

TB – A Gospel for Everyone Changing Everything

Galatians 2:1-21

10/31/21

Have you ever heard the name – **Charlie Chaplin**? He was an English actor/comic who rose to fame in the era of silent film to become the first actor in America to attain superstar status. He was most famous for his role “*the tramp*” which you might remember as the sweet, little man in the bowler hat w/ a cane. The tramp became so popular, communities everywhere would hold look-alike contests. On one occasion when in San Fran, Chaplin stumbled across one of these contests – and as a joke, quietly entered it. Amazingly though, he failed to make the finals! The judges decided (5) other men looked more like Charlie Chaplin than Charlie Chaplin did! Even though, Charlie Chaplin was literally staring the judges in the face.

I think this occurs far too often w/in Christianity – that is, we miss the truth for an imposter. We think being a Christian is one thing, when it’s actually another.

Example – if we were to walk into a local restaurant and begin asking people what is a *good Christian*, we’d get answers like, a good Christian goes to church, is moral, prays, gives/serve the poor, etc. IOW – we’d define a person’s faith by the outward religious actions they performed. Yet this is **NOT** what the Bible teaches. The Bible defines a Christian as someone who has been rescued by God’s grace thru faith – who now, follows in the footsteps of Jesus being Jesus to others.

This is the message of Galatians – that is, there’s nothing anyone can do to rescue themselves from their sinful condition – no amount of human achievement, no amount of religious activity makes a difference. Instead, *a person can only be rescued by placing their faith in the truth that God graciously initiated a rescue mission on their behalf by sending Jesus to die on the cross to make a full atonement for their sin.*

Last week, we began a new series in Galatians entitled, **Truth Bombs**. In this series, were looking at some of the most explosive spiritual truths in Galatians that when dropped not only can change our *earthly* lives, but also our *eternal* destinies. Last week, we looked at the atomic bomb that there’s only one Gospel – that Jesus is the only way to God. B/c if true, then every other way is a lie – a cul de sac/dead-end. We also discussed how **Jesus + anything = nothing** while **Jesus + nothing = everything**.

As we continue our study today, I want to look at a 2nd Truth Bomb that’s closely connected to the 1st one. **TBH** – I wanted to entitle this 2nd bomb as – *it’s better to go to church w/ a few hypocrites than to hell w/ all of them; or if a hypocrite comes b/w you/God, always remember the hypocrite is closer to God than you are*. But since that might’ve have offended someone, I decided to be a little more spiritual – **the true Gospel is for everyone, everywhere and changes everything**.

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, b/c he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he used to eat w/ the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to pull back and separate himself from the Gentiles b/c he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw they were not acting in line w/ the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs? We who are Jews by birth and not sinful gentiles know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So, we too, have put our faith in Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, b/c by the works of the law no one will be justified. “But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we Jews find ourselves also among the sinners, doesn’t that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! If I rebuild what I destroyed, then I really would be a lawbreaker. For thru the law I died to the law that I might live for God. I have been crucified w/ Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. For I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained thru the Law, then Jesus died for nothing.” Galatians 2:11-21

In this text, we get a glimpse into the truth – the Gospel *is for everyone, everywhere changing everything*.

To appreciate this passage, let's review the context. Paul was in the church at Antioch that had both Jewish and Gentile members – and it was God's grace alone that was the glue holding these factions together. Evidently, Peter came from Jerusalem for a visit – and at first, he was getting along just dandy hanging out and eating w/ Gentile Christians. He didn't even object to barbecue pork being served. That is, until an entourage of Jewish leaders showed up. Suddenly, our boy Pete became so Pharisaical. he started ghosting the Gentile believers he'd been hanging w/ – and this reversal in behavior made Paul's blood boil – he was (KJV) ticketh off. So, Paul called Peter out.

When I saw they were not acting in line w/ the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"
Galatians 2:14

I The Gospel is for **EVERYONE**

Tucked inside this encounter is a critical truth for all of us – and that is, *the Gospel is for everyone*. It wasn't just for the Jews, no more than it is just for Baptists, Catholics, or Pentecostals. In fact, God's grace is as much for the lost man/woman as it is for the ones who've already been found. It is for EVERYONE!

Now, *let's connect the dot*. Last week, we talked about how there's **only ONE Gospel** – that is, there's only one means for a person to be forgiven of sin and enter into an eternal relationship w/ God – which is thru the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus on the cross.

Meaning – *salvation is found in no one else – for there is no other name under heaven given to man by which we must be saved.* Acts 4:12 – and His name is **JESUS**.

As Jesus said – *I am the one/only way, the one/only truth, and the one/only life – and no one, not even one, can enter into a relationship w/ God except thru Jesus.*

So, as discussed last week, a cursory view of such a statement might appear *exclusive*; but in reality, if it is true, then Jesus' death/resurrection is the greatest, most *inclusive* act ever offered to humankind.

Why? B/c God's grace is for everyone, everywhere. Jesus entered time/space and died on an old, rugged cross for everyone. I'm certain this is what Jesus had in mind in His exchange w/ Nicodemus when He said – *for God so loved the world that He gave...*

SEE – salvation, grace, forgiveness is **available** to everyone thru the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

In Him we have redemption thru His blood the forgiveness of sin. Ephesians 1:7

Thus, *no mater who you are, where you're from, or what you've done* – whether you are red, yellow, black or white – God's love/grace is available to you – if you will believe/receive that Jesus and the cross are God's one/only solution to the problem of sin.

This is Paul's point to these believers at Antioch. It didn't matter if you're a Jew or Gentile – or something else – Jesus was for everyone, everywhere.

There's a big truth to be remembered – *while Jesus is available to everyone, not everyone will accept Him*. Everyone is invited, yet not everyone will believe.

We know from Scripture/experience that not everyone will trust in Jesus. Sadly, many will turn away. Around the world today, there are people sitting in churches who are cold to Christ, harboring unrepentant hearts, and being deceived into thinking their good deeds (or something else) will get them to heaven. Even worse, there are people *not* in churches who refuse to bend their knees and bow their hearts to accept Jesus. ***Yet it's not b/c God hasn't done everything w/in His power to make it possible for them to be saved.***

In Jesus, God has done everything necessary to rescue to most harden of sinners to be forgiven/set free – and it's available to anyone and everyone who'll believe.

But the Gospel isn't just for ***everyone*** – it also changes ***everything*** for everyone who believes/receives it.

II The Gospel Changes **EVERYTHING**

I have been crucified w/ Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. For I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained thru the Law, then Jesus died for nothing.

WOW! What a statement. *If a person could ever fully grasp its meaning, it'd radically transform their lives.*

Hopefully, I can provide us w/ a little insight into this majestic truth to help us thrive in our walk w/ Jesus.

A We Experience the **EXECUTED** Life

I have been crucified w/ Christ,

crucified with – to affix/nail to a cross w/ another.

In crucifixion, a man was stretched out on a wooden cross-beam, pierced w/ nails thru his wrists/ankles, and then dropped into the ground where he'd be left to die an excruciating death of asphyxiation.

So, the idea here is that by some supernatural, divine means, we've been *co-crucified* w/ Christ. Somehow in some way, thru the transaction of salvation, we've experienced spiritual death thru His physical death – and God has transformed us thru His death to life.

This is part of the miraculous mystery of salvation. As we're all born into Adam's family, and thus, dead in our trespasses/sin, thru our faith response to the sacrifice of Jesus, we too die and are made alive.

This is a deep, powerful truth. Somehow, when I believe in the work of Christ, His physical crucifixion becomes my spiritual crucifixion – and a part of me dies w/ Him. My old, sinful nature is pierced as He was – and miraculously, by His wounds I am healed. And in this death, a great exchange occurs.

B We Embrace the **EXCHANGED** Life

and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me...

5-yr old little Bobby who went to the doctor for a check-up. As the doc examined his ears, he asked, "Am I going to find Elmo in here?" Bobby said, "No!" Then, as the doc examined his throat, he asked, "Am I going to Blue in here?" Again, Bobby said, "No!" Then, as the doc placed his scope on his chest to listen to his heart, he asked, "Am I going to find Barney in here?" W/ an honest innocence, Bobby said, "No sir. Jesus is in my heart. Barney is on my underwear."

For the Christian, there's a great lesson here? B/c of the miracle of salvation, not only is our old life executed, but an amazing **exchange** takes place; and now God lives in us thru the ministry of the H.S. – *I now no longer live, b/c now, Jesus lives in me.*

Let me explain. At the very moment of salvation, we exchange our old life for God's new life. God deposits the H.S. into us and we're both indwelt/filled by the H.S. In so doing, we exchange *our sin for His grace, our way for His way, our ambition for His mission, and our will for His will.* We exchange our life for His life.

This exchange is **positional/practical**. Positionally, my identity and destiny changes. I go from *being lost to being found, from being dead to being alive, from being not of God to being in Christ, and from being condemned to hell to having the promise of heaven* – b/c thru the indwelling of the H.S. we **exchange** our sin for His forgiveness, our guilt for His grace, our bondage for His emancipation, and our identity for His sonship. All b/c God has taken up residence w/in me and now has jurisdiction over my entire person/life.

If anyone is in Christ, they have become a new creation, the old is gone, and now, all things have become new.
2 Corinthians 5:17

And now, b/c of this great, divine exchange, I now have a **responsibility** to live out this exchanged life until my death or until Christ's return – all b/c I have been crucified w/ Christ, I no longer live – and it is all b/c Jesus now lives in me wanting to live thru me.

This is where it gets challenging, b/c while I have experienced this exchange, until Christ returns, I'm going to wrestle w/ my flesh until final transformation.

Galatians 5 speaks to this saying the *flesh sets its desires against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.* **IOW** – eternally, I'm good w/ God, but on earth – I'm still waging war w/ my flesh. So, to help us, God has filled us w/ His H.S. to empower us to walk in victory this side of heaven.

C We Engage in the **EMPOWERED** Life

The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me...

When I think of living **empowered**, I think of the flow of electricity. Now, TBH, I'm not big on electricity, b/c I don't understand it. I just know that if I mishandle it, it'll be a *shocking* experience (Ba-dump-dump).

Actually, in my lifetime, I've built a few houses, so I've come to realize in the U.S., electricity runs on 110/220-volt circuits. The 110-circuit handles the lights/smaller appliances whereas the 220-circuit takes care of the bigger appliances like the stove and AC.

If you've ever traveled internationally, you know that many countries run on 220-volt circuits – so if you plug in you U.S. small appliances w/out a convertor, it will likely burn it out – which has happened to me. In a similar manner, if you plug your 220-appliances into a 110-circuit, they're going to grossly under perform.

Point – in the Christian life, we're wired for 220. That is, **Galatians 2:20**. This verse tells us that we're wired by God to live empowered/energized lives. So, *it's not I who live but Christ lives in me thru me – and the life I live, I live by faith* (that is – I **abide** by living in alignment under God's influence). As we abide, His power flows thru our lives by way of the H.S. so that we produce a God-fruit that impacts/influences others.

For the believer, abiding is everything. It's in abiding that we bear fruit and walk worthy of the Lord pleasing Him in every way. BUT apart from Him, we can do nothing. Thus, the abiding life is living in constant surrender/submission to God. It's not doing my best for Him asking Him to bless it, it's living under His influence

responding to His guiding direction. It's living plugged into His power so His life in me empowers His life thru me for His glory/purposes.

Stuart Briscoe used to say the Christian life goes thru (4) stages. In **stage 1**, when we trust Christ, we say, "Oh, this is easy! All I have to do is repent and ask Jesus to come into my life." But then, as we begin to grow, in **stage 2**, we learn that God expects us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him – and we quickly discover this is far more difficult than we first thought. In **stage 3**, after trying/trying, we realize that Jesus' commission is impossible – and we can either surrender or try harder. If in this confession we choose surrender, it is then and only then, we reach **stage 4** and begin to appreciate Paul words in Galatians 2:20.

TAKEAWAYS

The love and grace of God, the Gospel, is for everyone, everywhere and not just for a select few.

It is impossible to live the Christian life in my ability, power, or ingenuity – it can only be lived through my surrender to God and my willingness to follow the truth of God’s Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

NEXT STEPS

1 Spend time this week in your quiet time or with another person discussing these GROW questions.

G – What does it mean that the Gospel is for everyone, everywhere?

R – Read **Galatians 2:20**. What does it mean that I have been crucified with Christ?

Q – Read **John 15:1-6**. What does it mean to abide in Christ and how does a person abide?

W – Commit this week to spend time every day with God seeking to abide in Him. Reflect on Paul’s prayer to the Colossians in Colossians 1:9-12.

2 Speak to a family or friend this week about what you are learning about the power of the Gospel to transform lives and about what it means to abide.