

Churches of Galatia: Pleasing God-Not Man! (Slide 1)

Galatians 1:10-14

Reading: Galatians 1:10-14

Apostle Paul emphasizes that what he does in his authorized service for the Kingdom of God is to *please God and not man!*

If he were to be a friend to man, he wouldn't have allowed himself to be converted on that road to Damascus and would still be a persecutor of the Lord's people.

It's truly amazing the attitude of man in regards to Paul's ministry. In his time there existed a bloodthirsty element wishing to eliminate the way of the cross and that carried over for many years to come.

Though we spoke briefly about *verse 10 in our previous lesson*, I want to cite it again here:

Galatians 1:10 (Slide 2)

For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

Persuade might be a difficult word to understand if we only read it without definition. We think of "***persuade***" as trying to convince someone of something.

We said last week that ***“persuade”*** means-*“make friends with.”*

If Paul wanted to rekindle his old friendships, he would still be persecuting the church. But even in those times as a persecutor, Paul believed he was doing what God wanted him to do.

Paul writes to Timothy speaking of his former life:

1 Timothy 1:12-13 (Slide 3)

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, 13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

Paul was always quick to defend his authority simply because he wanted those who heard him to know what he speaks is approved by God. Time and time again he validates his authority as an Apostle.

If he didn't attempt and successfully defend his apostleship he would have less credibility. The very fact that there were some who were once his friends, who at one time lay in wait to harm him confirms his apostleship. **(Acts 23)**

There is no one who stands perfect before God and man, save through the blood of Christ. The redemption offered by God through His Son gives authenticity when we live and speak according to His word *despite our flaws!*

Make sure we understand that point. We cannot let our human weakness or past dictate our spiritual boldness in telling the story of Jesus.....but I fear some do!

The Apostle outlines his authority based upon the intervention he received from *Jesus Himself* on the way once again to persecute the church.

In verse 11 Paul says he makes known the Gospel of which he now teaches and it didn't come from man. This is absolutely in contrast from where he was to where he is now. His actions prior to his conversion were based upon his ignorance of the Gospel and was given to him by the authority of man.

Clearly, today we are under the authority of scripture written through inspiration and we must be careful not to trust our spirituality to the words of men.

Galatians 1:12 (Slide 4)

For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Having understood the devastation that he once caused the church by utilizing fear and even death, the Apostle Paul, though often warns of serious consequences, now leads with a more gentle approach. Take note of his remarkable words to the Brethren in Thessalonica:

Gentleness first-then later came a stern warning!!

1 Thessalonians 2:4-8 (Slide 5)

4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. 5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. (Slide 6) 6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. 7 But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. (Slide 7) 8 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.

It has been extremely hot in our area and it seems like it has been this way, at least to me, for sometime. In fact, it is life threatening heat if one were to be overcome by it.

I saw a sign outside of a church building that read something like this, *“If you think it’s hot here, consider the temperature of Hell! Come inside!!”*

Though likely true based on what we might picture eternal destruction to be like, a torment you can’t escape, a thirst you can’t quench, a place where there is no shade tree or relief. Nevertheless, I wonder if that’s the way to make new believers. *Especially those who really don’t know Jesus.*

Can we scare someone into being an authentic Christian? Perhaps we would be more effective in teaching the Love

of God and His Son Jesus Christ first! Perhaps then we would have greater opportunity to change the heart into a loving gentle mindset rather than in a state of fear: “You do this or else!”

*We sometimes make God out to be a person of the Godhead who watches and can’t wait until we make a mistake, rather than a loving Spiritual Being with arms “outstretched” hoping we will love Him back. Truly **not wishing for any to perish!!** That’s the definition of what Apostle Peter wrote!*

Paul continues to explain the past from the present in his defense. Again, doing so that they might believe and turn back and not heed the cloak of falsehood perpetrated by the Judaizing teachers.

Galatians 1:13 (Slide 8)

13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.

Acts 8:3 (Slide 9)

As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.

Acts 9:1-2 (Slide 10)

1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord 2 and asked letters from him to the

synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Acts 22:4-5 (Slide 11)

4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, 5 as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.

It was the gentleness of *Christ's mercy and grace* that Saul experienced! Jesus did not say to Saul, in his state of ignorance, "*You stop this or you're going to die!*"

I personally believe that to be a valid Philosophy in teaching the Gospel!! Mercy and Grace in one's ignorance is better than instilling fear!! Proper fear will come by and by!!

Galatians 1:14 (Slide 12)

14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

Apostle Paul says I ***profited/ advanced*** in my former life!! If I wanted to be friends with the ruling class, I would have continued.

One extremely important part of Paul's former way of life we must consider: Apostle Paul says ***how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.***

His zeal in ignorance wasn't conducted without strategy. I believe it plausible that as Saul the persecutor, he targeted the leadership of those following the way, the leadership of the church and the household and by doing so, those that followed would often crumble.

This might not be a great example, but to those of us who are "Western" movie fans, how many times do you see the good guy take out the chief and then see the rest of the tribe scatter. That's what I picture in Saul the persecutor as time and time again he would report his success.

If this is plausible, then something else is very plausible and I am convinced true-the individual Christian must be as strong in Christ as those saints who have gone on before us. A very serious element of Apostle Paul's mission is to commend every Soldier in Christ to have that type of strength, that is, to stand alone with the full armor of Christ and face the enemy!! Don't let the fallen weaken you!!

Do not compare yourself with others. Apostle Paul will later say that we are to help each other with one another's burden but at the end of the day:

Galatians 6:5 (Slide 13)

For each one shall bear his own load.

Christianity will be here until the end of time as we know it when Christ will return. An often used passage of scripture meant to comfort those who have lost a loved one in Christ also makes clear that Christianity endures:

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (Slide 14)

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Christianity endures, whether we do or not, until Christ returns!!

The Apostle Paul states that in his former life he **profited** (KJV)-**advanced** in Judaism, which he doesn't mean in a monetary sense but in success in persecution. He scattered the saints, which God used that persecution to advance His Gospel.

Saul likely also scared others out of serving Christ- (which happens today) because of persecution, convincing them that their leader Jesus has perished. Yet, others stand firm in the faith knowing full well the church will not fail.

The inevitable strength of the church is in Christ:

Matthew 16:18 (Slide 15)

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Apostle Paul states that he exceeded in following the traditions of his fathers.....

After entering his apostleship and writing by inspiration, he now encourages us to maintain certain beneficial traditions:

2 Thessalonians 2:15 (Slide 16)

stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

1 Corinthians 11:2

Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

Those traditions of sound doctrine and sound living that are not handed down by men but by the inspiration of the Spirit.

Shall we practice forgiveness, grace and mercy to those that are lost! That doesn't extinguish justice but the Apostle Paul gave us the example of how to start even in rebuke.

Invitation

A sound tradition that we have adopted after every sermon is to offer Christ's invitation. If you haven't been baptized into Christ Jesus, don't delay, do it today to begin enjoying the benefits of Grace in Christ!

If you are a child of God but need the prayers of your Brethren for whatever reason, please let us know.

Make your wish known today.....

Reading:

Galatians 1:10-14

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

11 But I make known to you, 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 it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. 14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

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