – Paul is going to war

2. Outline

- A. The *circumstance* – The Galatians were turning from the true Gospel
- B. The *cause* – False teachers had come in to confuse them
- C. The *condemnation* – What does God say about those who distort His Gospel
- D. The *commitment* – Paul's commitment to please God rather than man

I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES

Ga 1:6 (ESV) I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—

1. Paul's accusation: **Desertion**

- A. This Greek word for *deserting* was first used in the military context for *traitors*
Eventually it was used to describe one who converted from one religion or philosophy to another

Point: Paul speaks in a way meant to shock the Galatian believers

“Do you know what you are doing if you embrace this legalistic teaching! Do you think it is something light? To do that is to be guilty of desertion. Deserting Truth. Deserting God!”

Ga 1:6 (ESV) I am astonished that you are so quickly *deserting him who called you* in the grace of Christ...

- A. To turn away from the true Gospel message to any other is to turn away from God Himself!
 - 1). It is not just throwing in a few additions to the Gospel – but God doesn't mind
Here we see God does mind – He calls it an act of desertion when you do that
- B. The good news is there is still time to stop this
 - 1). Verb in the Greek indicates they were in *process* of doing this – but hadn't completed it yet

Transition: So they are turning away from God by embracing another Gospel
AND Paul is shocked at how quickly this has happened

2. Paul's Amazement: “I'm amazed at how quickly you are doing this”

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- A. It wasn't that long ago Paul had been with them
 - 1). His time in Galatia had been phenomenal (Acts 13-14)
Perhaps one the greatest missionary trips in the history of Christianity
 - 2). Jews and Gentiles were saved – people were healed – churches were planted
 - Point:** But so soon after all that – these Galatians were ready to embrace heresy
 - A. So soon after they had seen Paul used in such an incredible way
 - 1). They were willing to believe the lie that he wasn't sent from God at all
 - B. So soon after they'd seen the message Paul preached being used so powerfully
 - 1). They had watched it save others – they had been saved through it themselves
 - a). Now they're on the brink of believing it really wasn't a message from God at all
 - C. Paul is astonished – how could you see all that – experience all that
Be so powerfully touched by God just a little while ago – be rescued from darkness to light
 - 1). Then turn away from it and reject it! It makes NO SENSE!
 - Transition:** But why was this happening? Let's look at the cause
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II. THE CAUSE

Ga 1:6–7 (ESV) I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁽⁷⁾ not that there is another one, *but there are some who trouble you (confuse you) and want to distort the gospel of Christ.*

Intro: This group of false teachers had come onto the scene after Paul left
They were causing trouble – distorting Gospel message and confusing the Galatian believers

1. “Distorting” the Gospel defined

- A. Greek (met-ah-streph-o) = To pervert, to change completely
- B. Only used 3 times in NT – the other two give us feeling of this word
Ac 2:20 (ESV) the sun shall be *turned* (met-ah-streph-o) to darkness...
Jas 4:9 (ESV) Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be *turned* to mourning...
 - 1). Light of sun becomes the opposite = darkness
Laughter becomes the opposite = mourning
 - 2). So this word means you move from one extreme to the other – to the opposite
- Point:** To add any works to the Gospel of grace is not just a slight change
You've so completely twisted it that it is now on the opposite extreme
- A. You've moved it as far away from the truth as is possible
 - 1). As far away as light is from darkness – as laughter is from mourning
- B. You have turned the Good News of Jesus Christ into the bad news of mere religion
 - 1). Where men must work to earn God's acceptance
Rather than serving Him with delight because they are accepted
 - a). One is the service of a slave – afraid he will be beaten
 - b). The other is the obedience of a son – desiring to honor the Father who loves him so much

Transition: Paul continues on – speaking of the results of distorting the Gospel

Distorting the Gospel

2. Disturbing the Galatians

Ga 1:7 (ESV) ...there are some who trouble you... **(NIV)** throwing you into confusion

- A. How were they confusing the Galatians
 - 1). By making their distorted gospel seem like the real thing

- B. Legalist are very clever in presenting their case – they use Biblical terminology
- 1). They talk about Jesus dying for sin – and being raised again
 - 2). They speak of the necessity of faith – but it is faith PLUS works
 - 3). They use Scripture but it is twisted – taken out of context
 - a). I can imagine these Jews saying something like this
 “Didn’t Jesus Himself say He didn’t come to abolish the law but to fulfill it? Now if you are going to follow Him, don’t you think you need to keep the law too?”
 “So what you need to do – and we’re only trying to help – is to start off by being circumcised – God requires that to be right with Him.”
 - b). But that is Scripture out of context – Jesus DID come to fulfill the law - AND HE DID!
 - 1a). He obeyed the law perfectly in our place – because we couldn’t
 - 2a). When we believe – God counts us as righteous based on His perfection
 - 3a). IN CHRIST - He now looks at me as one who fulfilled every demand of the law
 - 4a). I no longer have to keep the law to earn God’s favor – Christ did that for me
 - c). Knowing that sets me free to serve Him from the right motivation – Love not fear

Thought: This is why we need to know Scripture so we’re not fooled - confused

- A. But these new believer’s were believing this phony Gospel
 And were starting to try to earn what God had already given them as a free gift – His acceptance - eternal life – that’s NOT Good News

Transition: Paul was fighting against this phony Gospel - were continue the fight today

3. Deceptive Gospels of today

Intro: We will uncover these more and more as we move along

THE GOSPEL OF SURRENDER AND BEHAVIOR

- A. Here people are challenged to “Give the entirety of their life to Jesus. Turn it all over to Him.”
- 1). That sound very biblical doesn’t it – and it is Biblical *in the proper order*
- B. Get it out of the proper order and you have a gospel of works
- 1). People think they are saved *when* their faith is strong enough to surrender all
When they feel they love God enough to commit themselves to Him fully
 - 2). Problem: This is based on their works – to generate faith – generate love – spiritual sorrow
- C. **Be CAREFUL you don’t reverse the order of grace**
- 1). The Gospel says you cannot earn salvation – notice the word it uses in v. 4
Ga 1:4 (ESV) who gave himself for our sins to deliver us (*NIV “Rescue us”*)
 - a). What is that saying? We were hopeless and lost – we couldn’t save ourselves
Therefore we needed to be rescued
 - 2). Here is another element that separates Christianity all other religions
 - a). Other founders of religions came to teach men and women how to earn acceptance with their god
 - b). But Jesus Christ came to rescue those who couldn’t earn acceptance

Thought: This thought of rescue is important – we need to understand it

- 1). You don’t rescue people unless they are in a lost and helpless condition
- 2). You don’t throw a drowning person a manual on how to swim
 They’re drowning because they can’t swim – *so you jump in and rescue them*
 - a). That is what Jesus did – He became a man – He jumped in and rescued us
- 3). We are rescued when we are weak and helpless – sinful and dirty
 After we are rescued we start to serve – we grow in our surrender – grow in our faith

- a). Why? because of God's work too – *it's all of grace*
 - 1a). I want you to come out of Galatians amazed about God and His work
Where you start to see Him in everything
- b). Speaking of the new covenant that we're brought into now
Ezek 36:25-27 (NLT) "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. (26) And *I will give you a new heart with new and right desires*, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart. (27) *And I will put my Spirit in you so you will obey my laws and do whatever I command.*
 - 1a). We love God – we surrender – we obey – we serve
Because God gives us a new heart – new nature – wired to do all that
- c). Man will never really love God – never really be able to do that until grace saves them
Ro 8:7 (ESV) For the mind that is set on the flesh(unbeliever) is *hostile* to God, for *it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.*
- 4). You come just like you are to Jesus – and His grace will change you
Man of sorrows what a name
for the Son of God, who came
ruined sinners to reclaim:
Hallelujah, what a Savior!
Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
in my place condemned he stood,
sealed my pardon with his blood:
Hallelujah, what a Savior!
Guilty, helpless, lost were we;
blameless Lamb of God was he,
sacrificed to set us free:
Hallelujah, what a Savior!
 - a). Guilty, helpless, ruined sinners can't do anything first but go to Him
Then they become rescued saints – He changes them

Point: Unless you are proclaiming the gospel as rescuing hopeless, helpless, guilty sinners

- A. You don't understand the Gospel message – you're missing grace

THE GOSPEL OF MORALITY AND TOLERANCE (big in the liberal churches today)

- A. This is a gospel that doesn't need the Bible or the rescue and death of Christ at all
 - 1). This is all about works – all good people will go to heaven
 - 2). I'll be there because I'm nice – I'm tolerant of others – I don't judge – I just try to love
 - 3). Homosexual straight. Black white. Rich poor. I just accept them all. I'm a good person
- B. Don't think this is big: Listen to this quote by Pope Francis

From Catholic Online – Headlines **"Pope says atheists can do good and go to heaven too!"**

Pope Francis: "The Lord created us in His image and likeness, and we are the image of the Lord, and He does good and all of us have this commandment at heart, do good and do not do evil. All of us. 'But, Father, this is not Catholic! He cannot do good.' Yes, he can... "The Lord has redeemed all of us, all of us, with the Blood of Christ, all of us, not just Catholics. Everyone! 'Father, the atheists?' Even the atheists. Everyone!" We must meet one another doing good. 'But I don't believe, Father, I am an atheist!' But do good: we will meet one another there."

The Article continues: We are judged by a just God who will welcome us based on what we have done with what we knew. Those who do not know God will be judged on the good they have done and the values lived by,

- 1). You don't need to know God – just do good – live by respectable values
- C. **The problem:** Is there anybody who is good enough – what does God say?

Rom 3:10-12 (NIV) As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; (11) there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. (12) All have turned away, they have together become worthless; *there is no one who does good, not even one.*" **Uh-oh**

- 1). Bad news for all these liberal churches filled with people who think good gets them in
 - a). You may be good on a human level – but are you good enough to get into heaven?
- C. Praise God the gospel goes out to people like us – who aren't good enough
 - 1). But until you realize you are not good enough – you will never be saved – never need Him

Transition: Like I said – we'll try to unmask the different false gospels that are in the church today

Seen: Distorting the Gospel – Disturbing the Galatians – Deceptive Gospels

4. DIFFERENCES are not allowed – only ONE Gospel

Ga 1:6–7 (ESV) I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁽⁷⁾ *not that there is another one*, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

- A. There are a lot of things we can do differently in the various churches
 - 1). There is a lot of room to think differently on many issues
- B. But there is only ONE Gospel – the gospel God gave to Paul and the other Apostles

Man is saved by Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ alone apart from works

 - 1). That is to be the **SAME** in every church – *that is non-negotiable*

Transition: To show how important this thought is

- A. Paul goes on to give some imaginary scenarios where a person might think it's OK to revise the Gospel

Ga 1:8 (ESV) But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

- A. What if Paul an Apostle (official spokesman) for God came back with a different message?
- B. What if an angel in all his majesty showed up with a different message

And said "Paul was wrong! It is faith PLUS the works of the law"
- C. Or what if a man had such a large ministry he had to buy an old sports arena to fit everybody in

Or if a man was on television with a worldwide audience

 - 1). But their Gospel message was different from Paul's message

Point: You must see what the Bible is saying here

- A. God rejects any possibility of a new Gospel *or even an adjustment* being made to the old
 - 1). We must reject any other message that tells a man they can be made right with God
 - a). Through being moral – keeping a list of rules – voting Republican
 - b). Being a better husband – wife – parent. Having good values. Being American
- B. The Gospel is a message of hope to sinners who know they need to be rescued
 - 1). It offers the work of God on their behalf to those who know they can't earn it themselves

Transition: Notice what Paul says next – God will reject those men who change His message

- A. Every teacher should read this and tremble – it should drive them to study

III. THE CONDEMNATION

Ga 1:8 (ESV) But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, *let him be accursed.*

Intro: Paul puts these false teachers in the cross hairs and lets them have it

- A. Doesn't sound very PC – No! He loves these believers too much to worry about that!

1. The Pronouncement: "Anathema" = to be accursed, cast away

- A. It means to be doomed to utter destruction
Get a feel for the word: Ro 9:3 (ESV) for I could wish that I myself were *accursed and cut off* from Christ...
- B. Get this! Paul is saying anybody who teaches a different Gospel deserves to go to hell
Geoffrey B. Wilson: Anyone who burdens the church with false teaching shall not escape being burdened with a crushing judgment.
- Transition:** This is so radical – Paul repeats it – lest we think he didn’t really mean it
- A. This time he sweeps all who teach a different gospel into this condemnation

Gal 1:9 (NASB) As we have said before, so I say again now, *if any man* is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

1. The Proportion: If ANY MAN preaches a Gospel that is different

- A. Paul says “If I do” (v. 8) – let me be accursed
 If an angel does (v. 8) – let him be accursed
 Now If *any man* does (v. 9) – let them be accursed
- 1). The teacher better care about doctrine – care about being accurate
- Thought:** You mean that sweet Pastor down the street that is so nice – such a warm smile
- A. Always talking about love – and hugs me and my kids every time we go
- 1). If he is preaching another Gospel then YES – Paul says ANY MAN
- B. LISTEN – PLEASE GET THIS – the standard of Christianity is NOT how nice a man is
 OR how big his ministry is (tired of that one) – how successful he may look
- 1). It is the MESSAGE he preaches – you must listen to that!
 Is he preaching the ONE TRUE gospel – Justification by FAITH alone!
- Point:** To all liberal theologians – cult members (at your door) and Christian churches
- A. This warning goes out with incredible gravity
- 1). Don’t think it doesn’t matter if you’re getting this message right - **IT DOES!**
 - 2). Don’t think that you have the right to see what Paul said and alter it – **YOU DON’T!**
- B. Now we start to see why Saints in past “Trembled” at thought of teaching God’s Word
- 1). Proclaiming this truth is the greatest privilege there is
 - 2). At the same time there is a gravity that seems to be missing today
 - a). These verses should insert that gravity again
- Transition:** Now Paul answers an objection that would probably arise
- A. Wow Paul! THAT doesn’t sound very loving – tolerant – Politically correct!

IV. THE COMMITMENT

Ga 1:10 (ESV) For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

1. Here is the question every Bible teacher must answer: WHO am I going to please?

“Am I going to be a man pleaser or a God pleaser?”

- A. Paul says I used to be a man pleaser – when he was a Pharisee – a Legalist
- 1). He was acting and speaking in a way that was designed to please man
- B. Obviously he’s not a man pleaser any longer
- 1). Man pleasers don’t express strong opinions like Paul did
 "Here is the only way - change it and you deserve eternal condemnation"

- a). He wasn't pleasing men he was infuriating them

Thought: It is so essential for ministers to see what is happening here

- A. Paul's an incredibly loving man –fighting for the spiritual health of these Galatians

- 1). He's their servant in that sense – battling for them

- B. But above and beyond that – FIRST He was a servant of Christ

Which means He is to seek to **PLEASE GOD FIRST**

- 1). That means sometimes you stand in a pulpit staring into a congregation

With a message you know MANY are not going to want to hear

- a). You know some will get angry – some may leave and never come back

- 2). But the God pleaser will preach that message lovingly and without compromise

- a). The man pleaser will dilute it – until it's no longer God's message at all

- b). They don't care about the congregations health – popularity is more important

Point: So Paul is committed to pleasing God more than pleasing man

- A. That means he is willing to tell the truth regardless of what man might think or do

- 1). Even when it means imprisonment – persecution and even death

- B. Paul ministered with the motive to hear ***"Well done good and faithful servant"***

CONCLUSION

1. We learn the danger of heresy when it comes to the Gospel And how God looks at those who teach that heresy

- A. The Gospel is a message entrusted to the church and we are to keep it pure
- B. Paul says we should be very concerned that we are teaching it accurately

Ga 1:9 (ESV) As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

THE CALL

1. What does the gospel mean to you? Have you responded to it?

- A. Have you seen you are a sinner? You have done nothing to merit salvation
- 1). Have you seen that your only hope is God rescuing you?

- B. Has that driven you to Jesus Christ to call out to Him for His mercy

Rom 10:13 (NIV) for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

- C. That is the only way to be saved – come as you are!

- 1). Then after you are saved – you WILL change – He will change you

Tt 2:11–12 (ESV) For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ⁽¹²⁾ training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

- a). Grace saves first and then grace changes those it saves

- b). Nobody stays the same after being saved by grace