

Galatians 2:1-10 – One Gospel For All People

Good morning church. So very good to be with you as we continue our time of worship through the Word of God this morning.

If you have a Bible, I invite you to turn to Galatians 2. If you're using a device, my encouragement to you is to use the CSB translation. It's available on the Bible app on most devices – that's what I teach and preach from.

READ Galatians 2:1-10

Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. ² I went up according to a revelation and presented to them the gospel I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those recognized as leaders. I wanted to be sure I was not running, and had not been running, in vain. ³ But not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. ⁴ This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus in order to enslave us. ⁵ But we did not give up and submit to these people for even a moment, so that the truth of the gospel would be preserved for you.

⁶ Now from those recognized as important (what they^[a] once were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism^[b])—they added nothing to me. ⁷ On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter was for the circumcised, ⁸ since the one at work in Peter for an apostleship to the circumcised was also at work in me for the Gentiles. ⁹ When James, Cephas,^[c] and John—those recognized as pillars—acknowledged the grace that had been given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to me and Barnabas, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰ They asked only that we would remember the poor, which I had made every effort to do.

PRAY.

An interesting text that we have before us this morning. Probably not one that a pastor would just randomly choose to preach from, unless he was working through the book of Galatians. Because in order for us to make sense of this, we have to understand what was happening in the 4 churches at Galatia since Paul had left.

So kids – do any of you remember what was happening at Galatia?

- False teachers had kind of weaseled their way into these 4 churches.
- They questioned Paul's authority
- They tried to change Paul's message
 - Said you had to take the ceremonial sign of Judaism
 - Said you had to obey all of the Old Testament laws
 - And if you did these, and you also believed in Jesus, then you could be in God's family.
 - At the root of their position was that faith in Jesus isn't enough.

So Paul writes this letter to these 4 churches – reminding them of the Gospel that he preached, and pointing them to the glorious truth that we are saved, declared righteous before God, not by anything we can do but through faith in what Jesus has done. Jesus was the substitute, paid the price for all who believe.

Paul was confident in both his calling and his message – both were from the Lord. He didn't need their approval, or their acceptance. He's writing to them out of concern for their own souls.

But see, the false teachers – their goal was to control and manipulate people. So they tried to discredit Paul. And picking up from where we left off last week, Paul has already recounted his first trip to Jerusalem, now we see him recounting another trip to Jerusalem several years later...

I. Paul, Barnabas & Titus

- Paul & Barnabas – two Jewish converts to Christianity, two missionaries, this dynamic duo of 1st century church planting bring along their buddy Titus
- Titus – Titus heard the gospel and responded as a direct result of Paul & Barnabas' ministry and mission.
 - It would be as if Matt and I, we go up to Jacksonville to the FL Baptist HQ to bring a report and we bring Cole with us.
 - Same type of thing
 - And as we'll see a little later – Titus wasn't a Jewish convert to Christianity, he was a Gentile convert.

II. I wanted to be sure...

So Paul goes up to Jerusalem, according to a revelation – a divine instruction of the Lord to Paul. And he presents privately the Gospel to the apostles in Jerusalem. The Scripture says he wanted to be sure he wasn't running in vain. Like trying to walk up the down escalator. It's fun for the kids, but you don't ever go anywhere, right?

- If we're not careful, it would sound as if Paul was doubting his message
- Or his message lacked clarity or something.
- But that's not the case, I don't think, because remember his message was from the Lord, and not from the other apostles.
- I do think it was an act of humility for him to privately share with these guys what he had been preaching.
- And this confirmation was for the benefit of the Galatian churches. He wants them to know that the Jerusalem guys were on board with his message.
 - Like you ask someone for directions, and they give you directions. Go up to exit 220, turn left, take the 2nd right, and then you'll be at Walmart. And the dude that gives you directions know he's given you the right answer, but to satisfy YOU, he plugs it into his iphone just to comfort and satisfy you.
- And while I think this was an act of humility, **ultimately it was for the benefit of the Galatian churches.**
 - They needed to know that the brothers in Jerusalem had their back.
 - Or are they just gonna leave them out to dry

The result? Not even Titus...

III. Not Even Titus...

Nothing was compelling Titus, a gentile Christian, to take the sign of circumcision. And don't miss this, Titus was a born again Christian. Was trusting in Jesus. And nothing compelled his to be circumcised. Because as the entire Bible, and especially all of Galatians assures us – salvation doesn't come from a set of rules and a list of things to do and to avoid doing. Salvation is a gift of God, by grace through faith. Period.

And this truth, Paul would never give up on.

IV. They wouldn't give up

Re-read V4-5

- False brothers → said another way, Fake Christians
 - Why would they have tried to infiltrate the church? To gain control over people, to take advantage of people, who knows. Doesn't really matter the why, but they were coming
- Paul's response → Don't ever give up
- And here I think it's really important for us to know, there were some things that Paul did allow, but there were other things that Paul would never give up on.
 - Some things so important, that to deny would essentially make you a non-believer
 - Priority of the Scriptures (all of them)
 - Grace alone + Faith Alone
 - Jesus as the only way to the Father
 - Importance of repentance, and a proper view of sin
 - Deity of Jesus
 - Physical bodily resurrection of Jesus
 - You get where I'm going here. Some things that to deny would make us no longer a Christian
 - Other things though, a matter of conscience and even preference
 - PCA position on baptism – they are wrong, but that doesn't make them unchristian
 - Music
 - Dress – some Jesus loving people would be wildly offended by how I'm dressed, and that I'm not dressed appropriately for a preacher
- You see the point. There are some things that Paul would never sacrifice on, while other things he would allow for the free exercise of conscience.
 - As one commentator noted, that I read this week, from the rest of the scriptures, we see that Paul would make "considerable concessions to accommodate weak Christians; but he wouldn't budge an inch of truth to accommodate false Christians."
 - And knowing the difference is HUGE.
- **Some things we have to hold on tightly to, and other things we have to hold on loosely**
- And where a lot of us get into trouble, is when we hold on to the wrong things too tightly, and the wrong things too loosely.

And don't miss why they wouldn't give up – "so that the truth would be preserved for you..."

V. So That...

Paul wasn't just trying to prove he was smarter or better than the false teachers. His overriding concern was the preservation of the true Gospel message. And as we think through today what we're called to hold on tightly to, versus what we can hold on loosely to – we need to be certain that our goal is the same. Namely the preservation of THE truth.

Our goal is never to convince people we are right – it's to point people to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

VI. The Result

We see in the last few verses here today, the result of Paul's trip up to Jerusalem.

- Paul's message was the same as Peter's message (at least here).
 - The one at work in Peter was also at work in Paul
- Because there is only ONE Gospel
- And this one Gospel is for all types of people

- Peter & the Jerusalem brothers → called to reach the Jews
- Paul and his mission team → everyone else.
- One Gospel, for all people.

CLOSING...

So the question for each of us today is, have you believed this one true Gospel?

Think through the things we find important, and the things we don't find important. Are we holding tightly to the right things?

PRAY