

## **There Is One Gospel - Week 12**

### **Pastor Matt Dean**

As we conclude our series THERE IS ONE GOSPEL — we have been looking at Galatians for the last 12 weeks together here is an overview of Galatians so we can remember together just how good the good news really is.

There is one gospel --- it's the proclamation of good news about what Jesus has done for those who trust Him.

**Paul begins with his identity. (1:1-2)** This is what God has done – his calling to bear witness as an apostle – is through Jesus Christ and God the Father

### **Paul follows with a gospel reminder. (1:3-5)**

- Grace and peace belongs to you from:
  - God Our Father
  - The Lord Jesus Christ
- Jesus gave himself for our sins
  - To deliver us from the present evil age
  - According to the will of our God and Father
- To Him be the glory forever and ever.

### **Paul addresses the issue of hypocrisy and false teaching (1:6-10)**

- I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel
- NOT THAT THERE IS ANOTHER ONE
- Some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ
- Paul's goal – to honor God, NOT please man.

Paul then shares about former life — being opposed to Jesus, but then being called by God to proclaim Jesus among the nations. Paul's message: There is one gospel - Jesus died in our place, taking our sin and shame, and by grace through faith, gives us new life now and forever.

The issue in Galatia was hypocrisy, and people were adding to what was required to be “saved”, complicating what it means to follow Jesus — and here is some helpful framework as we think about this together.

- Legalism = right behavior with wrong belief
- Hypocrisy = right belief with wrong behavior
- Faith = right belief with right behavior<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Christ Centered Exposition, Galatians 39

Peter and Paul were both apostles of Jesus – both called, both empowered... but there was a moment where Peter caved under pressure, where he was clearly in the wrong, and for the sake of the gospel, Paul opposes Peter to his face, in front of others...

Galatians was written about 5 years after this confrontation (you read about in Acts 15). And Peter would write his letters to the church about 15 years after this confrontation... it was a necessary conflict that preserved the clarity of the gospel.

In the middle of chapter 2 – we see that Paul opposes Peter – and we get to the heart of what it means to trust in Jesus.

Galatians 2:16 says <sup>16</sup> yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

Then, Galatians 2:19 says, <sup>19</sup> For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. <sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

This perspective – truly a vision of what it means to live - is for us to see that we too have been crucified with Christ, that we see and long for Christ to live in us – and the life we now live in these bodies we LIVE by faith in Jesus who loves us and gave himself for us. This is at the heart of what it means to trust in Jesus. We are LIVING TO God.

Moving into Galatians 3 – Galatians 3:13-14 says “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us - for it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree – so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.”

We believe this – that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us and that we are saved from ourselves and saved to God by our faith, our trust, our dependence upon the person and work of Christ. Because, we are living by faith TO GOD...

Paul is reminding the church that salvation is not by works, not by keeping the law, not by holding on to Jewish customs – but rather by seeing that Jesus is enough for anyone and everyone who believes in Him.

Paul then tries to help followers of Jesus understand their relationship with the law – what does it do? How do we see it now? Many Christians today still struggle to understand this now too.

Galatians 3:21-26. <sup>21</sup> Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! **For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.** <sup>22</sup> **But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.** <sup>23</sup> Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. <sup>24</sup> **So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be**

**justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, <sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.**

Why the Law?

For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. <sup>22</sup> But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

The Law is like a magnifying glass == revealing the rebellion of humanity that already exists. The law did not create rebellion – but it does capture its severity and holds our hand like a guardian, leading us to Jesus.

The law was our guardian (gk lit ‘to guide and to help’ or ‘to help by leading’ or ‘to care for by leading.’<sup>2</sup> – Leading us to the cross – leading us to say, we need a savior, leading us to cry out in faith - Jesus. We trust you!

The law literally helps you to the cross – leads you to the cross – guides you to the cross and Jesus invites you to trust what He did on the cross.

>>> Can I invite you today to consider your understanding of what it means to be right with God? Do you trust in your ability, your good works, your good efforts... or do you trust Jesus? Has the law, has the guardian, led you to the cross – convinced that you indeed need Jesus?

Not only does the law lead us to the cross where we see in faith what Jesus has done for us, but now we see that HOW we relate to God changes too...

Paul writes in Galatians 4:4-7 what happened...

*4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.*

Your identity as God’s sons and daughters has been proclaimed by the HIGHEST authority, paid for at the HIGHEST of prices, been determined by the MOST HONORABLE judge, and guaranteed by the HOLY SPIRIT of God. Your hope and your future belong to Jesus. He is your confidence and knowing Him is the goal!

This is why Paul keeps saying there is ONE gospel. This is what Paul was defending — that by grace through faith — we could know God in such a personal way as his dearly loved children.

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<sup>2</sup> Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). In *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 465). United Bible Societies.

Galatians 5 reminds us of what is at stake when we forget what Christ has done and what happens when we fail to trust that Jesus is enough?

### **Galatians 5:1**

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

*John Stott said “The Christian freedom Paul describes is freedom of conscience, freedom from the tyranny of the law, the dreadful struggle to keep the law with the aim of winning the favour of God. It is the freedom of acceptance with God and of access to God through Christ.”<sup>3</sup>*

Paul’s point – if you think that circumcision is required for salvation, then what Jesus has done is of no value to you. You are trading his scars for one of your own. You don’t think Jesus is enough.

Either you believe that salvation is a gift from God – something He has done for you OR you believe salvation is by some impossible human achievement of good works.

Galatians 5:5-6 says

<sup>5</sup> For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. <sup>6</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

We ourselves wait eagerly for the hope of righteousness.

We wait in hope.

We believe Jesus counts for everything we need.

We work out our faith in love. Our faith – expresses itself in love.

We love because we have faith in Christ.

We obey because we believe Jesus IS enough.

Galatians 5:7 is a reminder that people can be misled... that faithful followers can cave to fear, social pressure and false teaching...

<sup>7</sup>You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?

People “running well” are people that understand God’s grace in their lives – who are daily seeking to know, love, and glorify Jesus with gratitude in their hearts, who know what it means to keep in step with the Holy Spirit of God – people running well will be loving, joyful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and self-controlled. That kind of living points to Jesus living in his people!

In Galatians 6 – we see what it looks like to care for one another in gentleness and humility, and the reminder that we reap what we sow, and to NOT grow weary in doing good!

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<sup>3</sup> Stott - The Message of Galatians p102

Galatians 6:1 says Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

Galatians 6:9 says, “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

And then finally — get to the last verses... it’s clear. Our boast — our true and living confidence is in Jesus.

Galatians 6:11–18 (ESV): Final Warning and Benediction

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. 12 It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. **14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.** 15 **For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.** 16 And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

17 From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

Tim Keller “*Through the person and work of Jesus Christ, God fully accomplishes salvation for us, rescuing us from judgment for sin into fellowship with him, and then restores the creation in which we can enjoy our new life together with him forever.*”<sup>4</sup>

Martin Luther wrote, “To be convinced in our hearts that we have forgiveness of sins and peace with God by grace alone is the hardest thing.”

Spurgeon wrote, “When I thought God was hard, I found it easy to sin; but when I found God so kind, so good, so overflowing with compassion, I smote upon my breast to think that I could ever have rebelled against One who loved me so, and sought my good.”

John Piper says, “The gospel is not a way to get people to heaven it is a way to get people to God... ‘Behold your God’ is the most gracious command and best gift of the gospel.”<sup>5</sup>

Paul says — But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

This statement reaffirms that he would not see his life apart from Christ — that he would see his life as crucified with Christ — and the live he lives he lives by faith in Jesus because he knows that he loves him and gave himself for him. There is one gospel. Salvation truly is a gift from God.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.acts29.com/tim-keller-explains-the-gospel/>

<sup>5</sup> John Piper, *God is the Gospel*, 47.

I'll close this message with these two reminders:

*Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV): 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

*Salvation = Gift and Boasting = in Jesus. This is WHAT HE HAS DONE.*

*<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

*(2 Co 5:17–21)*

*ALL THIS IS FROM GOD.*

*RECONCILED US TO BE MINISTERS OF RECONCILIATION*

*FOR OUR SAKE HE MADE HIM TO BE SIN SO THAT IN HIM WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD*

