

## Galatians 1:1-10

### Introduction

#### I. Galatians is about living lives “Surrendered to Grace”

- A. Grace: God’s unmerited favor given in Jesus
- B. Surrender: def 1: “to give up”: to stop trying to earn our status before God  
Def 2: “to give over”: to give our lives over to God and live for him out of gratitude for the grace He’s given us

#### II. Historical background

A. A circular letter written to churches in the province of Galatia (Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe) around AD 50.

#### B. The Key Issue

- 1. Paul established new churches of Jews and Gentiles on the basis that God’s grace given in Christ is enough for salvation
- 2. Now other Jewish teachers have convinced the communities that God’s grace is not enough and that we must add to that works of the law (especially circumcision, food laws, and observation of holy days). And Gentiles need to act like Jews in order to be part of God’s covenant community.

#### C. A modern example

- 1. Trying to build a community center where white and black are equally welcome in the early 1900’s in the American South. The community center is based on the premise that equality comes from the sheer fact of being human apart from race or color, and therefore, black people don’t have to act like white people in order to be accepted as equal members of the community.
- 2. In Galatians: white and black = Jew and Gentile, and equality as human = saved by grace

#### D. Four questions that will be answered in Galatians

##### The Message

- 1. Who are the people of God?  
Jew and Gentile
- 2. What is the gospel?  
Salvation by grace through faith apart from works of the law

##### The Messenger

- 3. What authority does Paul have?  
He did not receive his authority from other men but directly from Christ
- 4. Who is Paul trying to please?  
When Paul is willing to “become all things to all men” he’s not doing so in order to please people but in order to preach the gospel effectively

### The Passage

#### I. v. 1-2: The messenger’s authority

-“apostle” = one of a small group of people Jesus specifically chose and commissioned to be his messengers: to give his good news with his authority

-“sent not from men nor by man”

Commissioned directly by Christ on the Damascus road (Acts 9)

-“all the brothers with me”

Probably Barnabas and other Christian co-workers

## II. v. 3-5: The message of grace

### v. 3: “Grace and Peace”

#### A. Who are the people of God?

“Grace” is similar to a typical Gentile greeting

“Peace” is the typical Jewish greeting (Shalom)

So “grace and peace” = Gentile and Jew together

#### B. What is the gospel?

-Grace: Saved by God’s unmerited favor (forgiven all our sins)

Not because of anything we’ve done or ever will do

Simply because of who he is: his love and mercy

-Peace: what results because of God’s grace

Reconciled to God and reconciled to each other

### v. 4: The historical event where we obtain grace and peace

#### A. “gave himself for our sins”

= he laid down his life on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins

Galatians 3:13: “Christ became a curse for us”

#### B. “to rescue us from the present evil age”

The two ages

##### 1. Present evil age: whole system ruled by Satan

old age where we are slaves to sin, slaves to law, caught up in guilt

old age where Jew and Gentile are enemies

##### 2. The age to come: Christ came, died, raised, ushered in a new age

new age of forgiveness, freedom, the Spirit, children of God

new age where Jew and Gentile are reconciled

see also Colossians 1:13, Titus 2:14, Romans 12:2

## III. v. 6-9: No other gospel

Paul skips his usual thanksgiving and prayer section, and goes straight into the issue

### v. 6-7

#### A. Other teachers are “perverting the gospel”

“Jesus is great, but unless you be circumcised and keep the law you aren’t saved”

#### B. The churches are “so quickly deserting” the gospel and “turning to a different gospel” (which isn’t a gospel at all because it’s not a message of grace)

#### C. Paul is “astonished” at their response

### v. 8-9

#### A. Paul desires God’s judgment to fall on those who preach another gospel

#### B. He’s so serious because nothing less than the glory of Christ is at stake

Either Christ’s work is enough or it’s not

- C. He's so serious because nothing less than human lives are at stake
  - This is not some minor doctrine: this is the heart of the gospel
  - To buy into these false teachers is to turn away from God, it's to be severed from Christ, it's to fall from grace
  - See Jesus' similar harsh warning in Mark 9:42

### Conclusion

#### I. During this series

- A. We want to hear the message of God's amazing grace in some fresh way
- B. We want to live lives that are more deeply "surrendered to grace"

#### II. Question for this week

In light of the Galatians being tempted to abandon the gospel of God's grace, how are you tempted to abandon the gospel of God's grace? What are your natural tendencies?

- ie. trying to earn God's favor through moral performance, or religious activity, or service, or perfectionism
  - or being judgmental towards other Christians and not offering them the grace God has offered us
  - or understanding grace as a concept and using it to live however we want without actually every surrendering ourselves to God in light of his grace

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. This series is entitled "Surrendered to Grace." Explain your understanding of the two definitions of "surrender" given on Sunday. How do those two definitions shed light on the gospel message?
3. How did the modern example of starting a community center for black and white together add to or change your understanding of the Galatian issue?
4. In what ways do you naturally tend to abandon or slowly slip away from the gospel of God's free grace?
5. Describe a time when you've been reminded of God's grace in a powerful way.