

Preached on 8/14/22 at GBC - Ruston

"Paul An Apostle"

Gal.1:1-3

As we begin looking at this **EPISTLE**, we need to understand **FIRST OF ALL** that **ALL THE APOSTLES (including Paul who wrote this epistle) all of them** stressed the **SIMPLE** and **SINGULAR** message they had been taught by our Lord – “*The JUST shall live by faith.*” Having been raised all their lives “*under the law*”, as well as being under the rule of the Scribes and Pharisees, they had been taught that grace and works were **CO-CONTRIBUTORS** to their justification and acceptance before God – “*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*”(Rom.10:1-3) We know this to be the case by the event recorded concerning Peter and his joining himself to the Judaizers in **Gal.2**, which we read in the “Call To Worship”. Like every elect sinner, Christ had set Paul (**Saul of Tarsus**) **FREE** from this damnable system of works based salvation – “*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*”(Rom.8:2) Having been “*taught of God*” that **JUSTIFICATION** before God was accomplished through Christ’s work of redemption **ALONE**, by His righteousness imputed to the elect sinner and rested in by God-given faith, Paul harped on this one truth like a **ONE STRINGED BANJO** – “**WHY**”? Because **THIS IS THE GOSPEL** – “*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.*”(I Cor.15:1-4) This was the **MESSAGE** that Paul **HERALDED** – “*For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*”(I Cor.2:2) God by His Holy Spirit has recorded by the hands of His servants **EXACTLY** what the Gospel is, and it’s **A SIMPLE MESSAGE** – “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*”(Rom.1:16,17) **LET ME BE PERFECTLY CLEAR** – There are many **IMPORTANT TRUTHS** set forth in the Word of God, vital truths those “*born of God*” readily bow to and in which they rejoice – **ELABORATE**. But even though they are **VITAL TRUTHS**, **these truths in and of themselves are not the Gospel!** **HERE'S THE GOSPEL** – “*Be it known unto you therefore, men [and] brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*”(Acts 13:38,39) If this message isn’t declared; if the “*righteousness of God*” is not preached out as the sinner’s only hope of salvation, **THE GOSPEL HAS NOT BEEN PREACHED**, no matter how many vital truths might have been set forth. With that stated, let’s begin looking at Paul’s words to every believer in every generation as set forth in this letter to the Galatians.

Notice how Paul begins this letter – “*Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;).*” You’d think those to whom he wrote

this epistle **KNEW** he was “*an apostle*”, yet Paul still inserts that **TITLE** into his letter. This office was the **HIGHEST OFFICE** within the church, and Paul asserts that he was called to this office, “*not of men, neither by man, BUT by Jesus Christ, and God the Father.*” In other words, Christ called him to this office, and confirmed Paul’s apostleship with signs and wonders. The Holy Spirit moved Paul to write this because the false teachers that had crept into the churches at Galatia had insinuated Paul wasn’t an apostle and therefore not to be regarded as one. Paul reminds them, that unlike the false apostles and false teachers that were sent out by men who had no authority to do so, **he was called to this office by Christ**, just like Peter, James, John, and the other apostles. **We have to always keep this in mind:** In order to be an Apostle, one had to have **SEEN** Christ in the flesh, been called and chosen to the office by Christ, and received their Gospel **FROM** Christ. **PAUL** had all these qualification. Paul saw Christ on the road to Damascus, was called and chosen to this office by Christ, and received His Gospel directly from the mouth of Christ, just like the other Apostles – “*But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught [it], but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*”(Gal.1:11,12) It is of important note that Paul not only declared himself called to the office of an Apostle by Jesus Christ, but also called to this office by “***God the Father who raised Him from the dead.***” Seeing Christ the Son and God the Father are **ONE** in nature, power, and authority, all three persons of the Trinity work together in the things of nature, providence, and grace, including ordaining and calling men to this office of an Apostle to the church. This statement serves to confirm the Divine authority under which Paul acted as an Apostle. The fact that “***God the Father***” “***raised Him from the dead***” also countered the false teachers argument that Paul wasn’t an apostle because he hadn’t seen or spoken with Christ like Peter, James, or John. Unlike them, Paul was called to his office after Christ’s “accomplished death” and resurrection, not called to the office as the others during Christ’s time of humiliation. **Think about it:** Christ **APPEARED** to Paul in His glorified and risen state, making and appointing Paul as His apostle to the Gentiles - **Look over at Acts 26:13-18.** As an “*apostle*” (which means ‘a messenger or delegate sent forth by orders’), Paul was faithful to his heavenly ordination and Christ’s command, carrying forth the Gospel to the Gentiles - “*For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which [was bestowed] upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*”(I Cor.15:9,10)

Look at Vs.2 – By this phrase – “*and all the brethren which are with me*” could be a reference to those brethren in the churches he was currently preaching when he wrote the letter, or it could be a reference to all his fellow-laborers in the Gospel, which he sometimes mentions by name in his other epistles. Either way, the importance of the statement is the same - Paul wrote it and is sending greetings from himself and the “**BRETHREN**”. That word “*brethren*” means ‘a brother, whether born of the same two parents or only of the same father or mother’. Whoever he intended by these words, they **ALL** shared the same Father – God the Father; were regenerated by the same grace; belonged to the same family and household of God; and were heirs together of the grace of life. Paul sends their greetings as brethren “*unto the churches of Galatia.*” The phrase “*unto the churches*” means ‘a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place’. In other word, those called by God the Holy Spirit through the declaration of the Gospel to faith in Christ as “***the Lord our RIGHTEOUSNESS.***” Paul was writing this to those in the “**churches**” (**plural**) scattered in the regions of Galatia where he had preached the Gospel, where many had

believed the Gospel, and now were being “**bewitched**” by these false teachers concerning the Gospel they professed to believe.

So how did Paul respond to this error that was occurring in the churches of Galatia? “**Grace** [be] *to you and peace from God the Father, and* [from] *our Lord Jesus Christ.*” This kind of greeting seems strange to the world and was never heard **BEFORE** the preaching of the Gospel. These **TWO WORDS**, “**grace**” and “**peace**” express everything necessary for the true, Christian life. The word translated “**grace**” means ‘good will, loving-kindness, favour’. Here’s the same word used to describe the **ONE** who is eternal life – “*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*”(Jn.1:15-17) The word translated “**peace**” means ‘the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God’. Here’s the same word used again to describe the **ONE** who is “**our PEACE**” – “*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this [shall be] a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth PEACE, good will toward men.*”(Lk.2:10-14) “**GRACE**” releases the objects of God’s love from the guilt, penalty, and condemnation of sin, while “**PEACE**” with God quietens the conscience of those who have been given “**GRACE**”. I like the way Martin Luther spoke of this in his commentary on Galatians – “The **TWO FIENDS** that torment us are **SIN** and **CONSCIENCE**. But Christ hath vanquished both these monsters, and trodden them under foot, both in this world and that which is to come.” These **TWO ESSENTIALS** of “*the faith of God’s elect*” are attributed to **GOD ALONE**, both the Father and the Son – “**Grace** [be] *to you and peace from God the Father, and* [from] *our Lord Jesus Christ.*” In other words, the **ABSOLUTE FIRST CAUSE** of “**grace**” and “**peace**” is God. Isn’t that how God **DESCRIBED** Himself when Moses asked God “*to show me thy glory?*” “*And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*”(Exo.33:17-19) That’s God’s **NAME** – “*And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear [the guilty]; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth [generation]. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.*”(Exo.34:5-8) **LISTEN TO ME VERY CLOSELY:** These Galatian believers to whom Paul was writing had confessed Christ and called on **THIS NAME**, and by doing so they had exhibited at least a mental agreement to the truth of justification by faith alone. But now they were being seduced away from the hope of their profession, and being instructed that salvation was **CONDITIONED** on what the sinner does, not on what Christ **DID FOR THEM**. So Paul greets them, not with threats of condemnation and alienation, but with a reaffirmation of “**GRACE to you.**” But he also greeted them with “**PEACE to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus**

Christ." Apart from God's infinite holiness and justice being **PERFECTLY SATISFIED**, there can be **NO PEACE!** But here's the **THING**: God had satisfied Himself through the accomplished work of redemption by His dear Son – "*I, [even] I, [am] he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.*"(Isa.43:25) Paul stated it this way to those at Corinth: "*And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*"(II Cor.5:18,19) The **ONLY WAY** a sinner can be united to and have fellowship with God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ is if they are **ASSURED** that they are reconciled to God, and that God is reconciled to them – "*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen [it], and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship [is] with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*"(I Jn.1:1-4) **To state it as simply as I can:** If one has **NO KNOWLEDGE** of "*peace with God*", they can never have **TRUE JOY!**

Let me say this and we'll close: Our Lord said: "*But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*"(John14:26,27) To all those whom the true and living God by His grace has bestowed the gift of life, they **HAVE PEACE** with God. Listen to Paul's words literally translated in **Romans 5:1,2** – "**Having been declared righteous, then, by faith, we have peace toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have the access by the faith into this grace in which we have stood, and we boast on the hope of the glory of God.**" (**Young's LITERAL Translation**)

We'll come back next week and look at Paul's next works concerning the foundation upon which the grace and peace stand!