

Self-Loath, No More
Galatians 1:1-9

“1Paul, an apostle—sent not FROM men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— 2and all the brothers and sisters WITH me, TO the churches in Galatia:” (Galatians 1:1-2)

In verse 1, Paul talks about how who he is, was determined by God, not people.

People were saying that Paul was not a true apostle because he wasn't walking with Jesus while Jesus was in the flesh, he had a later conversion. But, Paul was convinced that people don't determine who he is, but Jesus Christ and God the Father do.

When you are becoming who God wants you to be, there will be human opposition.

This reminds us that in life, there will always be people who try to discredit us. That's when we have to go back to what God says, thinks, and feels about us, and not get swayed by the opinions of man.

We want it to be God who raises us up, not our people-pleasing.

It's not uncommon, where people like to jockey for positions/platforms even in church. Paul was saying that he did not brown-nose his way into becoming an apostle. If people put you in position, you have to suck up, manipulate to stay in that position. We want it to be God who raises us up, not people. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up (1 Peter 5:6).

We must continually find our identity in God, not people.

I just love how Paul didn't let people determine His identity. Inside the umbrella of your identity is your: purpose and value. He refused to allow people to determine His purpose or value.

It's not a bad question to ask God, "Who am I, you made me, what's my value, what's my purpose?"

- **God is our designer and manufacturer, He knows our purpose.**
- **God is also our redeemer who paid our ransom on the cross of Jesus, He knows our value.**

He knew that His identity came from God. But, He also knew that he needed to be in a community of people (verse 2) ***"to all the brothers and sisters who are with me..."***

We need to be secure in our IDENTITY and we need set in a COMMUNITY.

When we have a healthy sense of identity from God, we can create a healthier community with others. The more you understand your God-given identity, the more you can enjoy your God-given community.

When we are not trying to get our value from our community, we can be more valuable to our community.

My community doesn't determine my identity.

When you know who you are, you don't become an emotional leech, but a resource to your community. Have you ever gotten around people and felt they were screaming for your affirmation. It's draining to be around people who are looking to you for identity. It's refreshing to be around people who already got their identity from God.

Sometimes people bounce from community to community because they try to get their identity from the community, when they should get it from God and bring it to the community.

You get your identity from God and live it out with the people. It's not that you get your identity from people and live it out with God.

In the first two verses of Galatians, we gain insight into Paul's vertical and horizontal relationship.

Paul didn't try to get from people what only God could give him, and he didn't try to get from God what people could give him. He didn't try to get identity from people and make God his only community.

What is our identity according to the God? This study will continue to lead us into profound discovery of our true identity.

“1Paul, an apostle—sent not FROM men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— 2and all the brothers and sisters WITH me, TO the churches in Galatia:” (Galatians 1:1-2)

Paul answered three essential questions about His life's purpose:

- 1) Who He got it FROM (Creator).**
- 2) Who was it to pursue His purpose WITH (Co-workers).**
- 3) Who He was to serve His purpose TO (Cliental).**

When it comes to your own life's purpose: remember that it's **FROM** Him, remember you can't fulfill it alone, we are meant to be **WITH** a team, and identify who you are to serve your purpose **TO**.

Sometimes you and your co-workings may be gelling. Other times it may get a little dysfunctional. But our identity doesn't come from our co-workers.

Sometimes we seem to be making good progress with our cliental. Other times, they seem unresponsive. But our identity doesn't come from them either. Our identity comes from the Creator.

Thank God for the people we are teamed up with, we can't do it alone.
Thank God for the people we need to reach and serve.
But, thank God that neither our co-workers or cliental define who we are.

We need to get our affirmation from God and give service the people.

Sometimes we get this all backwards and we try to get our affirmation from people and give our service to God. That is a *recipe* for burnout.

When you only have customers but you don't have a supplier, you will go out of business fast.

The people are the customers, but God is the supplier.

Paul could not have continued if he didn't get this down. He would not have had longevity in his ministry, if he allowed the affirmation of people to be His supply.

We got to remember not to even get our affirmation from our co-workers or cliental, but from God.

The more you get your affirmation from God, the easier it is to work with your team. It's not my teams job to supply affirmation.

The more you get your affirmation from God, the better we can serve our cliental. It's not my cliental job to supply affirmation.

God is the source of the input and the people are the recipients of the output.

You refuel at the table and release on the toilet. It's not the other way around, you don't eat at the toilet and release on the table. The table is the place of input and the toilet is the place of output.

The table is the place of input and the toilet is the place you pour out what was put in. Remember, God is the table. The people are the toilet. Let's not try to get the input where you are to give the output.

“3Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:3)

Grace has to come before peace.

This peace isn't the peace from weed or wine, it's peace of God, from heaven. If you want to know the peace of God, you need to know the grace of God.

I remember reading an interview between a big-time hollywood star, and he was asked, "What do you really want?" His answer was, "inner peace."

When I forget the grace of God, I forfeit the peace of God. When I lost the peace of God it's because I left the grace of God.

I want to be someone permeating with the peace of God, I want a peace that is contagious, that gets unbelievers curious, yet to access that peace I need to be arrested by God's grace.

Looking back on my journey, when I was truly feasting on His grace, I was definitely releasing His peace everywhere I went.

It's not first peace, then grace.

Peace also speaks wellness and wholeness. Sometimes, we think that we have to reach a place of peace (wellness) and then God looks down on us with favor.

Peace speaks of order. We sometimes try to get our life in order before we allow ourselves to believe in God's grace. God's grace is not a payment for your production, it's not an award for your performance.

Grace speaks of being lovely.

It's not that you get your life in order and He sees you as lovely. It's that He sees you as lovely now, and that's what enables you to get your life in order.

It's not your peace qualifying you for His grace.

It's His grace qualifying you for His peace.

He looks on us with favor now. When we see the grace on His face, it produces peace. **Peace is not something we produce, it's what grace produces.**

We want to experience peace in all three relationships:

- 1) **With God (spiritually)**
- 2) **With ourselves (emotionally/psychologically).**
- 3) **With others (relationally).**

All three relationships are interconnected.

When one breaks down, the others break down.

When you don't feel peace spiritually, you end up losing peace emotionally/psychologically and that effects you relationally.

His GRACE brought peace with God, so we can have peace with ourselves, and live in peace with others.

What did His grace accomplish?

“4who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (Galatians 1:4-5)

On the cross, Jesus crossed-out my sin record. I'm free from my sins **(Romans 6:11): “So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”**

“The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’” (John 1:29)

We could not have taken them away. We could only ignore our sins but we could not irradiate them. It was the will of our God and Father do dissolve our sins on the cross. Glory to God.

To what He's done for us, we ought to declare “Amen.”

Not, I'll make it up to you. Not, I'll pay you back; but AMEN- which means “I see it, I believe it, I receive it...”

The grace of God brings peace in all three relationships:

- 1) **With God (spiritually)**
- 2) **With ourselves (emotionally/psychologically).**

3) With others (relationally).

What we hate in/about ourselves, we hate in/about others.
 Whatever we are harshest with, we may be harboring within.
 What I despise in me, I will attack in you.

When Adam felt guilt and shame, he attacked his wife.
 When Eve felt guilt and shame, she attacked the serpent.
 They had to attack someone else, because if they put the spotlight on another, at least it is not on them.
 We see that all three relationships broke-down together.

We see that when there was no self-loathing, Adam and Eve dwelt in harmony with each other. They were naked and unashamed. They could be real with each other and they didn't need to attack each other. Yet, when and where there is self-loathing, we cannot be real with each other, instead we attack each other.

We keep everyone at a distance, we don't want to be known, for that is scary. We are an enclosed fortress, and we have cannons pointing out. We attack freely, but we don't connect easily, and we love poorly.

When Cain wasn't happy with himself because of his own sin-consciousness, he became a murderer. At the core, Cain wasn't most upset with Abel, but himself, he just took it out of Abel.

When we don't love ourselves in a healthy way, we cannot love others either, we use others. We use others by either getting others to feed our ego through: comparison, mockery, association, or even control.

As you can see, when our relationship with self is damaged, we cannot have a healthy relationship with others. Most of the time:

- The reason I have a hard time liking you, is because I have a hard time liking me.
- The reason I'm so unhappy with you, is because I'm so unhappy with me.
- The reason I cannot accept you, is because I cannot accept me.

- When I cannot forgive you, it's because I cannot forgive me.

The cross was about God opening the prison doors of our self-hatred. We don't have to be prisoners anymore. The knowledge of the truth can set us free (John 8:32). The cross was the key, to set us free from self-hatred.

God is now saying,

“There is no reason for you to feel ashamed, I have wiped your sin away. There is no reason to hate yourself, I've received you. There is no need to beat yourself up, I was beaten for you. You no longer need to be tormented by negative thoughts and feelings about yourself, but you can receive my positive thoughts and feelings towards you. There is no need to punish yourself, I've been punished. There is no need to harbor self-resentment, you have been totally forgiven. Now, you are free to be loved by me, to love yourself in a healthy way, and to love others. My grace enables you to experience peace for all three relationships. Now the way you do relationship is going to be very different. Now life is going to be different. Just believe me!”

I was reading a book about self-forgiveness from a Buddhist persuasion and wanted to see how they would address that issue. The book argued, “Forgive yourself, because everything happened for a reason.” The book we subscribe to, teaches, “Forgive yourself, because Jesus irradiated your sins on the cross.”

While this Buddhist/New Age author says “Forgive yourself it was just fate”, Paul would say, “Forgive yourself, because of God's grace.”

I think of the Hymn, “It is Well” and it goes, **“My sin of the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin not in part but the whole, was nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more...praise the Lord, praise the Lord, oh my soul. It is well with my soul...”**

It does more for me, for my heart, for my ability to love God, others, and myself, to know that I can forgive myself, not because it was FATE, but because of GRACE.

“My sin of the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin was just something someone deserved. It was just fate, the universe had it’s way, praise the Karma, praise the Karma, oh my soul...”

It’s more powerful for me, to know that I can forfeit my self-loathing, not because the universe fated it, because the God of the Universe died for my sin and remembers it no more!

I’m glad I’m not singing, “Praise the Karma, praise the Karma, oh my soul... but I get to sing, “Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, oh my soul.”

6I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

They started in grace-oriented and then moved into being works-oriented. We can easily fall into the same trap. I think we believe that God loves us unconditionally when we were spiritual babies, but as we get older, we feel we need to earn His favor now.

Yes, as we grow in the Lord we should know better and do better, but still, whether you are saved one day or 80 years, we all need His grace and it’s only by grace that we could and should relate to God.

My confidence in relating to God and entering into His presence must not be based on my works, but His grace.

8But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God’s curse! 9As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God’s curse!

Paul is furious in the book of Galatians, because people are coming to the Galatians, and telling them lies about God. They were bringing the wrong message, and it was not helping people, but hurting them.

It would lead them back into the prison of self-condemnation, or self-righteousness, and self-centeredness.

Paul spoke a curse upon them, but the truth is that those who don't believe in the grace of God are already in a cursed state.

- Trying tirelessly to please a Deity who is un-please-able is a cursed existence.
- To have a narcissist for your Father and Husband is a cursed existence.
- To never be sure where you stand with your ruler (boss) who has your fate at His fingertips is a cursed existence.
- To be paralyzed in your ability to accept yourself, because you don't know if God accepts you, so you don't know how to be accepting of others is a cursed existence.
- To be unable to forgive yourself, because you don't believe you are forgiven, and being incapable of forgiving others is a cursed existence.
- To feel like a million bucks and trash on the same day, based on how you performed in the rules, regulations, and rituals of your religion is a cursed existence.
- To feel like you have to walk a tightrope, and to fall is to be utterly rejected by God is a cursed existence.
- To feel like you are being graded on the curve, making you so insecure when you get around those who know more, seem to have it together, seem to never sin- is a cursed existence.
- To be so busy judging people instead of loving them, is a cursed existence.
- To feel better about yourself at the expense of another, is a cursed existence.
- To use the Bible to beat up others and self is a cursed existence.
- To self-inflict separation from the presence of God is a cursed existence.
- To pressure yourself to trust yourself to live perfectly is a cursed existence.
- To not know the peace of God is a cursed existence.

Conclusion:

Let's not leave the grace of God, your peace depends on it.

Jesus died for your sins, to bring peace in your relationship with God, now you can have peace in your relationship with yourself, and your relationship with others. He came to reconcile all three relationships. May all three relationships be upgraded by the gospel of His grace.