

Galations #3

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[0 : 00] We are halfway through January, so we welcome you to the January 15 class of the year 2015, and we have just recently undertaken a verse-by-verse exposition of Galatians.

And in our first four-way into the text, we really didn't get too far. So we'll start with verse 1, and I want you to be advised again that we are utilizing the 26th translation New Testament.

The bold print is based upon the King James Version. Other translations follow. And we've already noted that the author of the book is identified at the very outset, and that is because as the scroll is wound up, you need to know who is writing the letter that you are receiving because it was done in a rolled-up scroll fashion.

And if you did not use the name at the beginning of it, then you had to unroll the scroll and get clear down to the bottom to find out who signed it and who sent it. And that's the way we do today.

But you've got to remember that they always identified themselves at the beginning. So you could just open the scroll and immediately see who the author was. And that's why virtually all of these epistles begin with the name of the author as opposed to it being at the end.

[1 : 25] So Paul, an apostle, which we pointed out, means a sent one, not merely a sent one, but one who is sent with the authority of the one who sent him.

That is a huge difference. There are apostles in the Bible, and there are disciples in the Bible. And a disciple simply means a learner, or one who is under the tutelage of another.

So there are thousands of disciples in the Bible, but there are only a handful of apostles. So we could say, by way of clarification, that all apostles are disciples, but not all disciples are apostles. Apostles were those who were specifically chosen by our Lord, handpicked, if you will, handpicked and given the responsibility of fulfilling the obligations placed upon them by the one who was sending them.

So a good term for us to use as an alternative to apostle would be like an ambassador, someone who is sent by the governing authority.

[2 : 42] And in this case, of course, it is not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.

And all the brethren which are with me unto the churches of Galatia. These are multiple churches. They are churches located in present-day Turkey, which at the time this was written was Asia Minor.

And Asia Minor contains cities like Ephesus, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, etc. These are cities the apostle Paul visited on his first and second missionary journeys, where he communicated the gospel to people who were entirely pagan in their background.

These were not Jews, at least not for the most part. They were Gentiles who were into polygamy. I'm sorry, not polygamy.

Well, they were probably into polygamy too, but they were into polytheism, which was the worship of many gods. They were pagan in their background. And Paul describes these kind of people in Ephesians chapter 2 as being without God and without hope in this present world.

[4 : 03] So those are the kind of people to whom he is writing this letter. After he'd been there, preached the gospel, named some elders, established churches, and then moved on to another area.

Now he is writing back to them, and he's giving them updated information. So it is to all the brethren which are with me unto the churches, plural, of Galatia.

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. While it is true that this is just a standard greeting that was often found at the beginning and sometimes at the ending of New Testament letters, it is also very theologically correct because everything has to begin with

grace.

And these are found in this order for a reason. It is never peace and grace. There's always grace and peace because there is no peace. Unless it is preceded by grace.

Grace provides the basis for peace. And when Paul addresses these believers, he is simply reminding them that as recipients of the grace of God, that's the reason they enjoy peace with God and the peace of God.

[5 : 25] So it is grace be to you and peace. And when he indicates from whom these items come, it is from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

And it's interesting to note because here in the Greek construction of the use of these names, God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ, he is indicating that both of these individuals are full-fledged, legitimate dispensers of this grace and peace.

It is an equalization that is in mind here between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. That isn't so easily picked up on in the English, but it certainly is in the Greek.

And he is saying that which comes from and is dispensed by God the Father is exactly the same thing that is dispensed by and comes from our Lord Jesus Christ.

And he is here reaffirming and establishing the equality of the Son and the Father as being members of that triune Godhead. And our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father.

[6 : 45] And guys, this is the essence of the gospel. This is what it's all about. If sin is not acknowledged and acknowledged, personal sin on behalf of all of us, if sin is not recognized and acknowledged, then there is no basis for the death of Christ.

There is no basis for salvation. And this is why I'm convinced that a lot more of the gospel that needs to be proclaimed isn't really going forth.

And that is this. In order to effectively and faithfully preach the gospel to anyone, you have got to bring out the issue of sin.

And that's where it gets sticky. Because it may make you sound accusatory or condemning or judgmental or whatever. But we need to understand you have to deal with the nasty topic of sin before salvation has any meaning.

Or value. Or even any need. And this is what I refer to as the difficult part of the gospel. This is why the gospel isn't communicated to a lot of people.

[8 : 02] This is why, this is at least a very large reason why we as Christians are often very reluctant to share the gospel. Because the gospel is the solution to a need.

But you have to identify the need. What's the need? The need is our sin. And that's what we would rather not talk to people about because it's a little touchy.

It's difficult. Oh, you're saying I'm not as good as you are. Or you're saying I'm a terrible person. Sin, this is the connotation that often comes with it. And this is what I mean when I say this is the hard part of the gospel.

It is to enable people to understand they have a desperate need that they cannot meet. And if you do not establish the reality of sin, then there is no need for a savior.

And this is precisely why a lot of people do not pursue the claims of Jesus Christ. Because they have this weak-kneed notion that God somehow grades on the curve.

[9 : 10] And I'm as good as most people and not as bad as some. So I think I've got a pretty good chance. And they understand absolutely nothing about the nature of their sin.

And they understand nothing about the nature of the holiness of God. And that's where the problem lies. So we've got to identify the need.

Nobody is going to seek to meet a need when they don't know the need exists. And this is precisely why a lot of people are not seeking Christ.

Years ago, Gypsy Smith used to say, It's so hard to get people saved because you can't get them lost. And if man doesn't realize his lostness, he's not going to seek a savior.

And yet, when we proclaim people's sin, they often get defensive about that and antagonistic about it. This is one reason I've said a lot of times people have to get mad before they get saved.

[10 : 14] And they get mad because you're telling them that they're a sinner. And being a sinner doesn't mean that you are an especially terrible person compared to all the rest of mankind.

But it means that you're just like the rest of us. You're just one of us. A sinner is anyone who is less perfect than God. And that's a pretty good description.

And if you're less perfect than God, you've got a real need. Don't? And that would be about the same as an alcoholic saying I'm not an alcoholic? Yeah, exactly. You know, denial is a huge problem. Denial is a huge problem. Well, I'm not that bad. Oh, yes, you are. You are. Another way to put this, fellas, is look. If you are as pure and as honest and you have as much integrity as Jesus Christ, and you've got nothing to worry about, you're home free.

Now, if that's your category, if you are as good as Jesus Christ, you've got nothing to worry about. Because Christ is God's standard. Jesus measures up to God's standard.

[11 : 25] And if you are as good as Christ, you measure up to his standard, too. Do you think you fit that? And then let people think about that a little bit. Joe? God decides a small sin is just as bad as a big sin?

Well, it is. It is because sin is sin. And, you know, we categorize our sins. Small, medium, and large. And that's the way we look at sin. But as Joe has pointed out, when you're talking about holiness, absolute.

When you're talking about perfection, absolute. That's the standard that God has. God is perfect. His ways are perfect. What do you think his standard is?

His standard is perfection. Perfection. So, if you've got perfection, you've got it made. Don't worry. But have you not heard a lot of people say, now, don't get me wrong.

I'm not perfect. Well, my response to that is, I never suspected for a moment that you were. I'm not perfect.

[12 : 31] But I'm okay. Well, you have to be able to meet God's standard. And God's standard is perfection. And a typical response to that might be, well, that's not fair.

That's not fair. How can God expect anybody to be perfect? Well, he expects you to be perfect because he has provided a way whereby you can be perfect and acceptable in him.

And when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, Christ gives you his perfection. His standard. His standing.

His acceptance with God becomes yours. His, this is what it means to be in Christ. That's why that's so critical. You are either in Christ and you have Christ's perfection.

You are an heir of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Or you are outside of Christ, which is a very precarious position to be in.

[13 : 41] So, everybody is in or out. And when you receive Christ, you receive that which pleases God. You have a standing.

You have a position. We call this positional truth. This is what Paul meant when he said, therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's what it's all about. That's the gospel. Raj? I don't know your beginning thing about, you know, I'm better than most people. It's something in this world where we have access to a huge amount of information daily.

You know, we have crookedness in our government. We have cult religions all over the world. And I just wonder if people get that attitude or cop that attitude more and more.

You know, compared to the next guy, I don't look bad at all. Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. In the older days, it doesn't have been so obvious to them. Yeah.

[14 : 45] Right. Yeah. Absolutely. As I've often said, you look around, you can always find somebody that makes you look good. That's not a problem.

We can all do that. You can always find somebody that makes you look good. Yeah. And that's the basis of comparison that we choose to go with. But, as I said, God doesn't grade on the curve. And He accepts those who are acceptable to Him. And when Paul writes to the Ephesians, he says, wherein He has made us acceptable in the Beloved.

Our acceptance is because of Christ. It's not because of us. Our trust and our faith is in Him. So, this is precisely what he's talking about here. And this is all wrapped up in, Who gave Himself for our sins.

That, to the end that, this is a purpose clause in the Greek, and it means that there is an objective in mind. When Christ gave Himself for our sins, He had a game plan in mind.

[15 : 52] He had something on His mind that He wanted to accomplish when He gave Himself for our sins. And that was that He might deliver us from this present evil world.

Well, looking around this room, it doesn't look to me like you guys are delivered from this present evil world at all. It looks to me like you're right here smack dab in the middle of it. And, in a sense,

we are.

But, while we are in this world, we're not of this world. Because being delivered from this present evil world is a spiritual reality.

It's not a physical reality. We still have to live in a fallen world, even as fallen creatures. But we are redeemed fallen creatures. And our times are in His hands.

This present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father. And all that means is, in my estimation, is that it pleased the Father to send the Son to be the Savior of the world.

[17 : 00] This was how this whole thing came about. Now, there's a song, one of my favorite gospel songs is, at Calvary, and one of the lines is, Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan.

Oh, the grace that brought it down to man. That's where the will of God is involved. The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

We're told, Romans 4, that Christ was delivered. He was delivered up. He was handed over for our offenses.

And He was raised for our justification. Incredible concept. He gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world.

And that, of course, is spiritual. It goes back to the Romans 6 thing, where we are not under law, but under grace, and therefore we are to yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

[18 : 11] And this is all according to the plan that the Father and the Son laid out and agreed upon from eternity past. And as a result, as a result of this, Him giving Himself for our sins and the will of God having devised this plan, Paul's conclusion is, to Him, to whom, be glory.

That is, credit, honor, acknowledgement, recognition. It means that when we glorify God, it means we acknowledge God as being the source of it, and we give Him full credit for it.

Which means we can't take any credit. He gets all the credit. This is the meaning of the word glory.

To whom, be glory, honor, credit, recognition, acknowledgement, forever and ever.

So be it. Yes. And now He has gotten this preliminary introduction out of the way. Any other questions or comments on these first five verses before we go on?

Hey, we're on a roll this morning. Last time we didn't make much progress. But, Rog? You think in God's mind there was ever a time when He was tempted to scrap the whole thing?

[19 : 30] Well, in a sense, in God's mind was there ever a time when He was tempted to just scrap the whole thing? In a sense, that's pretty much what He really came very, very close to doing back in Genesis chapter 6.

And that's exactly what He did with the exception of eight people. In essence, He simply eliminated the population that existed by then and started all over with eight people.

And, of course, it didn't take long for them to mess up things again. And the reason they did is because when Noah and Mrs. Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives stepped on that ark, they didn't leave their old fallen nature behind.

It went right on the ark with them. And when they came out of that ark, it's true, there was a new beginning, but it was a new beginning with existing old natures because they had fallen this before they went on the ark and they had fallen this afterwards.

So, yeah. Wow. Something to think about. Other thoughts or comments? Anyone? Yes. I can't help but think about when they hammered that first nail in Jesus' arm or wherever they started as God the Father.

[20 : 54] I would have had serious doubts. If I had been my son, I'd say, you people are going to hell. I'm sorry. I'm not sacrificing. That love is... Well, it's just completely unfathomable and it's described as the unsearchable love and indescribable love and it is because what we are talking about is a father and sonship connection the likes of which we cannot begin to understand.

And those of you who have sons, I know how dear they are to you as mine is to me. But we are human beings. And when you think in terms of sonship and fatherhood on a level of deity, we just have to kind of drop out because we can't fathom what that is like.

And as dear as the father-son relationship is to us humans, that does not begin to compare with the kind of relationship that did exist and continues to exist within the triune nature of the being of God.

It's just an utterly incomprehensible concept. And the closest we can come is that of a human level.

But it falls far short of what was involved because when you're talking about deity, fellas, you are dealing with infinity.

You're talking about an infinite concept. And none of us has a brain that is capable of assessing an infinite concept. In fact, we don't have a brain that can even assess a finite concept, much less infinite.

[22 : 48] We are all limited in so many ways in our perspective and understanding and it's just amazing. And when you contemplate that the eternal, infinite God essentially interrupted, interrupted the nature and character of His very being in that triune Godhead to somehow separate those entities and one of them to take upon human flesh while maintaining a deity.

Thus making a God-man. Not half a God and half a man, but fully God and fully man in one person the theanthropic individual.

Utterly unique. Nobody ever existed like this before. Nobody ever will afterwards. It's just absolutely mind-boggling. And yet, this is what transpired when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Just absolutely incredible. Other thoughts? Yes. I don't think Abraham and Isaac is the closest we can come to it but Abraham and faith in God that he would raise that.

Yeah. If that's what it took, that's exactly right. And that is a beautiful picture and I'm satisfied that it is established and recognized in the New Testament too in Hebrews and etc.

[24 : 30] The concept between Abraham and Isaac. Yeah. Jeff. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Okay, any other thoughts? Of course, we're going to enter a new section here, and the tempo and the content changes dramatically.

And now you're going to see the Apostle Paul really get down to business. And you talk about calling a spade a spade.

And the Apostle Paul is going to sound very politically incorrect because he's going to call things exactly what they are, and he isn't selling soup.

Verse 6. This is the essence of his writing this epistle. I marvel.

[25 : 53] Now, Weymouth translates it, I am amazed. Norley translates it, I am dumbfounded.

TCNT, 20th Century New Testament says, I am astonished. We could add to that, the Apostle is saying, in effect, I am absolutely bowled over.

I can't believe what I've been hearing from you. Stunned is a good word. Amazed is a good word. Shocked is a good word.

Dumbfounded is a good word. All of these kind of adjectives are expressed by Paul over what is taking place in this church, or these churches of believers, where the Apostle Paul had been, labored, preached the gospel, stabilized these people, and then went on to other areas.

And after having left and gone on to other areas, he starts getting items of information that people are bringing to him about what's going on in these churches at Galatia.

[27 : 15] And it leaves Paul saying things like, What? You've got to be kidding. They what? How could they?

I can't understand this. And he sits down and takes pen in hand, and he is going to address this issue in no uncertain terms.

He pulls out all the stops. Forget about being gentle. Forget about being tactful. Just warm to the issue, because this is of monumental importance.

He sees his very work, his effort, the installation of the gospel, in those churches there at Galatia. He sees them as beginning to come unraveled.

And somebody is pulling on the threads, unraveling the work of the gospel that he planted there in those churches at Galatia.

[28 : 23] And he is letting them know from the get-go how utterly disappointed he is in them. The reason he is doing so is because he, of all people, understood what was at stake.

Now, that is more than you can say for a lot of Christians today. They just don't understand what is at stake. And what is at stake is the distinction between truth and falsehood.

These people are dealing in falsehood and they are not even aware of it. So he says, I marvel that you are so soon removed.

I mean, quickly removed. Good grief! I just left you people not that long ago. And it isn't as though years and years have passed and you somehow settled into this.

This is something that you've done rather recently. And I just can't get over how quickly and how easily you were moved away from what you agreed to when I was there and preached this gospel.

[29 : 39] So here we've got an apostle in severe disappointment and he is registering it with these people. As they read this epistle, I can promise you this, there are going to be some ears that are

really burning because he is not going to mince any words.

And let me tell you, fellas, when something like truth is at stake, there's no time to be pussyfooting around. When truth is at stake, there's no time to melt down your words and sugarcoat them so it goes over easier.

You need to hit this thing full force, frontal attack, no holds barred, let it all out, go for broke. And that's exactly what the apostle is doing.

He is not going to mince words. And by the way, do you think that somebody's feelings are going to be hurt there at Galatia?

You better believe it. Because when truth is at stake, hey, you be as tactful as you can be, but you don't water down the truth.

[30 : 52] The truth hurts. The truth does hurt. The truth hurts if you're holding air. The truth hurts if you're holding air. If a man is stepping out on his wife and two-timing his wife and he gets brought up short for it, you better believe that it hurts.

It's painful. That's the nature of truth. If you are in error, truth always hurts. Someone says, when you throw a rock into a pack of dogs, the one that yelps is the one that got hit.

And he got hit because it hurts, you know? And that's the nature of truth. And Paul is not going to mince any words. He's going to talk in very straightforward language.

And it is powerful. So, hang on to your seat. We'll be going there. And meanwhile, enjoy your breakfast. Pat? Isn't that exactly what we're doing today? Oh, yeah.

Yeah. It is. It is what we're doing today. And we backpedal with the truth. We soften the truth. We melt down the truth. We try to see how we can sugarcoat it and make it easy so we don't offend anybody.

[32 : 02] Don't hurt anybody's feelings. What's the answer to that? Well, the answer to that is you've got to recognize that truth and the communication of it is more important and greater than how it makes people feel.

Because you can't deal with the truth until you've heard the truth. And we need something to deal with. It makes exactly what's going on today. This political correctness and all that is connected.

Dana? In the second verse that uses the word churches, when was the word church first used? I'm sorry? When was the word church first used?

It wasn't used in exile. I don't think that's right. Well, it's used, yeah, it is used in Acts. It is used in Acts. In the original, in the original, it's the word ekklesia.

And it is used, well, the King James has it in Acts chapter 2 and 3, but it isn't there in the Greek at all.

[33 : 05] There is a verse, I think it's Acts 2.47 if I'm not mistaken, and it says something to the effect, and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved, but it isn't that way in the Greek at all.

That's the way that King James translated it in the English, but it's incorrect. And what the verse actually says in the Greek is, and the Lord added to their number such as should be saved.

So, the insertion of church in the King James is not actually correct.