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Faith Bible Church
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<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

Personal Study of the Bible-69
Galatians 1:1-10 – Livid Paul and Lovely Grace

Read Galatians 1:1-10. There are two things I would like to draw attention to in this section; one has to do with Paul's furious attitude toward those who distort the Truth, the other has to do with Christology: Christ's work on the cross. What would you think if you attended a Bible class and witnessed the pastor being absolutely furious against those who would distort Truth? What would you think if you witnessed him, in his rage, calling down curses from God upon corrupters of the Word of God? What if he stridently proclaimed that he was not here to please any man and that that was not the purpose of a local church? Would you admire him for his love of truth or would you look down on him because he was more oriented to Truth than pleasing man or providing him some upbeat spiritual message just to make him feel better? Would you appreciate hearing the truth or would you think 'man I do not need this.' If he taught something that convicted you of your carnal ways, would you appreciate him for waking you up to your waning relationship with the Lord, or would you go away sad because you felt like you were beaten up? Are you into Truth or your personal feelings? Now, reread Galatians 1:6-10. Note just how livid Paul is! Note how he openly calls down curses from God on any being, human or angelic, who would dare to add to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul is absolutely furious not only at the legalists who were disturbing the Galatian believers, but also at the Galatians for embracing a false gospel, which amounted to works + faith = salvation. This is the only time in the epistles of Paul where he does not express his thankfulness for certain believers. Furthermore, this is the only church of whom he does not ask for their prayers. Imagine that: Paul does not want the prayers of legalistic Galatians. How could he, seeing that they were bringing dishonor upon the Lord and His gospel?

Like the apostles and all those whose entire life is devoted to teaching God's truth, there is always going to be antagonism to the pure teaching of the Word of God, i.e., teaching it like it is. I have received my own share of conflicts over the years and it always comes down to believers who prize themselves over Truth. A believer's attitude toward a teaching pastor is a pretty good indicator of his attitude to the Word of God. Those who love the Word of God, will love, appreciate, and honor the teaching pastor regardless of any personality conflicts; they love him because he brings them the Truth and it is the Truth that they prize more than anything because it is the means of understanding and loving God. Note what Scripture says should be the believer's attitude toward the *teaching* pastor: Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 6:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:17. You may have noticed that different pastors handle pushback on certain truths differently: some, like one of my former pastors, was "burned out" from trying to accommodate those who will never be pleased; some tend to isolate themselves from other believers, like another one of my former pastors; some, tend to push back in a very open and vocal way at any attempt to water down the Word of God or any pressure to teach "according to the desires" of certain believers

(read Gal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:1-5). The greatest desire any believer should have when he comes to church is for the whole truth. If a person does not want the whole truth, then I really do not have anything for him.

In the midst of all of this frank talk, I would like to express my appreciation for all of those who have encouraged me to teach the whole truth. It is a pure delight to teach positive believers and lead them to full truths about God, creation, and themselves. It is my life and passion. It is why the Lord gave me the gift of pastor-teacher. I try to be as open as possible by allowing questions after every Bible class. Even if you do not feel comfortable asking a question in front of the class, I want you to know that I am always approachable. Yes, pastors may seem peculiar. But if they love the Truth, then it will be their lifelong passion—as seen in the Apostle Paul, whose passion for truth was simply too great not to be upset at any attempt to water down and distort in any way the Word of God. His life was about teaching the Word and to do that he could not be oriented to pleasing man: read Galatians 1:10 again. Given a choice between treating the Word in a cursed manner (by distorting it) or treating man, who rejected the Word of God as cursed, Paul let us know in no uncertain terms his choice, Gal. 1:8-10.

The second area truth I would like to draw your attention in our section is Christological and found in Galatians 1:3-5. As I mentioned in the previous PBS, there are seven profound Christological statements that run through Galatians. Note five truths we can glean from the first proclamation:

Galatians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.

1. The death of Christ was both voluntary and determined. On the one hand, He *gave Himself for our sins*, freely and voluntarily. On the other hand, His self-giving was *according to the will of our God and Father*. God the Father purposed and willed the death of His Son and foretold it in the Old Testament Scriptures. Yet Jesus embraced this purpose of His own accord. He set His will to do His Father's will.
2. The death of Jesus was for our sins. Sin and death are integrally related throughout Scripture as cause and effect. Usually the one who sins and the one who dies are the same person. Here, however, although the sins are ours, the death is Christ's: *He* died for our sins, bearing the penalty in our place. This was out of His love for the Father and His love for you and me. Never forget that God is in absolute control of all events in your life and He is absolutely loving/good in all events of your life. A believer must reject either God's love/goodness or control of all things to think that anything that ever happens to him was not designed by God out of love and for Good.

3. The purpose of Jesus' death was to rescue us out of this present evil age. Salvation is a rescue operation, undertaken for people whose plight is so desperate that they cannot save themselves. Regardless if one lives in the first century or in modern America, the age, the Zeitgeist, is always evil because of its separation from God. Evil is not really a thing, it is a privation of something. When something does not have what it should, it is evil. The world, the kosmos, does not have God, and therefore it is evil.
4. The results of Jesus' death is grace and peace. Grace is God's free and unmerited favor, and peace is the reconciliation or relationship we have with Him (and thus with others and circumstances). We live in the age of Grace because of the work of Jesus Christ and the full ministry of the Holy Spirit. It was the attack upon grace that got Paul so riled up. *To move into legalism is to desert grace and thus God*, read Gal. 1:6; note how God's *call* on our lives is by and for grace.
5. The eternal results of Jesus's death is that God will be glorified forever. Note the references in verses 3-5 to grace and glory (read again). Grace, peace, and Christ's giving Himself for our sins, are all part of the glory *forevermore*. Grace comes from God; glory is due to God. The end of the whole Christian system is encapsulated in this epigram.

What a marvelous blessing! That hideously beautiful Cross was determined eternally by the Father's will. Yet Jesus gave Himself voluntarily for us. The nature of His death was the penalty for our sins, and its purpose was to rescue us from the old age and transfer us to the new, in which we receive grace and peace now, and God receives glory forever. No wonder Paul was so vociferous at any attempt to water down God's marvelous matchless grace. Given the value of grace and the Word of God, we should not expect anything less from Paul!

*In 'Ehyeh,
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