

## *Galatians: Freedom In Christ*

Week 3: Under Whose Authority? (Gal 1:10 – 2:10)

### **Look Around**

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How do you determine whether a preacher or teacher is trustworthy?

As servants of Christ, our singular focus in ministry should be to please God. To be sure, consistently maintaining the purity of the gospel message of Jesus when preaching, teaching, or evangelizing is the mark of a trustworthy servant whose ministry is under the authority of Jesus Christ. When ministry efforts are motivated by anything other than pleasing God, they risk diminishing what God is trying to do through us.

### **Look at the Text – Context**

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In this lesson, we see Paul establishing his independence from anything other than service to Christ as the authority of his ministry. By allowing only Christ to have authority over him, he hopes to prove that he is more credible and trustworthy than the rival teachers.

In Galatians 1:10 – 2:21, we see Paul disconnecting himself from specific people and church leadership so that he can stand solely on the authority given to him by Jesus. Specifically, Paul argues that his gospel is independent of:

- Human teaching (1:13 – 17)
- Major churches of Judea (1:18 – 24)
- Jerusalem pillars (2:1 – 10)
- The apostle Peter (2:11 – 21)

## Look at the Text – Key Concepts

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- **Justified** – Justification is a declaration from God that you are innocent of sin. Instead, you are in right standing (righteous) before Him. God, the judge, grants you freedom instead of condemnation. Justification is God’s declaration about the status of the relationship between God and an individual, not any change within the individual. In other words, justification doesn't make anyone holy; it simply declares us not guilty before God and, therefore, treated as holy.
- **Righteousness** – righteousness embodies the character, behavior, and status appropriate for the covenant relationship between God and humanity. God demonstrates righteousness by being faithful to his promises. Humanity expresses righteousness in and through loyal obedience to God’s commands.
- **The Law** – The Mosaic Law refers to the laws God gave Moses on Mount Sinai after releasing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. They include the Ten Commandments, ordinances for living in society, and regulations for worship (requirements for priests, sacrifices, feasts, and the temple). The Bible gives at least four reasons God gave the Mosaic Law to His people: for their own good, to reveal Himself to them, to set them apart in order to reveal Himself to others, and to reveal humanity's need for a savior.

## Look at the Text – Observation & Interpretation

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### Galatians 1:10 – 24

#### Observation

- In Galatians 1:10, Paul uses a set of rhetorical questions to make a point. What is the point Paul is trying to make?

- Where does Paul say the gospel message he preaches comes from?
- Why does Paul say God revealed Jesus to him?
- What does Paul say he did once he received the gospel from Christ?
- What does Paul say he did not do once he received the gospel from Christ?

### ***Interpretation***

- Why is the origin of Paul's gospel message significant?
- What is the significance of Paul retelling the story of his encounter with Christ?
- What is the significance of Paul not going to Jerusalem to see the apostles?
- Why is it so important that Paul is not trying to win approval from human beings?

- In verse 24, why did the churches of Judea praise God because of Paul's preaching?

## Galatians 2:6 – 10

### **Observation**

- What is Paul's attitude toward the leaders at Jerusalem?
- Why does Paul say the leaders accepted his gospel message?
- After accepting Paul's message, what did the leaders at Jerusalem commission him to do?

### **Interpretation**

- If the status of Jerusalem leaders made no difference to Paul, why is it important that they accepted and approved of his ministry?
- What is the significance of the gospel message being preached to the circumcised by Peter and the uncircumcised by Paul?

## Look At God

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- In his wisdom, God sends people into our lives to offer salvation and help us deepen our connection with God. Think back through your life to those who have helped you grow spiritually. How has each person assisted in developing your relationship with Christ?
- What about these individuals or ministries helped you deepen your connection with Christ?
- Take a moment to express to God how you feel about God's commitment to consistently raise up people and ministries to help you grow in Christ.

## Look At Me

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- In your faith journey, is there any ministry that stands out to you as more focused on pleasing God than other ministries you've encountered? What makes this ministry stand out?
- Do you notice any difference in the outcomes of ministries that seem more focused on pleasing God?

- Take some time to think back over your faith journey. As you do so, consider what has motivated you to do ministry over the years. As you write your responses, do you find any motivations that do not seem solely focused on pleasing God?
  
- When we find ourselves seeking people's approval over God's approval in our ministry efforts, what steps can we take to reorient ministry back to the saving work of Christ for forgiveness and acceptance?