

Churches of Galatia: I'm not Lying!! (Slide 1)

Lessons from Apostle Paul

Reading: Galatians 1:13-24

As I have stated before we began this study, I'm taking the approach of learning practical lessons for us today in Apostle Paul's writings to the "*churches of Galatia!*"

You may have heard this story, it comes from a minister in *Spring Lake, NC* on Galatians. I believe it has a message for us today that points to one important common element in the former life and the changed life of "*Saul the persecutor to Paul the Apostle!*"

A young boy and his grandfather were walking down a dusty road leading a mule on a rope beside them.

A traveler walking towards them from the opposite direction saw them and expressed his observation:

"How foolish that you are.....both walking when one of you could be riding!" So the grandfather took his grandson and put him on the back of the mule.

They traveled a short distance when another person again coming toward them from the opposite direction made the following observation known:

"How terrible that a strong young man should be riding when a feeble old man has to walk!" So the boy climbed off the mule and the grandfather climbed on.

A little while longer, down the road they went and a third traveler from the opposite direction approached and made this observation:

"I can't believe a grown man would make a little boy walk like that!" So the grandfather hoisted his grandson up onto the back of the mule and they rode together.

Not long after, another traveler approached and in his observation he saw what he believed to be an atrocity:

"That's the cruelest thing that I have ever witnessed! Two people taking advantage of a defenseless animal!"

A little further down the road they encountered two travelers from the opposite direction. As they passed by, one traveler says to the other:

"I've never seen anything like that in my life! Two fools carrying a mule!"

The moral of the story, if you haven't already guessed, is that it's impossible to please everyone! One important aspect from Apostle Paul's life is that on both sides of his life, former and present; his goal was to Please God!

We would be well to remember that in all aspects of our own lives!!

Apostle Paul's message at the end of this chapter is to show those churches in Galatia what happened to him and assure them that what he speaks and does is true and they can trust him!!

Galatians 1:20 (Slide 2)

(Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.)

All throughout history it has been difficult in human relationships to determine whether someone is telling the truth or not. It still is today.

If you have received a certain message such as “*you have unpaid tolls*” then you are being lied to! It’s a scam! Things such as this happen daily, so in essence we are being lied to everyday!

It gets so bad, some scammers seem to have a great deal of your information and that makes it hard to tell the legitimacy of the solicitation compared to something that is false.

I get false invoices all the time regarding a purchase that I know I haven’t made and the scammer wants me to contact them if I feel it’s not legitimate.

Sometimes people are so good at disguising their true self that we buy in *hook, line, and sinker*. Many are proficient liars!! They can lie with such aptitude that they can speak to us face to face and we are convinced. In other words, if their mouth is moving they are lying!! It makes it difficult to know whom we may trust.

The Apostle Paul is dealing with false teachers attacking the churches of Galatia and in their attacks they are trying to convince those Christians that Paul is not legitimate.

They say his training is only from what he has been taught by the other apostles.

In his defense of his apostleship he actually separates himself from the others to validate that his authority is from God Himself:

(Slide 3) ***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 flesh and blood, (Slide 4) 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me***

18 Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. 19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

With great vigor, Apostle Paul defended himself: "Listen to me! I'm not lying!!"

A very apropos saying seems to fit well:

(Slide 5) *"When fiction rises pleasing to the eye, men will believe, because they love the lie; but truth herself, if clouded with a frown, must have solemn proof to pass her down."*

Churchill

The *judaizing* teachers were pushing Paul as a liar by emphasizing his former manner of life!

three years later: *Apostle Paul had been preaching the Gospel to the gentiles for **three years** before he met Peter face to face and the quality of Apostle Paul's conversion can be seen in his rebuke of Peter in **Chapter 2** as we will see in later lessons. "I'm not Lying."*

The Apostles' own country was as dear to him as was his countrymen!

Romans 9:3 (Slide 6)

For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh

That's a powerful statement of which without doubt expresses the character of Paul and validates his conversion. But there is more proof in our text:

It's really important for us to understand the last paragraph of **Galatians 1**. We are setting the stage for our next lesson prior to going into **Chapter 2**, so listen closely!!

(Slide 7) ***21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22 I was still unknown by 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 because of me.***

Syria and Cilicia: were provinces of Palestine. **Cilicia** is where the city of **Tarsus** is located. The birthplace of Saul.

What we read in Acts 9 is what occurred after the **three years** Paul speaks about in **Galatians 1**.

Acts 9:26-29 (Slide 8)

26 When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. They knew Paul by his former life and determined that he could be only posing as a changed man! They didn't trust him!

27 But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the (Slide 9) apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. 28 And he was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem, (Slide 10) speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death. 30 But when the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.

Apostle Paul, after arriving in Tarsus wasn't just idle having just escaped the *Grecian Jews* who sought to kill him, but began preaching to his countrymen he dearly loved **"the faith he once tried to destroy!" Galatians 1:23**

It is equivalent to our own desire to impart the Gospel message to those of our own country and even more to the point, our own family members.

(Slide 11) ***unknown by sight (Galatians 1:22): means the churches of Judea hadn't seen him face to face; they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy."*** (Galatians 1:23)

How do we separate truth from fiction, a truthful person from a liar: Look at the results of their words and actions! Look at what is left in their wake! A liar leaves destruction and chaos, but one who is in the truth leaves behind and ahead positive change!!

Galatians 1:24 (Slide 12)

And they were glorifying God because of me.

Apostle Paul as Saul created a chaotic pattern of unrest but the results of his conversion had an opposite effect:

Acts 9:31 (Slide 13)

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Peace is translated as **rest** in the KJV and bears the meaning of the same Greek word;

"A state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and havoc of war!"

This gives a glimpse as to the astounding effect of Paul's conversion on this region at this time.

Our own conversion or change can have an astounding effect on the lives of all we may encounter and engage.

Can the changes in a person really have an impact that will change others and their circumstance? It would certainly seem so!!

You've undoubtedly heard it said that "actions speak louder than words!" It seems to me that Apostle Paul's words match his actions!!"

Invitation

Jesus' Invitation to you:

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Reading

Galatians 1:13-24

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 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 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 become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. 19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. 20 (Now in what I am writing to you, 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 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 because of me.

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