

There Is One Gospel

Galatians (Gal 1:1-10)

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Greeting

"¹ Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—² and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—⁷ not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

¹⁰ For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. "

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

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."*¹

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."*²

¹ <https://www.acts29.com/tim-keller-explains-the-gospel/>

² John Piper, *God is the Gospel*, 47.

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 (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
- If anyone (a person or even an angel) -- says otherwise let them be cursed
 - *Lit: anathema = the curse of God resting upon anything or anyone marked for destruction*
- Paul's goal – to honor God, NOT please man.

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.

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ 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)

How can we apply these things to our everyday lives? What does it mean for you to see your primary identity as known and loved by Jesus? This is Paul's starting point – he does not see himself apart from Christ? What is your starting point?

If you need grace – it's yours in Jesus. **The true gospel magnifies the free grace of God – his free and unmerited favor – on you through Jesus.**

If you need peace, it's yours in Jesus. **The true gospel magnifies your peace with God – we are justified (declared righteous) by faith so that we HAVE peace with God.**

Grace and peace belong to you if you believe this: Jesus gave himself for your sins. Jesus gave himself for your sins to deliver you from the penalty of sin and this present evil age and give you new life with Him forever.

This is the starting point for HOW we live as a new creation in Christ – where true obedience is met with corresponding power for obedience with joy. (literally being compelled by the love of Christ).

This is what Paul was defending – that we cannot add to the work that Jesus has done in our place --- we live from His work, through the Spirit as we are transformed by Him. Not as Jews or Gentiles, but as new creations in Christ Jesus. When we rest in what Christ has done – this is an active, faithful, vibrant, dynamic way of trusting God in all of life.

If you are not trusting in Jesus – what are you trusting in? If you are not confident in God's grace – what are you confident in? Does your faith/confidence/trust point to what you have done or can do... or does your faith point to what Jesus has done?

God calls us to believe Him; to trust Him – and in trusting Him - we honor Him.

²⁸ Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" ²⁹ Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." ³⁰ So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' " ³² Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. ³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

(Jn 6:28-40)

In 1534, a man named John Calvin wrote this beautiful description of the gospel centered life.

“Without the gospel everything is useless and vain; without the gospel, we are not Christians; without the gospel, all riches is poverty, all wisdom folly before God; strength is weakness, and all the justice of man is under the condemnation of God. But by the knowledge of the gospel we are made children of God, brothers of Jesus Christ, fellow townsmen with the saints, citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, heirs of God with Jesus Christ, by whom the poor are made rich, the weak strong, the fools wise, the sinner justified, the desolate comforted, the doubting sure, and slaves free. It is the power of God for the salvation of all those who believe. It follows that every good thing we could think or desire is to be found in this same Jesus Christ alone.

For, he was sold, to buy us back; captive, to deliver us; condemned, to absolve us; he was made a curse for our blessing, a sin offering for our righteousness; marred that we may be made fair; he died for our life; so that by him, fury is made gentle, wrath appeased, darkness turned into light, fear reassured, despisal despised, debt canceled, labor lightened, sadness made merry, misfortune made fortunate, difficulty easy, disorder ordered, division united, ignominy ennobled, rebellion subjected, intimidation intimidated, ambush uncovered, assaults assailed, force forced back, combat combated, war warred against, vengeance avenged, torment tormented, damnation damned, the abyss sunk into the abyss, hell transfixed, death dead, mortality made immortal.

In short, mercy has swallowed up all misery, and goodness all misfortune. For all these things which were to be the weapons of the devil in his battle against us, and the sting of death to pierce us, are turned for us into exercises which we can turn to our profit.

If we are able to boast with the apostle, saying, O hell, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? it is because by the Spirit of Christ promised to the elect, we live no longer, but Christ lives in us; and we are by the same Spirit seated among those who are in heaven, so that for us the world is no more, even while our conversation is in it; but we are content in all things, whether country, place, condition, clothing, meat, and all such things. And we are comforted in tribulation, joyful in sorrow, glorying under vituperation, abounding in poverty, warmed in our nakedness, patient amongst evils, living in death. This is what we should in short seek in the whole of Scripture: truly to know Jesus Christ, and the infinite riches that are comprised in him and are offered to us by him from God the Father.”³

³ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/john-calvins-beautiful-description-of-the-gospel-centered-life/>

Questions for community groups:

What does it mean for you to see your primary identity as known and loved by Jesus? This is Paul's starting point – he does not see himself apart from Christ? What is your starting point?

Do you trust God? If you are not confident in God's grace – what are you confident in? Does your faith/confidence/trust point to what you have done or can do... or does your faith point to what Jesus has done?

Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." (John 6:29). Why does believing God feel like work sometimes?

Paul greets the churches with "*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*" How are you experiencing God's grace? What does it mean for you to have peace from God and peace with God through trusting Jesus?