**Called from our Mother’s Womb**

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**Galatians 1:10-15**

**Wednesday Evening**

**May 25, 2022**

**Galatians 1:10-15**

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. 11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. 13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. 14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,

**10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.**

Saints, undoubtedly the Judaizers had accused Paul of compromise, saying that he taught freedom from the Jewish law to the Gentiles in order to be a people pleaser and thus win as many converts as possible. But Paul explained that his purpose was always to please God.

Paul’s use of the word still offers a glimpse into his inner self and his past life as a Pharisee. Paul understood that by living a strict, law-abiding, judgmental, and appearance—focused life of a Pharisee, his goal had really been to please people.

Religious and pious people may receive mountains of praise for their supposed character and good works. Christians are rarely accorded such praise. Thus if Paul were trying to please people, he would not be Christ’s servant.

**Matthew 6:24**

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

There should never be any compromise with the truth, there is no compromise for the Christian with “this evil world” The life of serving Christ does not put people in the limelight, offer great material rewards, or promise worldly security. Thus, if Paul wanted to please people, he could have chosen many other routes or stayed a Jewish Pharisee.

Much of church growth philosophy centers on a “market” approach, discovering what people want and need. For a culture that treats God and the Bible as irrelevant, this approach may be the only way to break through barriers.

But we must have our motives clearly understood. If our desire is to please people, our packaging of the gospel may take priority over the content. If our purpose is evangelism, then reaching people through felt needs can be legitimate.

We must not forget that our allegiance to Christ comes first. We must never water down his authority in the life of a believer in order to bring him or her into a church.

**11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.**

Saints, in verse 1, Paul had introduced himself as appointed by God. As Paul launched into a repudiation of those who would refuse to recognize his authority as an apostle, he began at the beginning.

Paul wanted the Galatian believers to be assured that he was an apostle—called separately from the Twelve and received as an equal by the Twelve.

The Good News that Paul preached was the true gospel, not any false gospel, as he had discussed in verses 6-9. The gospel Paul taught was not based on mere human reasoning or logic—that is, it was not a belief or doctrine handed down to him through Jewish tradition.

**1 Corinthians 15:1-4**

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures…

**12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

Saints, The Judaizers, refusing to acknowledge Paul as an apostle, most likely claimed that Paul owed his salvation and gospel knowledge to Peter and James in Jerusalem and that he had to turn to them for approval and support of his teaching.

But, as Paul would point out, he had become a believer before he ever met these leaders in the Christian church. Nor was Paul taught the gospel. As a young man, Paul had sat at the feet of Gamaliel, learning by rote and repetition the Hebrew Law and Scriptures. But that was not the gospel, nor could it give salvation.

Instead, the message Paul preached came by direct revelation from Jesus Christ himself. We do not know the extent or manner of this revelation. Paul could be referring to his vision of Christ on the road to Damascus, to the time after Ananias returned Paul’s sight, to the three years spent in Arabia

**Acts 9:3-6**

3 And as he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" 5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" And the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

**Acts 9:17-19**

17 And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

18 Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. 19 So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

Paul didn’t say it, but he implied at this point: “How can anyone doubt my authority? How can anyone doubt the divinely revealed truth about Jesus Christ?”

**13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. 14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.**

Saints, to further support his apostolic claim, Paul showed how radically Christ had transformed him from a persecutor of the church to an apostle of the church. When he followed the Jewish religion, he was one of the most religious Jews of his day. He scrupulously kept the law and also

**Romans 1:16-17**

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

**2 Timothy 1:8-10**

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

10 but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel…

**15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,**

Saints, what changed Paul’s life from persecutor of the church to preacher of the faith? The little phrase, but . . . God, reveals what happened. God got hold of Paul’s life. Paul’s conversion happened only because it pleased God.

And God used every part of Paul’s life, even prior to his conversion, to prepare Paul for the ministry. God’s designs on Paul’s life clearly began before his birth. Similarly, Jeremiah was divinely informed that God had called him even before he was born to do special work.

**Jeremiah 1:5**

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

Saints, Paul’s expression recalls the profound awe described by the psalmist in Psalms139 in recognizing the scope of God’s awareness of us.

**Psalm 139: 1-24**

1 O LORD, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.

5 You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. 7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me, "Even the night shall be light about me; 12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.

13 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. 17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!

18 If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You. 19 Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men.

20 For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take Your name in vain. 21 Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? 22 I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; 24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

Saints, the context indicates that Paul was humbled by God’s grace in calling him to be an apostle rather than proud about any personal qualifications that made him noticeable to God. The fact that God would accomplish his work through any of us ought to inspire deep humility.

The understanding that Paul and all believers are chosen before birth by God is referred to as the doctrine of election.

**Ephesians 1:4-6**

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

Saints, this was a key part of Paul’s theology. In the Bible, election refers to God’s choice of an individual or group for a specific purpose or destiny. God’s sovereignty, not people’s works or character, is the basis for election.

**Romans 8:29-30**

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Election—being “chosen” before we’re born—is like receiving an invitation for a wonderful banquet. But the invitation comes to us unearned and unmerited. No friendship, political pull, or effort makes it necessary that we be on the invitation list.

The guest list is purely the host’s choice. After all, it is his banquet. The invitation comes with the traditional RSVP. God’s gracious invitation does require our response and attendance. Only those who respond to God’s call receive the gift of salvation; it is “by invitation only.”

It comes to us completely undeserved so that we might have no basis for pride. When we understand God’s sovereignty as well as his mercy, we respond with humility and gratitude that God would be merciful to even us.

Believers still may wonder why or how they could be chosen while others might be rejected. God is sovereign and, in reality, no one has any claim on his mercy. It is completely undeserved. He prepared us in advance by his gift of salvation, and he will reveal his glory when we are finally with him for eternity.

Instead of focusing on God choosing some and rejecting others, we should stand in awe at God’s offer of grace to any of us. Thus, no one can demand that God explain why he does what he does. He makes all the rules, but he loves to show his mercy to us. What an amazing God he is! What may seem to us to be an inconsistency on God’s part actually reveals our own inability to see as God sees.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray! Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**