

Galatians– Embracing Grace and Truth

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

 **828 7580 6094** ▶ **Thursday March 19, 2026**

Women of Excellence

Bible Study 7pm

Memory Verse

Galatians 1:10 (ESV) For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Galatians 1:6–9 (NLT)

⁶I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News ⁷ but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ. ⁸ Let God's curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News than the one we preached to you. ⁹ I say again what we have said before: If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed.

Galatians 1:6–9 (NASB95)

- 6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;
- 7 which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.
- 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

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- 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

Devoted to Destruction

POINT 1 -PAUL’S WONDER ABOUT THE GALATIANS’ DEFECTION

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; (1:6)

Paul could hardly comprehend that the Galatian believers were already abandoning his apostolic teaching. He was **amazed** a strong word, meaning to be astounded and bewildered. He could not fathom why they were **so quickly deserting Him**, that is, God, **who called** them by means of **the grace of Christ**. He was not surprised by what the false teachers were doing but was shocked by the favorable response they received from Christians in Galatia.

The apostle was especially surprised that the defection had come **so quickly. deserting** the true gospel. The believers apparently offered little and ineffective resistance to the false teachers and therefore were fickle in their allegiance to Paul and his teaching. It is possible even for longtime believers to lose a firm grip on those truths and allow themselves to be weakened and perverted by ideas that supposedly improve on the pure and plain teachings of Scripture.

These Galatians were true believers who had come to salvation in the power of the Holy Spirit (3:3, 5; 4:6, 8–9). They were Christian brothers (1:2, 11; 3:15; 4:12, 31; 5:13) who had become seriously confused.

To desert the gospel of grace that Paul had taught them was not simply to desert a doctrine but to desert **Him**, the God **who had called them to salvation**.

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The only gospel of God is the gospel of **grace**, which is the gospel of divine redemption totally apart from any work or merit of man. “For by grace you have been saved through faith,” Paul declared to the Ephesians, “and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship” (**Eph. 2:8–10**). And it is continually that “grace in which we stand” We live in grace from the moment of salvation, and if grace ever stopped, we would lose our undeserved salvation and perish in sin.

The grace of Christ is God’s free and sovereign act of love and mercy in granting salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus’ apart from anything men can do, and of His sustaining that salvation to glorification. It is absurd to accept a gracious salvation and then endeavor to maintain righteousness through human efforts, ceremonies, and ritual.

The Judaizers who plagued the early church claimed to be Christians, and much of their doctrine was orthodox. They claimed to believe all the truths that other Christians believed. They did not deny the gospel but supposedly improve it by adding the requirements, ceremonies, and standards of the Old Covenant to the New. But anything added to grace destroys it just as surely as does anything taken from it. When law—even God’s own law—is added to His grace, His grace ceases to be grace (cf. Rom. 11:6).

The Judaizers were promoting **a different gospel**, a completely contrary and ineffective means of being right with God. Consequently, although they had “begun by the Spirit,” some of the true believers in Galatia were trying to be “perfected by the flesh” (**3:3**). Although they had “come to know God, or rather to be known by God,” they had turned “back again to the weak and worthless

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elemental things” (4:9); and although they had been “running well,” they were now being “hindered ... from obeying the truth” (5:7).

Discussion Questions

- 1. The only gospel of God is the gospel of grace, how do you explain that grace?**

- 2. According to the lesson What alternative message were the Galatians being tempted to accept?**

- 3. What stands out to you in this portion of the lesson?**

POINT 2 - PAUL’S WISDOM REGARDING THE FALSE TEACHERS’ DECEPTION

which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. (1:7)

The distorted teachings of the Judaizers presumed to be a form of the gospel, but Paul declares that their “different gospel” (v. 6) was **really not another** gospel at all. There is only one message of good news, the gospel of salvation by God’s sovereign grace working through man’s faith. Any message that is either more or less than that is not the good news in any sense.

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Another refers to something of the exact same kind. Much that the Judaizers taught corresponded to the true gospel. They no doubt affirmed that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah predicted by the Old Testament prophets, and a great miracle worker. But they also taught that to be right with God and to maintain that righteous salvation a person must conform to all the laws of the Old Covenant. In doing so, they undercut the power of the true gospel, God’s sovereign, saving, and enabling grace. By adding works to salvation, they had completely undermined the gospel of God’s grace, of which there **is really not another**. Since man cannot maintain his right relationship to God by self- effort and good works. He will produce good works as a result of God’s saving grace and power working in him (Eph. 2:10; James 2:14–26), but he does not do good works to earn or keep salvation.

False teachers such as the Judaizers are even more dangerous than those who openly deny “that Jesus is the Christ” and thereby clearly participate in the work of the antichrist (1 John 2:22). False systems labeled as Christianity always distort the nature and work of Jesus Christ. Those who deny Christ altogether are easily seen as the unbelievers they are; but those who *claim* to teach and follow Christ while undermining the gospel of His grace are immeasurably more dangerous—because they give the appearance of leading people to Christ while they are actually erecting barriers to salvation by grace.

Are disturbing literally means to shake back and forth and therefore to agitate and stir up. Figuratively, it connotes deep emotional disturbance and refers to an unsettled mind. Although they were unaware of it, the churches of Galatia were being shaken to their very foundations by the false teaching of the Judaizers, who utterly **distort the gospel of Christ**. **Distort** carries the idea of turning something into its opposite, of reversing and thereby perverting it. The

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least bit of law that is added to the **gospel of Christ** reverses its character and turns it into that which is contrary to God’s gracious provision of salvation and sanctification based entirely on the merits of His sinless, sin-bearing Son.

Law does not moderately pollute grace but reverses and destroys it. As a means of salvation, the two are opposite and cannot coexist. Grace can be destroyed, but it cannot be modified. It can be rejected, but it cannot be changed. As Paul declares later in the epistle, “If you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law” (**Gal. 5:2–4**).

Paul wrote to Titus, “For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach” (**Titus 1:10–11**). The greatest enemies of the church are not those who openly contradict the Bible and denounce Christ but those children of hell who, proposing to speak in His name, undermine and distort His true gospel with a system of works righteousness.

Discussion Questions

- 1. In what way are false teachers like Judaizers more dangerous than unbelievers?**
- 2. Why is the question of who receives glory essential to know between a works-based gospel and a grace-based gospel?**

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POINT 3 - PAUL'S WARNING OF GOD'S DESTRUCTION

But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed. (1:8–9)

The Judaizers who were misleading the Galatian churches probably had impressive credentials and may have been among those who claimed to be from the Jerusalem church and to be authorized by James, the leader of that church (see Acts 15:24). In addition to proclaiming their modified form of the gospel, which Paul declared to be no gospel at all, they sought to undermine Paul's authority and teaching in every way they could. Whether as restrictive legalism, permissive liberalism, or cultic perversion, any teaching that adds to or takes away from God's revealed truth is a distortion of the gospel and perverts the nature and the work of Christ.

Paul declares, **even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed.** Even if Paul or any of his associates were to change their teaching, the Galatians should not listen to them but treat them like heretics, which they would then be. Even **an angel from heaven** should be rejected if he were to present a gospel different from the one originally taught by Paul. The Jews believed that the divine law came through angels (cf. Heb. 2:2), and the Judaizers may have made the point that this made the Old Covenant and its attendant ceremonies and traditions binding.

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Many false systems are attractive because they emotionally appeal to love, brotherhood, unity, and harmony. Many false teachers are popular because they seem to be warm and pleasant and claim to have great love for God and for others. It is because distortions of the gospel by such deceptive personalities are so appealing that “Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” (**2 Cor. 11:14**).

Paul turns from the hypothetical to the actual as he reiterates his concern. **As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.** The repetition reflects the passion of the apostle for gospel truth.

As we have said before refers to an earlier visit, not to the preceding clause in the text, The sense seems to be, “What I said at that time I am saying again now.” From the start of his ministry among them, Paul had warned them of imminent gospel perversions. The gospel **which you received** refers to the preaching of the good news of grace in Christ which they had previously believed.

False teachers not only should not be believed or followed but should be left to God’s judgment to **be accursed**. **Accursed** refers to that which is devoted to destruction. The apostle John wrote, “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.... If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds” (**2 John 7, 10–11**).

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Christians are to have nothing to do with false teachers, no matter what their credentials. It is both naive and unscriptural to believe, for instance, that staying in a religious school or church that denies the Bible and distorts the gospel gives a believer the opportunity to be a positive influence for the Lord. Even a leader like Timothy, well trained in divine truth, was warned to stay away from error and to concentrate on the pure truth of God (1 Tim. 4:6–7, 13; 2 Tim. 2:15–17). To subject oneself to false teaching, no matter how orthodox one's own convictions may be, is to disobey God and to compromise and weaken one's testimony and to tolerate distortion of the grace of God in Christ.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Why does Paul declare that even an angel preaching a different gospel deserves God's curse? What does this extreme statement reveal about Paul's conviction regarding the gospel?**
- 2. How does Paul's astonishment at the Galatians' desertion challenge our commitment to the true Gospel?**
- 3. How can we apply Paul's strong words against false gospels to discern truth in our spiritual lives today?**

Closing Prayer