

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 5-11-14 AM NOTES  
"THE LORD'S FREEDOM FIGHTER"  
GALATIANS 2:1-10  
#3 in Series, "Galatians: Living With Roots"

**Galatians 5:1 (ESV)** "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."

**1 Corinthians 15:1, 3, 4 (HCSB)** "<sup>1</sup> Now brothers, I want to clarify for you the gospel I proclaimed to you...<sup>3</sup> that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

**Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)** "<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast."

**Colossians 2:6 (NKJV)** "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him."

**Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)** "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

"Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the Pope or in the councils alone since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise; here I stand; may God help me." —Martin Luther

The Gospel is not easily protected, but it is easily lost.

**Philippians 3:2-3 (NASB)** "<sup>2</sup> Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; <sup>3</sup> for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh."

I. The Crucial Test (vv. 1-3)

**Galatians 2:2a (AMP)** "I went because it was specially *and* divinely revealed to me that I should go..."

II. The Contested Truth (vv. 4-5)

Unity at any price is too great a price.

**Galatians 2:11 (NIV)** "When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong."

**Galatians 2:5 (ESV)** "to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you."

III. The Crowning Triumph (vv. 6-10)

A. Paul's Message Is Accepted (vv. 6-8)

**Galatians 2:6 (NIV)** "As for those who seemed to be important—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance—those men added nothing to my message."

**Romans 10:1 (NKJV)** "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved."

B. Paul's Mission Is Accepted (vv. 9-10)

**Proverbs 31:20 (NKJV)** "She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy."

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Many would say that the summary verse of Galatians is **Galatians 5:1 (ESV)** “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” Satan, the enemy of our souls, wants us to be in bondage. Christ died and rose from the dead to set us free. This battle to avoid being brought into bondage has been fought in every generation of the church. The greatest freedom fighter in church history was the Apostle Paul. From a human standpoint, without Paul’s courage, Christianity would have just been a Jewish sect that would have soon vanished away. In every generation, the Lord has raised up freedom fighters in the church to battle against attempts to put Christians in bondage by distorting the Gospel. As Jesus taught in the parable of the wheat and tares, wherever God’s truth is sown, the enemy sows the seeds of falsehood (Matthew 13:24-30).

The most important prerequisite for living in our blood bought freedom in Christ is to be deeply rooted in the Gospel. In the first message of this series, we saw that the Gospel is not just for lost sinners; the Gospel is also for the saints (the Christians). Let me repeat what I said in the first message in this study about the Gospel. The Gospel is not just the way to enter salvation, it is also the way we live out salvation. We read in **1 Corinthians 15:1, 3, 4 (HCSB)** that the Gospel is the good news for sinners. “<sup>1</sup> Now brothers, I want to clarify for you the gospel I proclaimed to you...<sup>3</sup> ... that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures”. We know that this good news is appropriated by grace through faith apart from human works. **Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)** “<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Just as we are saved by grace through faith, the good news, the Gospel to the Christian is that the ability to live out the Christian life is also a gift of God. The way the good news of the Gospel is appropriated by the sinner is the same way it is appropriated by the saint (saved ones). We walk in obedience and in victory over sin by grace through faith. **Colossians 2:6 (NKJV)** says “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him”. We received Him by grace through faith and that is how we walk in Him. Galatians 2:20 is the clearest description of the Gospel, the good news for Christians. **Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)** “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live **by faith** in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” The purity of this Gospel as it applies to the lost and to the Christian must be held on to at all costs.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Gospel of grace had been grossly perverted by the visible church and Satan was largely having his way in a church that was filled with corruption and with members who were in bondage and in darkness. God raised up a group of freedom fighters cut out of the same cloth as the Apostle Paul. We call them the Reformers. The most visible of these freedom fighters was a Catholic Monk named Martin Luther. He was far from a perfect man, but he had a heart for the Gospel and for freedom in Christ. After a truly tormented life, this monk had savingly believed on Jesus Christ while reading the book of Romans in 1521. As Luther now saw the Gospel clearly, he realized how corrupt the visible church was and how they were bringing people into bondage instead of freedom in Christ. Luther began to speak out and write books. The church officials began to burn Luther’s books and Luther himself was called before the Pope (Pope Leo). When he was ordered to renounce his books and teaching on the Gospel, after much agonizing, Luther gave this response: “Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the Pope or in the councils alone since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise; here I stand; may God help me.”

Luther was standing in the shadow of the Apostle Paul, and there is a need for churches and Christians to do the same today. The Gospel is (as it is in every generation) under attack. We must be freedom fighters for the true Gospel. **The Gospel is not easily protected, but it is easily lost.**

Allow me to set our text for today in its context. In chapter 1, the focus was the **source of the Gospel** that Paul proclaimed. Paul was adamant that the Gospel he proclaimed had its source not in man, but in God. It was God Himself who revealed it to Paul. The focus in chapter two is the **nature of the Gospel**. The problem Paul was dealing with was that a group of Jews were perverting the Gospel and they dogged Paul everywhere he went. It was this group of freedom robbers that Paul was referring to in **Philippians 3:2-3 (NASB)** “<sup>2</sup> Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; <sup>3</sup> for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh”. These men that Paul called “dogs” are often called “Judaizers”. They were false teachers who said that salvation involved believing on Christ as the Messiah, but that wasn’t enough. Added to grace was human works. In addition to grace they said that one must also become a Jew to be saved. All of the men would have to believe on Jesus Christ but they also had to be circumcised. This ritual of circumcision meant everything for the Jews. It was handed down from the days of Abraham (Genesis 17). It was the sacred mark of Jewish identity, the symbol of the setting apart of the Jews from all other nations. In addition to circumcision by the men, both men and women were expected to keep the Jewish law – the feasts, the sacrifices, the dietary laws. It was “grace plus” which is not true grace at all. When human works are added to grace as a requirement, it is no longer grace. To settle this issue, Paul took a trip to Jerusalem. This is what he is describing in Galatians 2:1-10. Most scholars believe that what this text is referring to is what is called the Jerusalem Council that is detailed in Acts 15.

What is the relevance of all of this to today? What in the world would it have to do with mothers on Mother’s Day? It has everything to do with today. It has to do with defending and correctly presenting the Gospel. Mothers (and Fathers) have a responsibility to teach the Gospel to their children. You are on the Gospel front lines. We must get it right. At stake is our children and whether they grow up knowing the freedom of walking in Christ or embrace a false Gospel that brings them into bondage. There is no group that I am aware of today that is teaching exactly what these Judaizers were teaching. Satan changes the outward form of false Gospels from one generation to the next, but the enemies of the Gospel are alive and well in our day as much as they were in the first century. Today it is adding good works, the sacraments as essential for being saved, and for Christians it is adding lists of rules and regulations in addition to the clear commands of Scripture that must be followed in the strength of the flesh in order to gain God’s acceptance. Make no mistake. This passage is very applicable to today.

## I. The Crucial Test (V1-3)

The accusation of Paul’s enemies (Judaizers) was that he proclaimed a different Gospel from the Gospel proclaimed by the “true” Apostles like Peter and John. Paul’s contention was that they proclaimed the same Gospel. Paul never tried to hide from or ignore a conflict. He decided to deal with this accusation by going to Jerusalem where the leaders of the early church like Peter, John and James the Lord’s brother resided. Paul understood the priority of getting the Gospel right. If you are wrong about the Gospel, it doesn’t really matter much what you are right about.

Why did Paul make the difficult trip to Jerusalem? In verse 2, he says it was by “revelation”. Paul was saying, “I wasn’t called on the carpet and summonsed to come by the ‘important people’ in Jerusalem. I took the initiative to go in response to God’s directing me to do so.” **Galatians 2:2a (AMP)** “I went because it was specially *and* divinely revealed to me that I should go...” Paul did not go to Jerusalem to find out if the Gospel he was proclaiming was correct; he knew that it was. He went because God instructed him to do so. Paul’s certainty about the Gospel he proclaimed was not in doubt. The affirmation of the other Apostles and the church leaders was not for Paul’s confidence; however it would affect the fruitfulness of his Gospel by taking away the claim of the Judaizers that his Gospel differed from the Gospel proclaimed by the other Apostles and the leaders of the church.

What did Paul mean by that last phrase in verse 2, "...lest by any means I might run, or had run in vain"? Let me state again that nothing was affecting Paul's certainty that his Gospel was from God, but these Judaizers were affecting the fruitfulness of his Gospel. These false teachers were claiming that Paul's Gospel was false and different from the Gospel of the other Apostles, and it was affecting the fruitfulness of the churches Paul was planting. If the Apostles did not back his Gospel, Paul would still proclaim it because it was truth, but much of his work would be harmed (in vain) because of false teachers undermining his message.

Let me make sure that we understand what was at stake here and what the issues were. On the one side was Paul who said that the Gospel is for all people groups, all cultures, people from all backgrounds. All people are saved the same way – by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone apart from works. On the other side were the Judaizers who said that to become a Christian, a non Jew must first become a Jew. Here is what was at stake. If the Apostles had sided with the Judaizers, the church would have split. Neither group would have believed the other was truly saved. There would have been a Gentile church and a Jewish church that still held on to the Jewish law as a requirement for salvation. From a human standpoint, the future of Christianity depended on how this controversy would be resolved.

It is important that Paul and Barnabas took Titus with them. Titus was a Greek (a non-Jew). He was a living breathing non-circumcised, non-Jew who had been changed by the Gospel Paul proclaimed. He was the test case. Paul would not settle for just an abstract discussion of the essence of the Gospel. Would the other Apostles say that Titus had to be circumcised to be saved? Verse 3 gives the answer. This was solid evidence that the Jerusalem Apostles and church leaders agreed with Paul's Gospel.

## II. The Contested Truth (V4-5)

Before we get into these verses, allow me to deal with a misconception that some people have about the church – perhaps about this church. The misconception is that a church is doing well only when there are no problems, no dissention, no strife, and perfect unity. Therefore, whatever it takes we need to get rid of all dissention and disunity. That is just not true! In Heaven there will be no dissention and perfect unity, but on earth we have a real enemy and when a church gets serious about obeying God and charging Satan's strongholds, there will be all kinds of problems. I hate strife and I love unity and peace in the church. However **unity at any price is too great a price**. Having been Pastor here for close to 3 decades, I have noticed some patterns. What I am about to say will shock some. The seasons of the greatest fruitfulness – lives being transformed, numerical and spiritual growth, and advancement in Kingdom causes have been times of considerable conflict over a multitude of issues. The times of calm and few if any problems have been times of relative fruitlessness. It is calm in a cemetery! Certainly we must strive for unity, but it is unity around the truth! Satan, the father of lies is always attacking the truth. Certainly we ought to compromise on personal preferences like styles of music, strategic decisions by the church leaders that you might not think the best way to accomplish a task, and other issues of the best way to accomplish goals and spend money. But we must never compromise on truth and especially the truth concerning the Gospel for the lost and the Gospel for the saved.

Paul loved unity, but he was not afraid to go to war for the sake of the truth and especially the truth of the Gospel. We will see in the next message that he even confronted Peter in a very firm and stern way. **Galatians 2:11 (NIV)** "When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong." Let's examine more closely the confrontation that Paul had with these Judaizers. He calls them in verse 4 "false brethren". The Greek word is *pseudadelphos*. It literally means "pseudo-brethren". They weren't Christian brothers at all. They perverted grace and thus proclaimed a false Gospel. Their "gospel" would bring people into bondage. How did Paul approach them? Did he whine, "Why can't we all just get along?" No, he stood like a rock against them and didn't give an inch. In **Galatians 2:5 (ESV)** Paul said, "to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you." When it comes to the truth of the Gospel, there can be no compromise! Nothing must be added to the Gospel and nothing must be subtracted from it. The song writer said, "My

hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness". Amen! But my hope is built on nothing more than Jesus' blood and righteousness also.

### III. The Crowning Triumph (V6-10)

#### A. Paul's Message Accepted (V6-8)

Paul is not putting down the other Apostles and the leaders of the church such as James, the Lord's brother. He is simply saying that they added nothing to his Gospel. Listen to the NIV of **Galatians 2:6 (NIV)** "As for those who seemed to be important--whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance--those men added nothing to my message." Paul respected God-ordained authority, but he wasn't impressed by position, reputation, or human veneration.

In verse 7, Paul is not speaking of two separate Gospels. There is only one Gospel for Jews and for Gentiles. He was speaking of the focused recipients of the Gospel. Peter emphasized taking the Gospel to the Jews. However Peter is the one who gave the Gospel to the Gentile Roman Centurion Cornelius in Acts 10. Paul would focus on taking the one Gospel to the Gentiles. That didn't mean that Paul didn't witness to Jews. His pattern when he went to a town was to go first to the Synagogue and speak to the Jews and when they resisted the Gospel he would go to the Gentiles. Paul spoke of his burden for the Jews in **Romans 10:1 (NKJV)** "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel [the Jews] is that they may be saved." What is spoken of in verse 7 is the focus of these two early leaders in the church.

#### B. Paul's Mission Accepted (V9-10)

In first century culture, the clasping of another's right hand was to make a vow of friendship and it was also a mark of fellowship or partnership. Make no mistake; this was a slam dunk win for the Apostle Paul and the future of the Gospel and the church. Paul won and the Judaizers lost. When we look at the account of this Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, we find that Paul was told by the church leaders and Apostles not only that His Gospel was indeed the true Gospel, but he was given the task of telling the other churches about the council's decision (Acts 15:22-35).

Let me be perfectly clear about something. Paul and the other Apostles and the leaders of the church were not saying that keeping the moral law of God (the moral Commandments) and living a holy life are not important. They were saying that a holy life is the result of the Gospel, but it is not the Gospel. No one is saved by keeping the moral law of God and living a holy life. However those who are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone give evidence of salvation by having the desire and the power to obey God and live holy lives as they walk in the enabling grace of God, and by faith in the indwelling Spirit of Christ to empower them.

Often Bible teachers skip right over verse 10. At first glance, it seems sort of out of place, but it certainly isn't. Helping the poor is not the Gospel, but it is a necessary result of the Gospel. Proverbs 31, which is a composite description of the perfect woman and mother, says this about the poor: **Proverbs 31:20 (NKJV)** "She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy." Compassion toward the poor is an essential evidence of having received the Gospel. It is sad that all too often conservative evangelical churches remember the Gospel and forget the poor while liberal churches remember the poor and forget the Gospel. Both are wrong. Remember, stand firm and never compromise the Gospel, but a person and a church transformed by the Gospel has compassion on the poor. By God's grace that is what we seek to do as a church. We certainly haven't arrived, but we are called by God to go to forgotten people in our local area – inner city of Knoxville, the mobile home parks around us, the forgotten people in North America, and the forgotten and unreached people in other nations with the Gospel, but also with compassion for the physical needs of the people.

#### CONCLUSION

Have you been transformed by the Gospel? Are you living in freedom over the bondage of sin by the Gospel? If not today, I invite you to come believing the Gospel to be saved and to believe the Gospel to walk in freedom from sin's chains.