Galatians 1:10-24

Review…

- **The churches in Galatia…**
  - Galatia was not a city - it was a geographical region...
    - Paul was writing to a whole group of churches in the area of Galatia...
    - Paul's first missionary journey - Acts 13 & 14 - had been in the region of Galatia...
    - So, these churches were some of the first established by the Apostle...
  - The problem was false teachers called Judaizers who had come into the church...
    - So, Paul wrote the book to establish our freedom from the gospel of 'Legalism'...
    - It is a book that is all about the Gospel of Grace - it is the Theme of the whole book...
    - Chapters 1-2 - Paul personally deals with Grace and the Gospel...
    - Chapter 3-4 - Paul address the doctrine of Grace in light of the Law of Moses...
    - Chapter 5-6 - Paul practically deals with Grace in the daily life of the believer...
- **Galatians 1:1-9 - The Gospel of Grace…**
  - 1st - Paul as an example of Grace - Paul was an Apostle but the least likely of all men...
  - 2nd - The message of the Gospel - Grace and Peace through the cross of Jesus
  - 3rd - Rejecting Grace - the churches in Galatia had begun to follow Legalism...
  - 4th - Rejecting Legalism - Paul commanded them to reject any other gospel!

A better Gospel… (*3 things*)

- **1st - Serving God or man… vs. 10-12 (*3 things*)**
  - 1st - Paul was not concerned about pleasing men...
    - Before Paul's salvation - before the Gospel of Grace - he lived to please and serve men...
      - He had served under a religious system where he followed the rules of men...
      - He had been exceedingly zealous for the traditions of his fathers...
      - He even had advanced beyond all his peers - working harder than them all...
    - So that by following those rules - he had become famous among the Jews...
      - Famous among men - but it did nothing to make him right with God...
      - Religion is not about pleasing God - it is all about looking good before men...
      - Wearing the right clothes / having the right words / following the right traditions...
      - It is all to impress those around us - but it has no power to save us from our sin!
      - Yet many prefer 'religion' and 'tradition' to a relationship with Jesus...
      - Because religion makes us look good - makes us look holy in front of others...
  - 2nd - But now Paul rejected religion - he wanted to please God...
    - Paul was no longer concerned about keeping the rules of religion...
    - He understood the only benefit that came from those rules was pleasing men...
    - If he still tried to live by those rules - as the Judaizers were telling the Galatians to...
    - Then he would still be serving men - and not be a servant of Christ!
    - The problem with all religions is they can do nothing to change the heart...
    - They can try to make you look good on the outside - impress men...
    - But God sees the heart - and without the Grace of God - it is corrupt and evil...

- Those who dedicate themselves to religion - are not serving Jesus Christ!

- 3rd - The Gospel message Paul preached - had not been taught to him by men... vs. 11-12
  - The Judaizers were challenging the Gospel of Grace...
    - They questioned where Paul got the message - who gave it to Him...
    - As if somehow, it was just Paul's idea - some new thing he had come up with...
    - But Paul had not given the churches another religion - his own ideas...
    - Religion - faith in rules and traditions - has no power to save us from hell...
    - Religion is only men's vain imperfect attempt to reach up to a perfect God...
  - Paul received the Gospel as a direct revelation from Jesus Christ...
    - Just as Paul had received his apostleship from Jesus - not from men...
    - He also got the Gospel message from Jesus - and not from men!
    - The message Paul preached was God reached down to save man!
    - The Good News is not that we need to follow a lot of rules to be good enough...
    - The Gospel is that could not be good enough to get to heaven...
    - So, God came down and paid the price for our sin - so we could be saved...
  - Do we follow the ideas of men - or the Gospel of God...
    - The question is what we follow - a religion / or the Gospel of Grace...
    - Do we obey the 'revelations' of men - or the 'revelation' of Jesus Christ...
    - This is the contrast Paul opens up with - are you looking to serve men or God!

- **2ND - PAUL'S SALVATION - IN GOD'S TIME... VS. 13-19 (*3 THINGS*)**
  - 1st - Paul's past in the Jewish religion was well known among the churches.... vs. 13-14
    - Persecuting the church of God...
      - Paul (*then called Saul*) - had consented to the stoning and death of Steven - **Acts 7**
      - **Acts 8:1** - Saul made havoc – the picture is a wild animal tearing apart another...
      - And brought persecution – meaning to chase / hunt / pursue - the church....
    - What is interesting is the results of the persecution - the saints were scattered...
      - Jesus commanded the Apostles to go out into the whole world...
      - **Acts 1:8 -** "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
      - But up to that point the church had not moved far beyond Jerusalem...
      - It is easy to get comfortable in the familiar – sometimes God shakes things up...
      - It is very likely that the disciples would not have left to spread the Gospel...
      - If Paul had not come against the church - persecuted the believers...
      - **Genesis 50:20** - "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day…"
      - God allows challenges to come into our lives to stir us up...
      - To make us dependent on Him rather than on the familiar…
    - The question is why Paul had such hate for the Church...
      - The best answer is conviction – Paul was a marked man...
      - It you throw a rock into a dog pound the one who yelps got hit…
      - If you have a friend or family member that is especially anti-Jesus...

- Chances are it is because God is working on their heart…

- After Paul persecuted the church in Jerusalem - he wanted to go to Damascus
  - He had letters and authority from the priest to arrest anyone who confessed Jesus...
  - Saul's mindset - 'breathing threats and murder' - **Acts 9:1**
  - His very breath was like a warhorse that sniffed the smell of battle...
  - Saul wanted to destroy the church - hated Christians - because they were not Jews!
  - Religion is always divisive - destructive - turns people against each other...
  - If you are not part of MY religion - then you are wrong and must be stopped...
  - We live in a community where many are very hardened towards the Gospel...
  - Because they have been indoctrinated in a lifetime of traditions and superstitions...
  - And they are proud and think 'religion' is enough to get them into heaven...
  - When you dare to challenge those beliefs - you immediately come under fire...

o 2nd - When it pleased God - Jesus revealed Himself to Paul... vs. 15-16...
- Paul did not choose God - God choose Paul...
  - Paul recognized that God who had brought him into the world (*birth*)...
  - Was also the one who when in God's timing - saved Paul by His GRACE!
  - And called Paul to be an Apostle to the Gentiles - **Acts 9:15**...
  - We are rarely patient when it comes to people believing in Jesus...
  - We see people stuck in dead religion - following empty traditions...
  - Showing up to church only once a year on Easter - to kiss the feet of Jesus...
  - Putting their faith in wood and plastic representations of 'the saints'
  - We want slap them - make them believe in Jesus now! Today!
  - But you cannot force someone to see Jesus - only God can open their eyes...
- Just as Jesus met Saul on the road - 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me'…
  - Paul believed in his religion - thought it was right to persecute 'The Church'…
  - So, Jesus blinded Saul - to show him he was spiritually blind - and open his eyes...
  - **John 9:39** – "I have come to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind."
  - Those who are religious think they are right – because they cannot see the truth...
  - You convince a blind man that he is seeing things the wrong way…
  - Until you first help him to see – that he is blind...
  - Those who cling to their religion - need to first see their religion cannot save them...
  - Then they will be willing to open their eyes and look to Jesus!

o 3rd - After Paul's conversion - he did not immediately go to Jerusalem... vs. 17-19
- Paul was saved in the city of Damascus...
  - After his conversion went into Arabia (*to the west*) for three years...
  - He then returned to Damascus for a second time - **Acts 9:23-26**...
  - The point being Paul was not discipled or taught by any of the other Apostles...
  - It was Jesus who taught him and discipled him in the Word...
  - Often, we get the mistaken idea we are not able to understand God's Word...
  - We need to have someone interpret it for us - explain the Word to us...
  - There are plenty of people who are willing to tell us 'what the Bible means'...
  - But the question is are they right - or is it just their opinion...

- God has given each of us His Holy Spirit - He is the one to teach us...
- **John 14:26** - "But when the Father sends the Counselor as my representative—and by the Counselor I mean the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I myself have told you."
- We can be absolutely certain that what the Holy Spirit gives us – is the truth!

▪ Paul did eventually try to meet with the disciples in Jerusalem - **Acts 9:26-28**
- But they would not meet with Saul though because they were afraid of him...
- They did believe that the man who had hunted them to death had changed...
- But although everyone else feared Saul – Barnabus believed he had changed...
- Barnabus did not see Paul's past - only what Jesus had done in his life...
- In religion - what we do is who we are - we are defined by our actions...
- But in Jesus we are also not defined by actions - we are simply defined by Christ!
- **II Corinthians 5:17** - "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

▪ Not all of the disciples were willing to receive Saul...
- Paul only up spending fifteen days with Peter / and saw James (*Jesus ½ brother*) ...
- We need to learn that not everyone will believe we have changed either…
- The only thing that matters is that Jesus has made us a new creation in Him...

- **3RD - THE CHURCHES' REACTION TO PAUL'S SALVATION... VS. 20-24**
  - After Jerusalem Paul traveled into Syria and Cilicia (*Tarsus - Paul's hometown*) ...
    - Paul did not spend much time in Jerusalem - with the Apostles...
    - He was immediately called out by God to begin the work of spreading the Gospel...
    - Paul did not need anyone to qualify him for ministry - God had prepared him...
    - If you want to teach a Bible study - or serve God in any way...
    - People tend to look for the diploma on the wall - the recognition of a religion...
    - But the proof of the calling of God is not in the commendation of men...
    - I know a lot of men who have the 'pastoral degree' - who are not pastors...
    - And I know a lot of men who have no degree - no diplomas - who are pastors!
    - The calling of God - is shown through the work of God through someone's life!
  - No one from the churches of Judea even saw Paul's face...
    - They only heard about his conversion - God saved a man who hated the church...
    - The fruit from Paul's life was obvious - and all the saints glorified God for it...
    - It is not very difficult to figure out what purpose/calling God has on your life...
    - All we really need to do is look at how God is using us - where is the fruit...
    - If you are called to kids - you will enjoy and be good with them...
    - If you are called to be a teacher - then you will enjoy and be good at teaching...
    - It will not just be you who recognize the calling - it will be obvious to everyone!