

The Gospel Guarantee

(Galatians 1:11-24)

(preached 7/24/16; Sunday AM)

Introduction

Take your Bibles and turn with me to Galatians
1:11-24...

Please follow along as I read these set of verses which
are next up for us as we look at every verse in the book
of Galatians...

Galatians 1:11-24

11 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. 13 For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; 14 and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my [h]countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. 15 But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased 16 to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with [i]flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to

Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. 18 Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to [j]become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. 19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except [k]James, the Lord's brother. 20 (Now in what I am writing to you, [l]I assure you before God that I am not lying.) 21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22 I was still unknown by [m]sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; 23 but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." 24 And they were glorifying God [n]because of me.

Let us pray.

My family groans when I am searching through the channels and find a program that is called Antiques Roadshow.

For those of you missing out on some exciting TV, Antiques Roadshow is a show on PBS where people bring items to have them valued by experts.

The appraisers travel all over the US and invite people to large arenas to have their items appraised to determine insurance needs or maybe selling prices...

The show is fascinating because there are items on it from all periods of time and from all cultures and you not only learn the value of an item, you get the history of it as well.

I could sit and watch for hours, but my family usually makes me change the channel in a matter of minutes.

Now the show doesn't always have a happy ending.

Sometimes bring in items that they think are incredibly valuable only to find out that they are reproductions that have little or no value at all..

One man brought a group of what he thought were Native American statues that he bought from a woman in Mississippi for 1000s of dollars to find out they were reproductions...

However, most of the time the show is about authenticating that items are real and then placing a value on them...

Often to the delight of the people who own them...

The record for Antiques Roadshow is a set of bowls that were carved out of rhinoceros tusks...

The man who owned them paid \$5000 for them but came to the show to find out that they are worth over 2.5 million dollars.

His response to the appraiser?

Thank you for affirming what I thought to true all along. I told my wife that these were worth the money even though we always wondered if they were fake.

Now as we think about the book of Galatians and the purpose of it..

We need to remember that the churches in Galatia were being presented a false gospel...

They were being told that the way to salvation was Jesus plus good works....

They were being taught that salvation was Jesus + following the Jewish law...

These false teachers were teaching that male believers even needed to be circumcised to be saved...

And that all believers needed to follow the Jewish festivals and Sabbath and dietary and purification laws to be saved..

And that all the other 613 laws of the OT...

And since Paul preached a gospel of grace and not a gospel of works like them, the false gospel teachers needed to discredit Paul...

They needed to distract the people from the gospel that Paul had given to them and lure them away to their false gospel...

And one of the ways to do that was to attack Paul...

Because if you can discredit the man, you discredit his message...

We all know this since it is an election year in our country...

Because politicians practice this all the time...

If they can cause you to distrust the man or woman, then you will distrust their words...

Politics is no longer a battle of ideas, it is often a battle of I am less evil than you...

And the one who comes across as not as bad often wins the office...

The same strategy worked thousands of years ago as well...

Because these false teachers couldn't really attack Paul's teaching...

They couldn't disprove what he taught by the Bible, so they simply went after Paul personally.

We have seen some of this attack already as Paul has opened his letter in verses 1-5, and then presented the problem in verses 6-10...

Today, in verses 11-24, we get into the defense of the gospel that Paul preached to the Galatian churches..

And the first way that Paul defends what he preached is by defending himself.

As we look at these verses this morning, we are going to first of all that Paul is a an authentic messenger of the gospel...

Which is very important as we think about Christianity because much of the NT was written by Paul under the inspiration of God..

In other words, if you can't trust Paul, then you can't trust a large section of the NT...

However, Paul is trustworthy, and his words are trustworthy because they are simply the words of God himself...

When Paul preached the gospel, he preached the words of God...

When Paul wrote about Christianity, he wrote the words of God...

There is no such thing as what Paul said versus what Jesus said....

If Paul said it in the Bible, it is the very word of Christ who was the one who gave it to him...

Many people have red letter Bibles where the words of Jesus are in red...

Though I have owned a Bible like that in the past and have nothing against them...

I would remind you that every word of the Bible is the word of Christ, who is God...

You could put every word from Genesis to Revelation in red because every word is the word of God.

And when Paul spoke or wrote in the Scriptures, he spoke and wrote for God.

And we will see why we should believe that today...

But also in this passage, we are going to see 3 important truths about the gospel in the life of Paul...

3 truths about the gospel that should cause us to love the gospel even more and share it even more often...

The first truth is found in verses 11-12...

I. The Gospel Is Pure(11-12)

11 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

As Paul begins his defense of the gospel that he had preached to the Galatians, he simply defends where he got the gospel...

Look, kids can be cruel...

In school if somebody came in with a new gold chain, people would often assume it was fake...

Most of the time it was because they were jealous, but they would say things like...

“That fake stuff is going to turn your neck green.”

Or “that ain’t real gold, it is silver with gold spray paint.”

One day, a poorer kid came in and that is saying something because nearly everyone in Whitmire was poor..

But he came in with a huge gold necklace...

The kids started going after him telling him that he stole it and it was probably fake anyway...

He told, "I didn't steal it. Daddy got it at the flea market on Saturday."

In other words, "It's mine but it's not real."

When the false teachers challenged Paul over the realness of the gospel he preached, he simply began his defense by saying....

"The gospel I preached to the Galatians came from Jesus Christ Himself."

In other words, my gold chain came from the gold mine.

It is the real thing.

Some man didn't give me the gospel on the street that was hiding under his overcoat...

I got the gospel I preached from Jesus Christ.

Now, Paul was saved on the road to Damascus, Syria.

At the time of his salvation, Paul was an opponent of Jesus Christ....

We will see more of that in a minute.

But once he was saved, Paul was taught about the gospel by Jesus Himself...

Clearly, he had met the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus and that led to his salvation, but then he was taught personally by Christ after his salvation...

In other words, Jesus saved him and then became his Sunday School teacher for 3 years in Arabia...

It was a unique experience in history.

When people are saved today, they aren't taken away to some remote area to see the resurrected Jesus and talk face to face with him...

But that doesn't make us less special because new Christians have access to Christ through his Word and through prayer...

No one today goes to Arabia to meet with Jesus and be taught by him personally, but you can find you a quiet place every morning...

Pray and then pick up your Bible, and Jesus will teach you just the same...

It is amazing to me how many people want an experience with Jesus that is like what Paul had, but they fail to see that they can have a meeting with Jesus every day through prayer and the Word..

Jesus is still teaching.

Unfortunately, he has less and less students willing to learn.

Most just want an experience rather than having to study His Word.

Let me make one quick application in the opening verses...

Never forget that the gospel, which is the good news that those who put their faith in Jesus can be saved, is not an invention of man...

No man would ever invent a gospel that would make him look so helpless as to need a Savior...

No man would ever invent a gospel that made God so powerful that he demanded payment for sins against Him...

The gospel has to be a creation of God, and it is...

And if God created the gospel, He has the power to share it with whomever He pleases..

And Paul was blessed to simply be a messenger of it, and Jesus had called him to that task...

Paul's gospel was the real thing because it came from the real source...

But not only is Paul's gospel real because of who it came from, Paul's gospel was real because of what it can do....

Look at verses 13-17....

II. The Gospel Is Powerful (13-17)

In verses 13-17, Paul describes his own conversion experience...

Look at who Paul was in verses 13-14 before he was saved...

Verse 13...

He described himself as a persecutor of the church...

He was even someone who tried to destroy the church...

And why was he a persecutor of the church?

Verse 14...

Because he was a zealous Jew....

The Jews had rejected Jesus as their Messiah...

And so, they rejected those who had converted from Judaism to follow Christ with their lives...

Before he was saved, Paul was a traditionalist...

He loved the history of his people...

Being a good Jew was not just about what you believed,
it was about every part of your life...

Your family, your celebrations, your traditions, your
customs....

Paul was an expert in all of it...

He even called himself a Jew of the Jews...

He was a southerner of southerners...

He understood the history of his people...

He celebrated the teaching of the rabbis in Judaism...

Paul was a Jewish man through and through, and that
made him an enemy of anyone who would attack his
faith or his people...

You may know people like this who are obsessed with
their heritage...

Doesn't matter what the Bible says or what God says,
they are who they are and ain't nobody or nothing going
to change them....

Well, Paul may have thought that when it came to him
being a perfect Jew....

However, look at verse 15...

But when God....

Stop right there for a second...

Every testimony of every true Christian should contain those 3 words in it somewhere...

Every testimony begins with a sin filled past, but the punch line of every testimony should contain...

But when God....

For me, it was a matter of weeks that eventually ended in the office a pastor in Union that God made my sins clear to me and revealed the truth to me...

But all testimonies revolve around a time when God intervenes in the life of a sinner and everything changes...

It can happen in a matter of seconds or in a matter of months or even years...

All I know is that salvation is the story of a “But when God” moment in the lives of people he saves...

Paul had that moment on the road to Damascus in Acts chapter 9...

And look how Paul describes salvation in verse 15...

God had set him apart to save him while he was still in the womb of his mother...

And God had called him by His grace...

I know people struggle with the idea of who is in charge in salvation....

Is it a work of man or a work of God, yet you see here and other places in the Bible that salvation is a work of God from beginning to end...

Yes, you need to call upon the Lord to be saved...

Yes, you need to repent of your sins to be saved...

But ultimately, God needs to call you before you can do either of those things...

God set Paul apart in his mother's womb and he called Paul at the appointed time....

And then look what Paul says in verses 16-17...

He called me to salvation but he also called me to preach the gospel to Gentiles as a Jewish man....

But please note what Paul says next...

Even though I was saved and given a mission, I didn't go get training from someone made of flesh and blood...

In other words, I didn't get the gospel I was called to preach from a normal man....

On top of that, he didn't even go to Jerusalem to get trained....

Jerusalem would have the center of Christianity at this point because it was where the disciples were living...

In other words, God saved Paul...

God called Paul to preach...

And God took care of all the training as well...

He didn't send to a man to be taught...

He didn't send Paul to the disciples for them to teach him, even though that would have been okay since they had the true gospel as well...

Instead, God called him away to Arabia to be taught by the resurrected Christ before sending him on to Damascus....

Now, let me make a couple notes...

The first is this...

Paul was living in a unique time and was uniquely called to ministry...

I hear many people say, "Well, I don't need training. Jesus called and all I need is Jesus to train me."

And though I agree to a certain extent...

Jesus can use formal training as his way to train you...

I would never say it is mandatory for a man to go to seminary to preach...

But if given the opportunity, it is the wisest choice...

More harm has been done to the gospel and even to the church by well-meaning but not properly trained men...

Jesus can teach you. There is no doubt...

But He may want to use Godly men in the process...

There was only one Paul and He had a unique mission and even Paul went to seminary...

It was a 3 year tour in the seminary of Jesus Christ...

Now, to make this section helpful for us, let me simply remind you of the power of the gospel....

It is an old cliché, but it is a true cliché...

That the gospel can take the worst sinner and make him into the greatest saint....

Paul would never call himself the greatest saint, but I can guarantee you that no one has done as much for the church of Jesus Christ as Paul...

But what is amazing is this....

Paul didn't grow up at First Baptist Church or Tarsus....

He wasn't a lover of Jesus Christ ever since he went to VBS at a 5 year old...

Instead, Paul killed people who went to church...

Paul hated the gospel of Jesus Christ...

Paul loved to burn churches down...

Yet, the gospel can take a hater of Jesus and transform them into a lover of Jesus.

The gospel can take a disobedient and sinful man or woman and change them into the sweetest person you will ever meet....

People in our world are looking for answers....

How do we keep people from killing others?

How do we stop the hateful speech?

How do we end all the violence?

And they all search for answers...

Well, if we had better laws...

If we had more meetings and talked more...

If we changed the court system...

The solutions go on and on....

Do you want me to tell you how to end murders and violence in the streets?

Share the gospel with your neighbor....

Plant the seed of salvation in their ear....

And beg God to turn that seed in a plant of salvation in their life...

If we spent as much time protesting against one another and complaining about one another as we did sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and praying for the salvation of others...

We may see a very different world than we do now....

The gospel is not a solution for changing a person's life, it is the ONLY solution...

One final truth to see about Paul and the gospel is found in verses 18-24...

III. The Gospel Is Perceptible (18-24)

You can see in verse 18 that Paul spent 3 years in Arabia being taught by Jesus truths about Christianity...

Eventually, that training was over and God led him to Jerusalem for a short time to meet with Peter and James...

This would have simply been for him to meet with Peter to become acquainted with him...

Peter is the apostle to the Jews and Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles...

I am sure that Paul may have had some questions that only Peter could answer as someone who had been with Christ for 3 years...

And then Paul also saw James, according to verse 19....

James was the Lord's brother...

Someone who may have known Jesus his entire life and could testify to his perfect obedience...

I don't think this was for teaching purposes but simply to give Paul a feel of who Jesus was....

To hear about his gentleness and meekness and obedience from men who who with him...

Paul then left Peter and James in Jerusalem and went to the north...

You can look at this map I have put on the screen to trace Paul's route after salvation....

He was saved on the way to Damascus....

Was called away to Arabia, which is to the east here, for 3 years...

Went to Jerusalem for 15 days and then headed north to Syria and Cilicia to start his mission as preacher to the Gentiles..

According to verse 22, this traveling away from Jerusalem even kept Paul unknown to most folks in Judea,...

Which simply means that most people in Israel didn't even know who Paul was for some time even though God had saved him and called him to preach the gospel...

Now the question is...

Why did Paul tell the Galatians about all of this?

Why did he stress all this travel and where he was?

For this simple reason, he wanted them to know that the gospel he preached was not because he had been brainwashed from some crazy followers of Jesus known as the disciples....

He wanted them to know that the gospel he gave to the Galatians was not something that he had dreamed up and made up to benefit him...

He wanted them to know that the gospel was not a way for Paul to have power over them...

He simply wanted to prove that the gospel he preached was a result of it coming from God Himself...

He hadn't attended the Disciples Seminary...

He hadn't attended a seminary that he imagined...

No, Paul had gotten the good news from the One who created the Good news...

Paul had gotten the good news from Jesus Christ...

Why does this matter to us?

Well, like I said before...

When you read what Paul writes in the NT, you know it isn't from a crazy man named Paul but it is in fact from God's own mind...

That usually isn't a problem for Baptists...

We take the whole Bible as the Word of God...

If Jesus says it, you can take it to the bank...

If Moses says it, you can hang your hat on it...

If Paul says it, its as solid as oak...

I am grateful to be in a church that believes that, but there are churches that fight over Paul's words...

They claim that Paul doesn't have the authority that Christ has....

But Galatians 1 shoots down that claim once and for all...

If Paul writes it, it is because Jesus taught him, and that settles it forever....

Yet, there is one more truth that we need to apply this morning....

And it found in the last 2 verses of Galatians 1....

Though the people in and around Jerusalem may not have known Paul if they had seen him, they did keep hearing reports about him....

And look what people were saying about Paul....

He who once persecuted the church is now preaching the faith that he once tried to destroy...

And they were glorifying God because of Paul....

You see Paul has been changed so much by the gospel that people could only attribute that change to a work of God in PAul's life...

In other words, some things can only be explained as a work of God in this world....

And one of those things is this....

The change that comes into a man or woman's life as a result of the gospel taking hold of them...

So many people claim to know Jesus Christ, but my question to you is are you a changed man or woman because of the gospel....

Has the truth that Jesus saves been driven so deep into your heart that your whole world has been rocked by it?

Has it affected your life in any measurable way?

Has it affected how you talk?

What you do?

Where you spend your money?

Has it affected whether people recognize you as the person you used to be?

Has anyone ever said about you....

He used to look the opposite of a Christian, but now he looks like one?

The gospel is from God and by God...

The gospel has the power to change even the worst sinner...

But the gospel also takes hold of you so much that people can't help but notice and then glorify God for the awesome work He has done to change you in to something you weren't.

If that isn't true of you this morning, today is the day to repent and believe...

Today is the day to stop holding to a false claim and make it a reality...

Today is the day to start the process of making yourself unrecognizable to those who know you best...

They didn't recognize Paul's face, but they did recognize that Paul was a different man....

Can they say the same about you this morning?

Let us pray.