

Churches of Galatia: Galatians 2 (Slide 1)

Strategy in Teaching

Reading: Galatians 2:1-10

As I have tried to convey before in this study of Galatians we want to pull out the relevant lessons for us today and how we can apply them in our Spiritual walk.

Much of what Apostle Paul speaks about reaffirms some of what we learned from last week's lesson. Perhaps it is best to highlight those from the very beginning of this lesson.

God shows no partiality when it comes to the offering of salvation to *"all of humanity."*

2 Peter 3:9 (Slide 2)

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Apostle Paul emphasizes in his letter to the churches of Galatia that God's Grace is offered to all without partiality.

From the Old Testament into the New, God has declared that being partial has no place with His righteous expectations or His nature.

In **Leviticus 19**, God through Moses established His moral law to the *Children of Israel* in regards to human relationships and *Partiality*. This message to Moses is directly from God and should be the mindset of His people today:

Leviticus 19:5 (Slide 3)

"You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor."

In our society today we have to stop putting individuals on a pedestal of honor, especially when they have added nothing but taken away a great deal. There is no partiality with God.

Apostle Peter introduces an important caveat to the impartiality of God. In the introduction of the gentiles in having a right to hear the Gospel, Peter realizes something significant about the Grace of God:

Acts 10:34-35 (Slide 4)

34 Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

Fear God and work righteous to be accepted by Him and everyone has that opportunity.

Apostle Paul states here in:

Galatians 2:6 (Slide 5)

But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.

Understand that this was a mix of people. Some perhaps who had a reputation from a religious standpoint and perhaps even some of the apostles who were confused on the issue of circumcision brought into play by those ***who came in by stealth.***

Those being brought in were done so for the specific purpose of compelling others to accept that they had to be circumcised in order to be a Christian.

We have to be cautious even yet today to not bind tradition (*that's the way we've always done it*) or our own beliefs on others that do not align with the purity of the Gospel.

Apostle Paul says no matter who they are or who they think they are, it doesn't matter to me, God isn't partial to any man, only to *truth and righteousness*. These people haven't added or told me anything that I don't

already know. In fact, I know the Gospel truth and doctrine to a greater degree.

I find this interesting as we will see in a later lesson that Paul, ***one born out of due time (1 Corinthians 15:8b)*** had a better handle on truth than those who had been with Christ in the beginning.

Yet, this is a remarkable element of the tenants of God's Grace!!

Apostle Paul's instruction to the *churches of Galatia* is largely based upon God's Grace over tradition and over the confidence of our own works.

Apostle Paul states that these works that others are compelling people to do are intended to ***bring us into bondage*** of which we have escaped under Grace. Even *Titus*, a gentile, was not compelled (forced) to be circumcised.

Apostle Paul says I didn't listen to this nonsense at all:

to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour.....perhaps a lesson in many aspects of our lives is that we need not give attention to nonsense no matter how curious we might be.....nonsense can corrupt the movement of truth toward its rightful destination:

that the truth of the gospel might continue with you

The necessity of Strategy in Teaching Truth

"after fourteen years" - Apostle Paul continues to defend his apostleship by again illustrating the fact that he was working apart from the other apostles after his conversion.

This Gospel is the true Gospel and the one and only Gospel that is preached to the gentiles and to the jew and those things that have been fulfilled are no longer in force. The need to reintroduce circumcision as a requirement for qualifying one to be a Christian is false.

Paul says he was sent by ***revelation***, that is; *spiritual instruction* to present the truth of the Gospel that he preached to gentiles. He's not teaching an alternative Gospel to the gentiles and one completely different to the jews....rather the one and only Gospel.

However, Apostle Paul, given the circumstance, uses strategy to convey the message.

Galatians 2:2 (Slide 6)

2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.

Apostle Paul utilized strategy to teach the truth and he did so to more effectively convince those struggling with this false interjection of the necessity of circumcision, which in fact was the covenant between God and His chosen people, the Jews, and was meant only for them. Indeed, tradition or the work of man would nullify the concept of God's Grace.

Apostle Paul's strategy was not to speak with a large group of people but was to speak to smaller groups in hopes of having a greater impact so that ***lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.***

Why would Apostle Paul deploy this type of strategy?

To understand his methods one must understand the heart of Apostle Paul?

"A Portrait of Apostle Paul"

I'm always amazed at the natural instinct and intelligence that God has given the animal kingdom.

My dog Chocolate exhibits both instinctual qualities and intelligence and those are reflected in the actual emotion she displays on her face. Yes, I believe you can see emotion in her face!

She was outside playing one day and instinctively, when she felt itchy, which I think she has dry skin, she laid down and rolled on her back in the dry grass. Her hair is so fine and when she does that it is really hard to get all of the grass out.

I told her, "Chocolate, if you do that again you are going to get your bath early." She looked at me, with kind of a smirk of satisfaction on her face, like she knew what I was saying. She does understand what the word "bath" means. She usually fights it.

So, shortly after, she goes out again and this time she rolls around in the dirt. She had dirt embedded in her coat. So I told her we're going in. When we got into the kitchen I told her "now you're getting your bath!" Her countenance fell and she looked so dismayed as if she had lost her last friend.

When she is tired you see it in her face and her eyes. When she hears any of the grandkids are coming over her face lights up with joy. All I have to do is say their name and she lights up. She has a wide range of emotion in her facial communications.

Sometimes, she will be laying on the couch just as calm as can be with her head resting on the arm of the couch. She looks at me with a gaze that does not blink nor is distracted. It is the gaze of pure love. They say a dog looks at you with their puppy eyes in this way to show you their absolute undying love. She often extends her paw and stares intently in your eyes to express her love.

This made me think of how we sometimes are detached from the idea that the people in the Bible aren't fictitious characters but people as we are with raw emotion.

I believe in humans, these types of emotions, this range of emotions that are expressed on the face, are driven by the Spirit God has given us. We can feel emotion in the pit of our stomachs, our physical heart, and in our minds.

We can see from one's expression sincerity or selfishness!

We can feel embarrassment on our face as our cheeks often turn red. We feel joy, sadness, relief, despair and much more.

I think to understand Apostle Paul and his motives we must understand the emotional attachment he has with those he shares the Gospel with. In fact, that is his joy.

Paul writes from prison to the church at Philippi:

Philippians 1:12-14 (Slide 7)

12 And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. 13 For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains

because of Christ. (Slide 8) 14 And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear.

When one who has been outspoken as a champion for any cause is imprisoned or martyred, those who were followers, supporters, or fellow advocates are emboldened to keep that one's cause alive and become even more outspoken.

In this case, they became a force for what is good and righteous in speaking God's message of hope and grace!!

Philippians 1:15-19 (Slide 9)

15 It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives. 16 They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News. (Slide 10) 17 Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me. 18 But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, (Slide 11) the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice. 19 For I know that as you pray for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me, this will lead to my deliverance.

How often did Paul's face express joy? Certainly in his work in ministering to the saints and when those who hear the Gospel accept the message!

I am convinced that the Apostle Paul expressed in his face all the emotions that every human does. However, Apostle Paul felt the love of God and His word within his spirit, in his stomach, in his heart, in his bones and in his mind. He had joy even while in prison.

So often when people have composed a portrait of Paul from their understanding of who he is, we see a stoic person who appears to have little emotion or connectivity to humanity. Nothing could be further from the truth. His joy and his emotion was wrapped up in his love for God and his people.

He had a desire and an intent to devote his life in teaching others about Christ and he suffered and died for that cause.

He used a great deal of strategy to teach others about Christ because he genuinely wanted others to be saved!!

Apostle Paul speaks of talking with just a few at a time to teach them the more perfect way. It seems to me that this is a strategy we can employ today. "One person at a time" or one small group.

Apostle Paul's expression of joy was inspired by the fact that God and Christ Jesus are the center of his world.

Are they the center of our world?!

May we express the same joy in our love for God and His creation as did the Apostle Paul.

Invitation

Today, we offer Christ's invitation. Become a child of God through baptism and live in that realm of everlasting hope.

If you have been baptised but feel the need for prayer, we are here to help you in that request as well.....

Please let us know how we may assist you in your walk with Jesus.....

Reading

Galatians 2:1-10

1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. 2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain. 3 Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. 4 And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), 5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

6 But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me. 7 But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter 8 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), 9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

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