

Christ Community Church

Sunday, May 5, 2024

Letters for Life

Galatians 1:1-5

(English Standard Version)

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Notes

“It is not your hold on Christ that saves you; it is Christ. It is not your joy in Christ that saves you; it is Christ. It is not even your faith in Christ, though that be the instrument; it is Christ's blood and merit.” Spurgeon

“This letter has been called the ‘Bill of Rights of the Christian Life’ or the ‘Magna Carta of Christian Liberty’ or the ‘Emancipation Declaration’ from all of legalism and bondage in Christianity. It was this book that deeply touched the heart of Martin Luther and gave him strong convictions on justification by faith. There is a close connection between the Book of Romans and the Book of Galatians for they both stress salvation by grace through faith in Christ. However, there is a distinct difference in these two books. Romans has a very positive emphasis, proclaiming what the gospel is in a calm, orderly, logical way. Galatians has a negative emphasis, proclaiming what the gospel is not, and it is written in a rash way, showing anxiety and distress by the writer, for the true gospel was perverted.” Dr. Jack Arnold

Background and the Occasion for Writing the Book of Galatians

Galatia was in North-Central Asia Minor but these people were Europeans and not Asiatic. Galatia comes from the same Latin root word for Gaul. Anyone who took Latin in school remembers the beginning of Julius Caesar's works, Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres, “Gaul as a whole is divided into three parts.” Gaul is the ancient name for France. Around 390 BC some Gauls invaded the Roman Empire and sacked the city of Rome. They turned into northern Greece and suffered a military defeat at Delphai. They then migrated into Asia Minor where Attalis, King of Pergamos defeated them and confined them to North-Central Asia Minor and this area became known as Galatia. In 189 BC, Galatia became a Roman Province.

*“The Galatians were fickle (unstable, quick to change), war-like, treacherous, mystical, superstitious and ritualistic. Julius Caesar said of the Gauls: ‘The infirmity of the Gauls is that they are fickle in their resolves, fond of change and not to be trusted.’ This cultural characteristic of fickleness and quickness to change showed up in the Galatian Christians, for they had left the true gospel for a perverted gospel (Gal. 1:6 **‘I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel.’**) Acts chapters 13 and 14 tell us that Paul and Barnabas came into Galatia, preaching the gospel in the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Derbe and Lystra. In all these Galatian cities, Paul and Barnabas received persecution, and in Lystra Paul was stoned and left for dead. However, because of their faithfulness in preaching the truth of the gospel and the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in calling men to salvation, some responded to Christ and local churches sprang up in these cities. Paul established these Christians in the gospel of grace. They knew the real gospel of grace but they were being swept away by false teachers in Paul's absence from them so this was the occasion for writing this letter.” Various*

Galatians 1:1

“Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.”

- 1) **Paul understood Hebrew culture.** Hebrew by birth and Pharisee by training, studying the law under Gamaliel, one of the leaders of the day.
- 2) **Paul understood Gentile culture.** Born in Tarsus and a Roman citizen. He was well versed in Greek and Roman culture.
- 3) **Paul understood Christianity.** Paul knew the resurrected Christ personally. Paul was a man touched by the grace of God, understanding salvation was supernatural from beginning to end.

Paul's source of authority in writing was directly from the Father through the Son...supernatural and of divine origin.

1 Corinthians 9:1

“Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord?”

Galatians 1:2

“... and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:”

This was likely a circular letter to all the churches in various cities in Southern Galatia. Paul wanted all the Christians to know that his apostleship and message were from God.

Galatians 1:3

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ ...”

*“Paul used the word **grace** more than 100 times in his writings. Among all the other writers of the New Testament, it is only used 55 times. Paul was truly the apostle of **grace**. These two terms, grace and peace, constitute Christianity.”* **Martin Luther**

Galatians 1:4

“... who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father ...”

“Throughout the epistle, Paul points the Galatians to the centrality of the cross. He cannot wait to make this plain, and we find a reference to it in his very first sentence.” **Morris**

Galatians 1:5

“... to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

*“It is just possible that this clause should be translated not so much as an ascription of praise, but as a glad affirmation of faith: ‘his is the glory.’ In that case, it might be compared with the ending of the Lord’s Prayer which, whether part of the original text or not, certainly represents a very early liturgical ‘response’, like that made by Paul here. In either case, doxa, glory, is not the empty praise that humans can give: doxa corresponds to the Hebrew *kābōd*, the unutterable effulgence of the divine glory, the outward sign called the *šēkînâ* that to a Jew denoted the very presence of God (Exod. 40:34).”* **Dr. Alan Cole**

The ”L” of Life

1) **All GRACE...ALL the Time!**

Titus 2:11-14

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”

“Our worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace.” **Jerry Bridges**

2) **Growing as People of PEACE**

Romans 12:18

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”

“God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.” **C.S. Lewis**