

Galations #5

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] All right, welcome to our class this morning. This is our February 12 class, and I assume that you fellows have already made appropriate plans for your Valentine. And that would consist of, well, I guess it depends on what your tradition is regarding that, but I am confident you will take care of it, and your Valentine will not be disappointed.

We are in Galatians chapter 1, working our way through the text here, and we have arrived at verse 10, actually, where the Apostle Paul is beginning to present his case as an Apostle of Jesus Christ.

And, fellas, this is going to be a recurrent theme through all of the epistles that Paul writes. Well, perhaps not all of them, but especially with Galatians and with Corinthians, he is going to repeatedly make his case for his calling.

Because what he has to say is definitely linked to his authority and right to say it.

That is, his apostleship. And he is going to have to defend that repeatedly. I trust that you will see the connection and how vital it is that his apostleship and his authority be established, because everything that comes from him is going to be linked to that.

[1 : 32] The issue for the believer, in fact, the issue for the pursuit of truth in any venue, the issue for the pursuit of truth is authority.

Everything rests upon that. What is your authority for what you believe? And in the Scriptures, this is made crystal clear.

And this is why I make so much of the issue of the authority of the Word of God, because everything rises and falls with what you recognize as your authority. And so it is, not only with the Apostle Paul, but with all of those whom God chose to pen Scripture.

And in verse 10, he is saying, For do I now persuade men or God? Who am I trying to please here? Who am I trying to satisfy? For if I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

And the implication there is obvious, is that you can't do both. If you're going to please Christ, if you are going to serve the Lord, it is inevitable.

[2 : 38] You're going to have to displease some people. Because there are two different worlds represented here. There is the world of human thinking and human understanding versus the world that God represents.

And he says, If I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ. Notice how Knox translates that with his rendering. Do you think it is man's favor or God's that I am trying to win now?

Shall I be told now that I am courting the goodwill of men? If after all these years I were still courting the favor of men, I should not be what I am, the slave of Christ.

But I certify you, brethren, verse 11. I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

And I am satisfied, and I just want to inject this here for the record, because I think it is very, very important, and that is this. The gospel that Paul begins to preach, the gospel to which he refers here, has never been preached before.

[3 : 58] Now this is a really important point that we are talking about. I want you to pick up on this. When he says, The gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

Now he is going to be using the phrase in at least three other places where he refers to the gospel as my gospel. Now that is a very curious expression.

Even for an apostle to use, he is going to call it my gospel. Well where does he get off personalizing the gospel that way? What does he mean? He does not mean that the gospel, the good news, originates with him.

But what he does mean is the proclamation of this gospel originates with him. And this is a truth that is generally lost on most of Christendom even to this day.

And what we are saying is, the gospel that Paul the apostle is going to proclaim, the good news that he is going to proclaim, is really different from the gospel that the twelve apostles had been preaching.

[5 : 13] Their gospel was related principally to Israel, the twelve tribes, and Paul's gospel is going to be delivered to Gentiles, to non-Jewish people.

And it doesn't have anything to do with the Sabbath, doesn't have anything to do with circumcision, doesn't have anything to do with keeping the law of Moses. It is a new thing that comes on the scene.

And yet, this is a difficult kind of concept for me to explain, but I'll do the best I can. The gospel that Paul is going to proclaim is not the gospel of the kingdom.

It is the gospel of the grace of God. But what complicates the issue is the fact that justification by faith, based upon grace, has always been the sole vehicle through which God has called men to himself.

It goes all the way back to Adam. Adam and Noah and others were also, and Abraham were justified by faith.

[6 : 31] And Paul makes that very clear when he addresses the issue in Romans chapter 4, when he talks about Abraham being justified by faith. So, in a very real sense, guys, the gospel that the Apostle Paul is preaching, the gospel of the grace of God, is still something that goes all the way back to Genesis.

But what we have with the introduction of the law of Moses, which was imposed exclusively upon the nation of Israel, the twelve tribes of Israel, it set in motion a whole plethora of rules and regulations, all of which really were designed to show to man that he cannot measure up to the requirements that God has.

So, the law becomes a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. The law is designed to show up our imperfections, while it also is a reflection of the holiness and the righteousness of God.

So, while the law was never given to justify or save anyone, it was given to show man that he needs something apart from the law.

He needs justification by faith. And this subject is one that has been around, as I said, from the book of Genesis on, but it became so obscured under Judaism, that was so given over to law-keeping, Sabbath-keeping, circumcision, and all the rest, that much of what Paul is going to be saying is new.

[8 : 12] And yet, it is to be delivered to the Gentiles, and it is going to be opposed by the Jews, because they saw it as anti-Mosaic, an anti-law.

So, try to keep that in mind, if you will, when he says that the gospel, the good news, verse 11, which was preached of me, not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

In other words, I got it straight from Christ. I didn't get it from any of the twelve apostles. And in fact, he goes on here and elaborates on that a little bit. When he says, For you have heard of my conversation, and this King James conversation means your lifestyle, your manner of life, the way you conducted your life on a day-to-day basis.

That's the meaning of the word conversation, and it's a completely different meaning that we assign to the word conversation today. So, don't be thrown by that. In time past, in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure, I persecuted the church of God and wasted it.

That beyond measure means he went above and beyond the call of duty. He went to extreme lengths to persecute the church. His attitude and actions toward these believers who received Jesus as their Messiah, Paul says, his attitude and actions toward them was over the top.

[9 : 52] He went to extreme lengths, and that, of course, is why he was driven all the way to Damascus to pursue them. He said, I persecuted the church of God and wasted it. Philip says, I did my best to destroy it, made havoc of it, laying it waste, strove to root it out.

Because when the apostle, when Saul of Tarsus was on the scene, and in connection with the stoning of Stephen in chapter 7 and everything, Saul of Tarsus saw these fellow Jews of his embracing Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, not only wrong-headed and wrong-directed, but he saw them as a cancer, a moral, spiritual cancer, attaching itself to Judaism and actually threatened to undermine it, to even destroy it if he could.

And he rose to the challenge of fending off this thing that they considered nothing but error and apostasy and dangerous teaching and all the rest of it.

He was personally committed to stamping it out. And he had plenty of assistance and encouragement to do so from the religious establishment of Jews.

And that's what he set about doing and that's why he went all the way to Damascus, left the country, went clear into a foreign country, into Syria, to find these people and bring them back because they had fled there because of the persecution.

[11 : 33] And he says in verse 14, And I profited in the Jews' religion One translates it, I made progress in the Jewish religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen.

And you could just imagine these Jews in the religious establishment patting Saul of Tarsus on the back. Attaboy! Go get him! I tell you, that Saul of Tarsus, he is something.

He is really zealous for the law of Moses. He is God's go-get-em man. Sick him, Saul! Go after them! And they were, of course, encouraging him and elevating him and promoting him and patting him on the back and acknowledging him and talking him up and everything as a model.

I just wish we had more Saul of Tarsus. It would be wonderful. And, of course, he was bathing in all of these accolades and the flesh was eating it up. He was congratulating himself, patting himself on the back for doing God's service.

And remember, the night our Lord was betrayed, as he gathered his twelve apostles together, he warned them. He told them, he said, men, the time is coming when those who would kill you will think they are doing God a service.

[12 : 59] I just want to warn you what's coming. And, of course, we know that that was actually fulfilled in the lives of the apostles. And Saul of Tarsus was doing the best he could to fulfill that.

Beyond measure, I persecuted the church of God and wasted it and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals to my known nation being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

But, and here is another one of those glorious adversities injected into the text. It is the but.

And if you want to study that is immensely rewarding, study the buts in the Bible. because the but always indicates that what is coming is in direct contrast to what has gone before.

And the Greek calls this an adversity. And it means just the opposite is coming. But, when it please God. And you know, virtually everything hinges upon whether or not something pleases God.

[14 : 20] When you examine the evidence as to why there is something rather than nothing, and you ask the question, the philosophical question, why does anything exist?

Why is anything here? Why was anything ever brought into existence in the first place? I can think of only one verse of Scripture, and there may be others that I've overlooked, but I can think of only one verse of Scripture in the Bible that really addresses that.

And it's a statement that is rendered by the four and twenty elders in Revelation four, when they fall down before Him on the throne, and they worship Him, and they say, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive honor, and power, and glory, and majesty, and dominion, for, or because, Thou hast created all things, and by Thy good pleasure, they were and are created.

And that's it. that sums up the whole thing as to why there is something rather than nothing. The word pleasure, of course, is related to the word pleased.

And it simply means God was pleased to create all things. Well, a number of times it does say, please God.

[16 : 03] It says God pronounced everything good, very good. Yeah, in Genesis. But this one verse, and then, that's in Revelation chapter 4, and then in chapter 5, the same four and twenty elders exalt the Lord, and they say that he is worthy to receive honor, etc., etc., for thou hast redeemed all things.

So, the first honor is for creation, and the second is because God was pleased to redeem all things. The first is for creation, and the second thanksgiving is for redemption.

And we live and move and have our being, we all serve at God's pleasure. We exist and have our being at God's pleasure.

And when you stop and think about it, it's a remarkable concept that each of us has the ability to bring pleasure unto our creator.

pleasure, it's kind of difficult to think in terms of our being a puny human being, flawed and failed human being, and yet we have the ability to bring pleasure to God, and we do so, of course, through our attitude and through our actions.

[17 : 42] And Paul is saying here that the rationale for this whole thing, for his being called to an apostleship, is the fact that God was pleased who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace.

It simply pleased God to do that. Within and of himself, God considered that a good thing to do, and that's why he pursued it, and that's why he called Saul of Tarsus.

Any thoughts or comments before we turn the page here? Joe? that Jews needed the law, Moses' law, to show them that they needed Christ and they were wrong.

Right. And do we then, Gentiles, what do we need? Do we have the knowledge of the risen Christ? Is that what we have to convince us?

Do we need to lead redemption? What gives us? Because the law doesn't apply to us. No, that law does not apply to us, but in Romans chapter 2, the law of Moses, you're right, the law of Moses does not apply to us, but in Romans chapter 2, where Paul addresses the issue, well then, the Gentiles, what about the Gentiles?

[18 : 59] And he says, for when the Gentiles, who have not the law, are a law unto themselves, in that they have the law of God written in their hearts.

God is in the law of God and wrong is in bread, inborn, in our being.

We come complete with the knowledge of right and wrong. We all are created with a moral base within us. And even though we do not have the law of Moses, we have that law of God which is implanted in the human heart and everybody has it.

And even those who deny it have it. So, and that's, I think, Romans 2, 14, if I'm not mistaken. Dana? There was a Bible study that I, there was a Sunday school class that I went to earlier, and the lesson in the class was, how do you find what good is?

Now, on the surface, it didn't sound like a dumb question, but when you get into it, it's not easy, and the answer is by going to the Bible, and that defines good, but everybody, whether they're religious or not, has an idea of good, and they're different judges, and it's, there's kind of a revelation to me to realize that good is not so obvious.

[20 : 30] Yeah, the point has been made that if there is no definitive good, then there is no evil. and if there is such a thing as moral rightness, if there is a moral law, if there is a moral imperative, there has to be a source for that.

You cannot have a moral law or a base of morality without a moral law giver. It is absolutely impossible. There has to be a source, and of course, there is a source, and we know that source to be none other than God the Creator, and he has revealed his level of morality in the scriptures.

Dick. Many people now don't want to have any right or wrong, you know what I mean? Yeah. Or moral convictions. Yeah. Well, whatever you want to believe is all right.

There is a moral blending, and it is referred to as relativism, moral relativism. Many people think that morality is determined solely on the basis of what your culture approves or disapproves of.

So, we look at a subject like, well, we'll just pick a hot potato today, same-sex marriage. Well, is same-sex marriage right or wrong?

[21 : 58] Well, the law of the land is increasingly convinced that it is right. So, that makes it right. And if you accept culture or the judge's verdict, etc., as being the ultimate arbiter of right and wrong, then morality is dependent upon shifting moral cultures.

But if there is something that is above that, then that's the thing that we ought to address. And, of course, the secularists and the atheists say there is nothing above that because man is the measure of all things.

and, frankly, that's where we're at now in a relativistic secular society. That's what we're moving toward. Well, guys, I appreciate you being here this morning and thanks a lot for joining us.