

Galatians: Freedom In Christ

Week 2: A Different Gospel? (Gal 1:1-9)

Look Around

Have you ever had someone say, “You can't be saved if you are [or aren't] doing _____?” (i.e., speaking in tongues, praying a certain way, going to church at specific times, etc.). If so, how did it influence your understanding of what it meant to be saved?

When our salvation is questioned because of our behavior, it can shake our faith and cause us to re-evaluate what it means to be saved by Christ. As we re-evaluate our behavior based on the comments from others, sometimes we make changes to our ideas about what it means to be saved by Christ and what needs to be done to live out our salvation. Those changes may be helpful or harmful—either way, they cause us to question what Jesus has done for us and how salvation is granted.

Look at the Text – Context

In a time when access to so many opinions and teachings is readily available, the danger of falling prey to a false gospel is a constant threat for believers in Christ. But we should never allow the gospel message to be changed from God's original promise. We must always hold fast to the truth of the gospel message and never let ourselves be fooled by useless alternatives to gaining God's favor. When Paul recognized that the Galatians were having trouble distinguishing the true gospel message from the false gospel being taught by rival teachers, he challenged their thinking asked them to consider what they were doing. Paul

starts his letter to the Galatian not with the customary thanksgiving, but with astonishment over what is happening.

Look at the Text – Key Concepts

- **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 a 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

Galatians 1:6 – 9

Observation

- Who called the Galatians to 'live in the grace of Christ'?

- As you read verses 6-9, how would you describe the emotion behind Paul's words?
- What are the rival teachers doing that has Paul so upset?
- What are the Galatians doing that has Paul so upset?
- What does Paul suggest should be done with anyone teaching a 'different gospel'?

Interpretation

- What are Paul's feelings toward the rival teachers? Why do you suppose he feels this way?
- Why does Paul describe the Galatians as being 'thrown into confusion'?
- What is at stake if the Galatians turn to a 'different gospel'?
- Why is the Galatian's acceptance of the rival teachers so shocking to Paul?

Look At God

- In his grace, God sent Jesus to give 'himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age' (Gal 1:4). Take a moment to get an image of Jesus rescuing you from a situation that threatens to kill you. As you allow the scene of Jesus rescuing you to play out, how do you respond to Jesus for saving your life? What are your feelings, thoughts, and words to Jesus?
- How do you think Jesus might feel if suddenly you gave someone/something else credit for saving your life? How might it affect your relationship with Christ?

Look At Me

- How would you respond if you heard a message that suggests anything more than accepting Christ is required for salvation and acceptance by God?
- What are some reasons that you might accept preaching/teaching that requires something more than accepting Christ for salvation and acceptance by God?
- What individual and collective responsibility do we have to ensure that preaching/teaching of the gospel message remains Christ centered?
- What happens when we fail to take that responsibility seriously?



- Besides being a preacher or teacher, what are some things you can do to make sure nothing but accepting Christ is required to be saved and accepted by God in our faith community?