

Galatians 1:1-10 - Week 1

SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 2024 - MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - “Living in freedom every day”

As we dive into our study of Galatians, there is a core truth and promise that we as believers must grab hold of: In Christ, we are free! The Apostle Paul (formerly known as Christian persecutor Saul) is going to use these six chapters of Galatians to help us understand the truth and freedom that we have as believers in Jesus Christ and his saving work; justification by faith alone. This is very different from the false teachings that are being introduced to the Galatian church by the Judaizers of their time. These false teachers were trying to make it about the Mosaic Law, man’s works, and a “Jesus plus something” type of faith. Paul is going to address these lies and false teachings here in Galatia, and in doing so, also warn us today of false teachings that can still creep in and distort the truth of the real Gospel. Paul is confronting these issues, yet also encouraging them, and us as believers today, to hold fast to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His work alone that brings freedom from the imprisonment of the law, from our sin, and from working to please man. In this we will see and recognize our desperate need for a savior, for a relationship with Jesus Christ. We will see that there is only one true Gospel and that we must be on guard that it doesn’t get distorted. This Gospel, this incredible work of Jesus Christ has set us free! Because of this we are able to live and walk freely, submitting to the Spirit that now lives in us (Christ’s Spirit), not submitting again to a yoke of slavery (the Law of works). As Christians we are free to live by the Spirit, loving God with all of our heart, soul, and mind, and loving others as Christ has loved us.

Scripture - Galatians 1:1-10

Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead – 2 and all the brothers[a] who are with me, 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. 6 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.

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study

Isaiah 61:1-3; John 8:31-36; Acts 9:1-31 & 13:38-39; Romans 8:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 1:1-10; Colossians 1:21-23

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions...

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts

Judaizers had come into the church, now they had become church leaders, were saying, become a follower of Christ, believe in Jesus, then you can only become a Christian after circumcision, follow certain Old Testament laws...only then can you be worthy of being a follower of Jesus Christ.

Paul does not have time for pleasantries because of what is at stake; the issue at hand is the good news of Jesus Christ. The Gospel was being added to, therefore, stripped of the power and freedom it was designed to have for the early believers. Paul is not in the mood to make new friends with his introduction - he is letting them know from the onset: What I have to tell you is crucial, and I have the authority, so you better listen!

Paul highlights the grace given to each of us and further defines it for them in his introduction and gives us the elements of the good news of Jesus Christ/the Gospel that we will develop in weeks to come:

- The Gospel is the movement of God. (vs. 3)
- The Gospel is for the rescue of sinful man! (vs. 4)
- The Gospel is hope through the payment made by Jesus Christ. (vs. 1)
- The Gospel gives us an opportunity to respond to His calling. (vs. 1-5)
- The Gospel places glory and honor back upon a Holy God. (vs. 5)

The Gospel is a holy God, moving on behalf of sinful and lost mankind, offering payment for our sins through Jesus Christ, rescuing us while we were his enemies, redeeming us to be children of God, and giving him glory forever and ever. Paul was not going to allow anyone or anything to dismantle or add to it.

We live in a culture that wants to take away from the gospel. We don't like being called sinners. We don't like that Jesus proclaimed one way to salvation. But the Gospel will remain. Or we want to add to it: another book, another writing, another set of rules. But the Gospel is the Gospel.

Here, in the first chapter of Galatians, we see one of the strongest warnings in all of the New Testament concerning false teachers. Paul is fired up in his warning. He is deeply concerned about what message is being preached. (vs 6-10)

Four biblical tests for avoiding false teachers:

- Test the fruit of their behavior
- Test their doctrine - don't take one message and proclaim it to the world until you have examined the ministry or the person you are promoting.
- Test their submission to Scripture in their teaching and personal life.
- Test to see if they are teaching the pure gospel of justification by faith. Make sure it is not Jesus+.

Key Thoughts

False Teachers:

- Keep you at a distance.
- Attract you with their ability, not their character
- Diminish the weight, impact, and consequences of sin
- Point you to extreme “grace” that requires no real repentance or change in your life
- Shackle you with extreme “works”/legalism that require you to atone for your sin and discount that is done with the blood of Christ
- Make you the center of your faith, not Christ
- Elevate their personality and not the person of Christ
- Exchange (and often equate) holiness with happiness - smile and be happy
- Teach for personal gain, not God’s glory
- Often, divide, not unify.

Types of false teachers:

- DEFCON 1: Well-intentioned dragons - Friends/family who mean well but have been influenced by bad information. An example of this is a powerful 30 second clip while the other 29:30 seconds of the message might be filled with deception. (DECEPTION)
- DEFCON 2: The desire to always be right: If I am right, then I cannot be questioned. If I can’t be questioned, then I am never held accountable. This false teacher adds layers to the good news of Jesus that eventually leads to legalism or total allegiance to a pastor rather than Jesus. (DEVIATES FROM TRUTH)
- DEFCON 3: Give us your money in exchange for spiritual gain. Pastors, teachers, companies, politicians, etc. who use the Bible for worldly gain. (DECONSTRUCT THE TRUTH)
- DEFCON 4 - False Prophets who teach lies regarding God/scripture. Those who say a sin is not a sin. The goal is destruction. They lean into false teachings that claim you can save yourself. That your happiness is the goal of humanity. That you are not sinful, because after all, you define your moral parameters, therefore you can never really be wrong.

Here is what we can tell you about Rich Fork and those who teach from a place of authority:

- We are going to preach Jesus.
- We will preach about Jesus and his life, death, and resurrection.
- We are going to sing about it.
- We will rejoice in various expressions (clap, raise hands, sit, kneel, pray, sing) of the hope we have in Jesus.
- We will address sin but cover and proclaim it can be covered by the grace of God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- We are going to lead you to accountability.



Reflect & Respond

Think of a time in your life where someone truly needed to get your attention, call you out or reprimand you, in love, but because you were in the wrong. What did this look like? What did it sound like? How did that person drive home the point that they needed to make? Where have you perhaps needed to be that person to someone else? Again, what did this look like?

What do we see in verses 1-5 of Galatians that establishes the importance of this letter? Why does Paul establishing authority here matter? Does authority in the church still matter today, and if so, how is that carried out?

What do we see in verses 6-10 that lets us know that Paul is reprimanding them?

What is the true gospel that Paul is referencing in verses 6-9 (see "Further Scripture Study" on page 2 of this guide.)? What is this "grace" that they are abandoning?

Take the time this week to read all of Galatians (six short chapters). How was the Gospel of Jesus Christ being distorted in Galatia? What ways are you seeing the Gospel of Jesus Christ being distorted in our own day and time?

As we work through Galatians, we will see that the church has an identity problem. There are false teachers that are putting their identity in the Law, the works of man, and Old Testament traditions, rather than the promise of Jesus Christ. What things do we as Christians today often put our identity in that either adds to or takes away from the grace that is only found in the work of Jesus Christ?

Why is it important that we as believers are on guard against false teachers/teachings? How do you recognize false teachings when they arise? How do you prevent yourself from falling into false teachings?

How should we as Christians best respond to false teachers/ings when we hear them? What if they are impacting people close to you or perhaps even those in your church?

How do you ensure that you are holding fast to the Gospel of Jesus? How are you sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others in your community?