

“A Legitimate Messenger”

Galatians 1: 11-24

April 14, 2024

Focal Point:

Today in our passage of Scripture we are going to see things that make someone a legitimate messenger for God. Paul did this because he was writing a letter of instruction to them but he wanted to share evidence with them why his instructions should be listened to. He was laying claim to the legitimacy of his ministry. Paul was letting the Galatian churches know why he was legitimate as a messenger of God. In the end, it was very simple. He had the scent of God on him. It was obvious by his life that he was connected to Jesus.

Share with your group to open:

Is it obvious by how I live that I am connected to Jesus?”

GALATIANS 1: 11-24

¹¹ I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. ¹² I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. ¹³ For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴ I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵ But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being. ¹⁷ I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus. ¹⁸ Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas^[b] and stayed with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother. ²⁰ I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie. ²¹ Then I went to Syria and Cilicia. ²² I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. ²³ They only heard the report: “The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.” ²⁴ And they praised God because of me.

Background:

The false teachers were trying to damage Paul's influence over the Galatian churches. They said he was not a legitimate messenger of Christ. On the surface, this seemed to make sense. They did not consider to have authority since he was not one of the original disciples of Jesus. They also did not like his message because he focused on getting the gospel to non-Jewish people.

Leader should read Luke 10: 25-39 about the Good Samaritan

THE SOURCE OF HIS FAITH (vv. 11-12) Have someone read verse 11-12

Leader: Watch the sermon again regarding the water in Haiti.

Questions to ask:

1. Are you as picky about your faith walk as you are your water selections? Bottle only, flavored, chlorine free, only from the refrigerator for filtered water, never the faucet, prefer the rubber hose taste? Are you as concerned and careful about your spiritual food?

Have someone read 1 Corinthians 15: 1-4

Questions to ask:

1. Do you feel the need to follow the Old Testament laws? If so, why?
2. If you are saved, explain why you let others convince you to do more to be saved?
3. How do you respond when someone tells you where or how to focus on something other than Jesus?
4. Do you focus on the clean water or the contaminated teaching.

Have someone read Titus 3: 3-7

Paul was legitimate because his source was Jesus. The pure source.

THE TESTIMONY OF HIS FAITH (vv. 13-17) Have someone read verses 13-17

Questions to ask:

1. What was Paul's former life? Discuss the details of his duties before he became a believer.

Have someone read Philippians 3: 4-6 and Acts 8: 3

Paul had a dramatic turnaround in his life. He was a leader in persecution of Christians for the Jews. Jesus saved him and assigned him the mission to preach the good news to the Gentiles.

Have someone read Acts 10: 28

Questions to ask:

1. Describe how you lived prior to Christ.
2. Describe how you live now in Christ.
3. How do you examine the resume / history / life style of people's lives that have an influence on your life?
4. How does your identity in Christ matter?

Have someone read Ephesians 2: 22-24 and 2 Corinthians 5: 17

THE WORK OF HIS FAITH (vv. 18-24) Have someone read verses 18-24

Here Paul even gives the timeline of his faith journey.

Have someone read Act 9: 26-28

Questions to ask:

1. How do you respond to a believer that you are not sure about?
2. If you are perceived as a questionable believer, who would vouch for you?
3. Who would you vouch for?

Have someone read 2 Peter 3: 15 and James 2: 18-20

Many have tried to discredit Paul. He addresses sexual purity, marriage, homosexuality in his letters to us. These topics are still in conflict with today's world. But remember he did not write these things all by himself. Jesus appointed him, the Spirit filled him as directed by Christ.

Questions to ask:

1. When was the last time the world tried to discredit your faith? How did you respond?

Recall and discuss the dating app analogy.

1. What is the difference in discrediting yourself verse others discrediting you?

Conclusion:

Paul showed he was a legitimate messenger of God because of the source of his faith, the testimony of his faith, and the work of his faith. This is really a good guide for us on a couple of levels. Christians need to use the same test for Paul's legitimacy for leaders and people who claim to be people of faith. Including yourself. There is a vast shortage of true biblical faith being demonstrated by the church today. If those who claim to be Christian were legitimate in their faith, we would not have the junk going on that we have today.

Things to ponder:

What's the source of your faith? Where does it come from?

What's your testimony and what does your faith produce in your life?

Have you put yourselves under the leadership of culture? If so, repent of that and put yourself under the leadership of God's Word.