

Galatians 1

Galatians 1
Tape # 8164
Pastor Chuck Smith

Let's turn now to Galatians, chapter one.

Galatia was not a city, such as Ephesus or Colosse or some of the other cities that Paul wrote to. Galatia was an area. It was sort of like, "To the churches in California." It was a territory and thus it wasn't an individual church but there were churches. So you find in the opening, verse two, "To the churches (plural), of Galatia." The area of Galatia was just sort of south of the Black Sea. It was an area that would be sort of Armenia, up in that territory. It was inhabited not by Greeks but by Gauls. Several churches were established there.

It is interesting that in the Book of Acts, we don't read of Paul's going to Galatia, but obviously he was in the area of Galatia where he established churches there. It's important to realize that the Bible is not a complete account of the ministry of Jesus or of the early ministry of the church. It covers some of the more important and salient aspects of the church's outreach, but it isn't a complete detailed kind of an account.

John said if all of the things were written, concerning Jesus, of the things that He did and said, probably all of the libraries of the world could not hold the things that could be written. So John said I selected certain things. "Many other things did Jesus, that are not recorded." But these, he said, I have recorded or I have written that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, by believing. So recognize that in the Scripture, it is not and does not represent to be a complete and total account.

The Book of Acts isn't a complete account. It really sort of follows the ministry of Paul and of Peter, more than any others. It is abbreviated. It doesn't cover the ministry of the other apostles and the places they went and the things that they did. And of course it cuts off quite early in the record, as far as records go. You have maybe the record of the first twenty-five or thirty years of the church. It doesn't carry us beyond that.

So the churches of Galatia, no doubt as I said, were established by Paul. He wrote to them, probably, now as we finished off Corinthians last week, Paul was talking, you remember, this is the third time I am coming to you and am going to settle the issues that were there in Corinth. It is thought that on this third visit to Corinth, is when Paul wrote this letter to the churches of Galatia.

In the churches of Galatia, there were these same types of false teachers, who followed Paul's ministry. They sought, first of all, to denigrate Paul in the minds of the people, by declaring that Paul was not a true apostle, that he did not really have the authority of the church for his ministry. That he was sort of a self-appointed kind of an apostle. They were teaching the people that it was necessary to keep the law of Moses and that it was necessary to go through the ritual aspects of the Mosaic Law, circumcision and the things of that nature in order to be saved. They were basically preaching a gospel, which Paul said is not a gospel of working yourself in God's favor. It was the works kind of gospel that they were espousing.

So Paul is going to be reestablishing in the hearts of the people, the glorious gospel of grace! How that we are received and accepted by God, not on the basis of our works for God, but God's glorious work for us, in and through His Son, Jesus Christ. So a tremendous and beautiful application and teaching on the doctrine of grace, we'll find here in the Book of Galatians.

So he opens with, *Paul, an apostle*, The thing that has been challenged, he reaffirms right at the top.

But an apostle, (*not of men, neither by man*, I haven't been sent out by men. The word, apostle, means one who was sent out. But he said, I've not been sent out by men. My apostleship is not of men.

They have in the church today, sort of a ritual in which they call the apostolic succession of the laying on of hands, in the ordaining of a man to the ministry in certain church groups. The high church, the Episcopalian church, the Catholic church, this apostolic succession of laying on of hands. So that when you are to be ordained for the ministry, as the bishop lays his hands upon you, to ordain you to the ministry, that bishop had hands laid on him by a bishop, who had hands laid on him by a bishop, who had hands laid on him by a bishop ad nauseam, back to Peter. So Peter is you know, it's sort of like dominoes, back to Peter. And so the hands laid on me, it's Peter's hand, oooh, you know! Because the domino effect goes back to

Peter, the hands laid on by hands laid on, by hands laid on, by hands laid on. There is nothing Biblical about it, but it's sort of a doctrine that has been incorporated in some of the churches, the apostolic succession of the laying on of hands.

Paul said it didn't happen to me, that way. I'm not an apostle of men, neither by men. It's an interesting thing how that so many times people are asking, where did you get the authority to be a minister? Who gave you the authority? This goes back, really, to the times of Jesus, even before Jesus, when John the Baptist was baptizing in the Jordan River. The Pharisees came down and it's sort of Pharisaical kind of a question, the Pharisees came down and said, who gave you the authority? From whence comes this authority? Who gave you the authority to baptize? And of course when Jesus cleaned the temple, they challenged His authority. Who gave You the authority to do this?

There are always those who are claiming that you have to have a certain authority to baptize people or to preach the gospel. Usually they are looking for the authority of some council of men. Of course, it's one of the things the Mormon Church lay claim to the fact that they, only, have the authority to minister, baptism and things of this nature today, because they are the only church that has restored the twelve apostles. The church is being run by twelve apostles. Thus only the Mormon church can confer authority for the ministry. It's necessary that you know, you be ordained by their twelve apostles.

It's interesting that that issue still comes up after this many years. Paul said that his authority wasn't by men, it wasn't of men, *but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father*, Now, those are pretty good credentials. I would say that if you had those credentials, you really don't need any others. People are asking oftentimes about ordination. The ordaining of a person to a ministry. Our response as always, is that we do not ordain anybody for the ministry. We cannot ordain anybody for the ministry. There is only One who can really ordain people for the ministry and that's the Lord! He is the One who ordains people for the ministry. What we do is we sort of ratify what the Lord has done. We seek to recognize that God's hand is upon this person's life. They have an anointing of the Holy Spirit. God is using them. It's obvious that God has ordained them. So we seek to ratify or to accept and acknowledge the ministry that God has given them. But we really can't ordain people to the ministry.

Seminary education really cannot prepare you for the ministry. No ordaining board can really ordain you to the ministry, effectively. Only God can ordain a person for the ministry. So we seek to recognize those who lives are obviously touched by the Lord. That is why in the early years here at Calvary, we sent out young fellows like Greg Laurie and Mike McIntosh and so many of the others, because it was obvious that God's hand was upon their lives. God had anointed them for the ministry. We just recognized it. We gave them papers, sent them out and let them do the work that God had ordained them to do and called them to do.

So Paul an apostle, not of men nor by man, but by our Lord Jesus Christ and by God the Father, *who raised him from the dead;*) ²*And all the brethren which are with me*, Now he doesn't name the brethren that were with him. If this was written from Corinth on his third visit, we know that Luke was with him and Titus was with him, but who these brethren are, Paul does not name.

unto the churches of Galatia: ³*Grace be to you* Now, this the area where they were failing. They had been established in the grace of God. Paul had preached to them the gospel of grace. In fact, in a while, he is going to say, I marvel that you are so soon, turned from the gospel to another gospel, which isn't the gospel. Oh foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should do soon turn from the truth? Having begun in the Spirit, the gospel of grace, are you now going to be made perfect in the flesh? Paul marvels that they would leave this glorious gospel of grace to be entangled again in the yoke of bondage of the law, which of course was happening. And we'll get into that more fully as we come to those passages further down in the Book of Galatians here.

So grace, the issue that Paul is going to be discussing in the Book, he puts in the opening salutation, Grace be to you. The typical greeting among the Greeks, *charis*. The word means loveliness, charm, beauty. It was one of the beautiful words of the Greek language. It was the word that they would use typically for greetings, grace.

and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Now the word, peace, was the typical

Jewish greeting, *shalom*! Even to the present day, it is the typical traditional greeting among the Jews, shalom. And you hear it all over, whenever you go anywhere in Israel, you greet them, shalom!

So Paul combines the Greek with the Hebrew, the grace, the charis, along with the peace, the shalom, unto you from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ. We have pointed out before and it is important that we continually point it out that there are some things that need constant reminders or repetition. This is one of those things.

Peter said, I'm writing to you though you already know these things, because I written about them before. But I want to put you in continual remembrance. So I am writing them to you so that even after I'm dead, you'll still be reminded of these, basic, salient, truths.

This is one of those, Lord Jesus Christ, is not first, middle and last name. Jesus is His name! Lord is His title. He is the promised Messiah, the Anointed One. He is God's anointed King and Priest. A Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. But He is also not our great high priest only, but He is also our King.

Now the offices of priests, high priests, and the office of the king were inaugurated by the anointing, the pouring of the anointing oil over them. Thus the word, Anointed One, the *Mashiyach*, the Anointed One is the One who is to be anointed by God as the King, the promised King of Israel. So that is what Jesus is. He is the Anointed One, the Messiah. His name is Jesus. The angel said to Mary that you shall call His name Jesus. He said that to Joseph also. Thou shall call His name Jesus.

In the Hebrew, it is *Yehowshuwa*, which is, Jehovah is Salvation. And the angel said to Joseph, call His name Jesus, which is the Greek form of Yehowshuwa. For He shall save His people from their sins. So His name implies His ministry and mission of saving people from sin.

But Lord is His title. He said, why do you call me Lord, Lord? And yet you don't do the things that I command you? There is an inconsistency here. You call Me, Lord, Lord, but you are not obeying me. That's inconsistent. He said many will come in that day, saying Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name? They will go on boasting what they did and He'll say, I never knew you. That is in the capacity of Lord. He was never the Lord of their lives. The question is, is He the Lord of your life?

I know that it is not exactly correct for all of the critics, who are waiting for me to say something that you know. They go over the tapes with a fine-toothed comb, trying to find out. You said is instead of was, you know. I don't have time for them, but I realize that this is taking it out of its actual meaning. But there is an application here. We talk about taking the name of the Lord in vain. Now I understand that that is a reference to blasphemy, so allow me that. But I think that there is something also to taking the name, Lord, in vain. That is, if I'm saying, oh Lord, oh Lord, yet I'm doing my own thing. I'm not obeying Him. I believe that that is taking the name of the Lord in vain, because He isn't the Lord of my life. And though I may use the title and say oh yes, Lord, oh yes Lord, unless I'm obeying Him, it's taking the name of the Lord in vain. I know that that is not what is meant in the law, when it says thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain and so forth. But yet, that's something to think about.

⁴*Who gave himself* Now talking about our Lord. And I think it would probably be better in the translation, to put the comma after Lord. So that we get the idea and the meaning and the sense that it's a title, the Lord, Jesus Christ. That's who the Lord is. It's Jesus Christ! But if we would put a comma after that, we would actually come to an awareness then. When I speak, I usually try to put the comma into the language. You know, you don't say the Lord comma, but I say the Lord, Jesus Christ. I try to put the hesitation in there so you get the idea that it is a title. It isn't His name. And that He indeed is the Lord! Now one day every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Paul in talking about salvation being close to us, he said, it is as near as your mouth for if you will confess with your mouth and here's where the translation is bad because, literally is, if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord. They translated, if you will confess with your mouth, the Lord Jesus Christ. But then these people who think names, first, middle and last, oh sure the Lord Jesus Christ. But it's literally (Romans 10:9), if you will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! That's the confession of salvation. It's the submission to Jesus Christ as Lord. Believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall

be saved.

So, the Lord, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself *for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world*, Jesus said (John 10:18), no man takes My life from Me. I give My life. I have the power to lay it down. I have the power to take it up again. Jesus said (Luke 10:19), the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost. God, He said (John 3:17), did not send Me into the world to condemn the world but that through Me the world might be saved. And so He gave Himself for our sin. He died in our place. He took the responsibility and the guilt of our sins upon Himself. And He died for us that He might, and the purpose, He might deliver us from this present evil world.

We are living in an evil world. The world can get a grip upon a person's life. It's very easy to be ensnared by the world because the world makes all kinds of glorious, glamorous, promises of fulfillment to you. And the advertising media recognizing that basically and innately within every man, there is a vacuum. There is a sense of emptiness. There is a need for fulfillment. And so the Madison Avenue advertising agencies, recognizing that this is a basic characteristic in every man, they plan their advertising schemes to say, look, this is what you are looking for. This is what is going to bring you fulfillment. And the whole advertising scheme is based upon promising to you that you will find what you are seeking and searching for if you will only have this product. And if you don't have this product man, you are just out of luck, because this is the product that is going to give you every thing you are looking for.

Your problem is dull teeth! And if you only had beautiful, white, sparkling, teeth, that would be the answer. You could then have everything you desire and everything you want. And so you know, this toothpaste is going to do it for you.

Or maybe your clothes are dingy. And this detergent is going to change your life. It's going to bring new excitement and romance into your life, you know. And you know, you can have fulfillment. They use this in trying to get you to purchase the product.

Now the world has a very strong hold on people because all of us are indeed, searching for meaning. And we are searching for fulfillment. But the meaning and the fulfillment that we are searching for can never come from the worldly things, from material things. And that is the whole, big, lie. But yet because of the promises there, we gravitate towards it in hopes of fulfillment. And so what do we do? We go from one pursuit to another, to another and to another. And the emptiest moment of your life is when you have achieved and attained that which you had hoped was going to bring you the ultimate fulfillment. And when you achieved or attained it, you find emptiness.

Even as Solomon in the Book of Ecclesiastes (Eccles. 12:8), makes his pursuit through so many things, and ends up with the "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity and vexation of spirit, there is no profit under the sun." In this world under the sun, there is nothing that can fulfill the deep yearning and longs that you have in your heart for God! The problem with Solomon is that he was searching under the sun. The fulfillment is in the Son, Jesus Christ!

So He gave Himself that He might deliver you from this present evil world and from the power that it has, because you get caught in the vise. It takes hold of you. You are not being fulfilled. It becomes a drudge. It becomes just a grind. Life becomes a grind. It's interesting that so many people, when they have reached the epitomy of success as far as the world is concerned, commit suicide because of the disappointment and the emptiness that was there. They didn't find what they were searching for. They found that it was just empty like everything else.

He died for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world *according to the will of God and our Father* (It's not God's will that you be ensnared in the worldly things, that you be trapped by habits and addictions. It's God's desire to set you free (John 8:36). And whom the Son sets free, is free indeed!):

⁵*To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* So, that's the opening salutation, a beautiful salutation by Paul.

⁶*I marvel* (Now he gets right to the subject.) *that ye are so soon removed from him that called you* (That is, Jesus Christ.) *into the grace of Christ unto another gospel* (So quickly you moved from this wonderful grace that is in Christ to another gospel): ⁷*Which* (Paul said) *is not another* (That is, it isn't a gospel. The word gospel means "Good News". And this trying to be approved of God by your works and your efforts,

that's not good news. The good news is that God has accepted you in Christ! That God has accepted the finished work of Jesus Christ. And God has imputed the righteousness of Jesus to you through your faith in Jesus. That's the good news! It's not by works but by His grace that I stand tonight! I stand not in my righteousness, which would be of the law, but the righteousness which is of Christ through faith. The good news is the grace of God through Jesus Christ by which I am accepted by God.

One of the first issues to arise in the first church counsel was called over this very issue. That is, what relationship the Gentile believers had to the law of Moses, for in Antioch where Paul was ministering, a large fellowship had developed. It was a large church, a strong church. Because it was a large, strong church, many of the Jews from Jerusalem came up to see just what's happening there in Antioch. They had heard of the liberty that these people had in Christ. They didn't wear little skullcaps and you know, they were eating pork chops. They came to spy out their liberty. They were sort of aghast at the church at Antioch. They said, brother, you can't be saved unless you keep the law of Moses and you are circumcised. So Paul grabbed these fellows. They said, we are from the church in Jerusalem. We've come up commissioned by the church to check out the liberty of these believers here.

Paul said, let's go back to Jerusalem and we'll settle this issue. So Paul took some of the brethren from the church in Antioch and they came back to Jerusalem with these fellows from Jerusalem, who claimed to have the authority of the church. And they called the counsel, Acts fifteen, to determine whether or not as a Gentile, it was necessary for me to keep the law of Moses in order to be saved.

You see, traditionally, the Jews thought that salvation was for the Jew only. And that the only way you could possibly be saved was to become a Jew. To proselyte and become a Jew. That was the only way you could be saved. And so that strong traditional belief sort of carried over into the church. And thus in the church there was this strong, (in Jerusalem), this strong admixture of the law as well as faith in Jesus Christ. And faith in Jesus Christ was just sort of added to the keeping of the law.

So Peter was the first to testify before the counsel in Jerusalem. He testified how God called him to go to the Gentiles, to the house of Cornelius. And Peter said I don't think that we ought to put on the Gentile believers a yoke of bondage, referring to the law and the many, many little interpretations of the law. I don't think we should put on the Gentiles that yoke of bondage that neither we, nor our fathers were able to bear.

Paul and Barnabas got up next. They testified how God was working so mightily among the Gentiles all over the world. They were sharing their ministry among the Gentiles, what God was doing. So it was finally determined by the church that they would write a letter to the brethren in the church in Antioch and just tell them to keep themselves from the pollution of idols and things that were strangled and from fornication. And if they do that, they do well. They didn't try to put the Gentile church under the law.

But there were those who that were never satisfied with that and they would follow Paul wherever he would go. They would preach a message of law. You've got to keep the law in order to be righteous and in order to be saved. That is the issue of the letter, so they were drawing converts.

Now, Paul is marveled. He is surprised. How in the world could people be attracted to the law? It is a question. Why would people be put under stringent rules and regulations and leave this glorious relationship that we have through grace to try and keep rules and regulations in order to be accepted?

Now, you see, this is not something that happened only in the early days of the church. It's something that's happening today. There are still those groups that come up with their regulations, that in order to be a full-on, full-blown, type of a Christian, then, you know, you can't do this, you can't do that. And then they lay out the law of righteousness. It isn't any longer that "accepted by God through grace and through faith in Jesus Christ" but it's also keeping these rules and regulations.

There are many groups that the works play a very important part in their doctrine and framework. The Jehovah's Witnesses are driven by a desire of earning a position in heaven. That's why they are so diligent in going around on Saturdays from door to door. They are so diligent to spread because their salvation is dependent on that.

The Mormons, the marriage sealed in the temple and the wearing of the proper underwear and so forth. It's important if you are going to be able to take your wife out to some planet and become god. But there is a certain appeal of this to the flesh. Also there is a certain security. A lot of people have difficulty just

believing and accept the fact that by my believing God accepts me and has justified me. I am in good standing by faith in Jesus Christ. And they want guidelines. They want others to put these guidelines. You can't do this, you can't do that. They need sort of a regiment in order to feel secure.

Also they need something to boast about. So if I can check off and put my little gold stars each day on the chart. Then I can see a whole chart of gold stars, I can say, look at my chart! All gold stars, you know, aren't I wonderful? And that desire of sort of glorying in what I did. Oh yes, Jesus died for me, but look what I've done! You know, and you're trying to, buy acceptance by works. So Paul is going to deal with this very strongly in the Book of Galatians. As he seeks to correct this false gospel that has invaded the churches there in Galatia.

So he said it's not another, that is it isn't a gospel. It isn't good news. *but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.* ⁸*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* And that includes Moroni. If we or an angel from heaven, if you tonight would be awakened, say at two in the morning and here is an angel sitting at the foot of your bed, shaking your toe to wake you up. You open your eyes and here is this bright, shining, creature and says, I've come to bring to you a new revelation to give to the world, a way to be saved. Here is the list of rules that people must follow. If they can fulfill these ten requirements then they can have salvation and they can be saved. And now I commission you to go and share this gospel with the world.

Paul said let them be accursed! There is only one gospel! There is only one true gospel! And that's the gospel of the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

⁹*As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed (anathema, Let him be accursed).*

¹⁰*For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.* I'm not trying to persuade God to change. I'm here to declare what God has revealed. And I'm not here to please men. I want to please God in presenting to you the truth, because if I would preach the message that was pleasing to men, then I wouldn't be the servant of Jesus Christ.

¹¹*But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.* This is not the gospel that has come from man.

¹²*For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.* I didn't go to Jerusalem to go to the apostles and to set down and learn from them about Jesus Christ and the relationship that we can now have to God through Him. I learned this gospel directly from Jesus Himself. It's not of man. It's not from man, but the doctrine, the gospel of grace is something that I was taught by Jesus Christ, by revelation of Jesus Christ.

¹³*For ye have heard of my conversation (my manner of living) in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:* Paul was one of the leaders in the persecution of the early church. Paul later felt horrible about this because he forced people to blaspheme Jesus Christ at the threat of death. It bothered him that he was so blinded by his traditions and the religious institutions of his day, that he could have done such things. So you've heard about what I have done in the past, the persecution of the church and the wasting of it.

¹⁴*And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.* Paul was very zealous for the things of Judaism. He was a zealot. He was a radical. He went beyond his equals, of those who he was in school with. He was being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my father. He was going to hold to on to those traditions.

The interesting thing with the Jews, the most important thing is tradition. That's the most important thing in the mind of the Jews, the tradition, to continue in the tradition of the fathers. And they will tell you very plainly that if they didn't have traditions they wouldn't have a nation. And the big threat of Christianity to them is that they say it will destroy them as a nation because they are held together by their tradition. Not necessarily by their faith in God because many of them are atheists. But it's their tradition that holds them

together. That “Fiddler on the Roof”, you know is so true. It’s tradition! You know, it’s so important to them. So Paul, was traditional. He was of that ilk that believed that this is the binding ingredient that makes a Jew a Jew.

¹⁵*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,* ¹⁶*To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:* Paul in looking back, and each of us can.

In looking back over our lives we can see how God's hand was on us from the beginning. God has a purpose for each of our lives. God began early in our lives, working in us, preparing us for the work that God had before ordained that we should accomplish for Him.

Even as Paul speaks about being separated from his mother’s womb, I can look back in my own life. I can realize how that God separated me from my mother’s womb and began early preparing me for the work that He had in mind that I should accomplish for His glory and for His kingdom. I can look back over my life. I can see each step to see how God's hand was there. How God was working. Many times I was going in the wrong direction, as Paul did. But even God used that and had a purpose in that. Then He brought me back on the right track.

Paul’s background in the Hebrews’ religion, his background in the Grecian culture, his being born a free Roman citizen, all of this was to play a part in the future as God would work out His plan in and through Paul’s life.

I look at my background, my early experiences of frustration of trying to please God with my works. Trying to be approved and accepted by God, prepared me for the teachings for on the grace of God as Paul tried to please God in the law, to prepare him for this glorious, rich message of God's grace.

And so separated from my mother’s womb, Paul said. He called me by His grace. It was not because I deserved it, but just the grace of God as manifested in my call to the ministry, that He would use me. And God's purpose was to reveal His Son in me. Paul said be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Jesus Christ. He said to Timothy, be an example of the believers. And so he is saying that the Lord chose to reveal Christ in me that I might preach Him among the heathen. So immediately when this call came on the road to Damascus, he said I did not confer with flesh and with blood.

¹⁷*Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.* ¹⁸*Then after three years* (at least three years) *I went up to Jerusalem* We don’t know, maybe it was three years after he returned to Damascus before he went to Jerusalem, we’re not certain of that. For then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem. Is that after he returned from Damascus or it that after his original call? We’re not certain. It doesn’t matter. But it was a long time between his conversion and his going up to Jerusalem to get the story from the apostles. For he got the story directly from Jesus Christ. He went out to Arabia. He went down to the area to where the law was given, to the area around Mt. Sinai, where the law was given. And there he was taught the grace by Jesus Christ Himself, by the revelation of Jesus Christ, this glorious gospel that has set the captives free, that has liberated us, was given to Paul to preach to the gentiles.

So after three years, I went up to Jerusalem *to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.* ¹⁹*But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.* Now James, the brother of John, had already been beheaded. And so it seems that James, the Lord’s brother, and Mark (Mark 6:3), lists James as one of the brothers of Jesus. So Paul here affirms that he was the Lord’s brother and he saw him. But he stayed with Peter only for fifteen days. He didn’t really confer with the apostles there. He didn’t even see them except for the Lord’s brother.

²⁰*Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.* ²¹*Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;* ²²*And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:* They didn’t know what I looked like. I was unknown to them by face. They had heard about me, but, you know, they wouldn’t recognize me if they meant me on the street corner. I was unknown by face. To the churches of Judea, that’s in the area around Jerusalem, in Judea, the surrounding area of Jerusalem.

²³*But they had heard only,* They had heard the testimony of Paul. Paul, you know, who was wasting the churches, those converted to Jesus, you know, but word had spread.

That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. What a glorious witness and testimony, preaching the faith now. The man who so strong in his endeavor to wipe out Christianity, is now preaching Christ!

²⁴*And they glorified God in me.* You know, there was great rejoicing! They were praising God because of Paul's ministry, because of the conversion, because of the dramatic work of God's Spirit in Paul's life, turning him from an enemy of Christ to a proclaimer of the gospel. And so they glorified God in me.

Jesus said, let your light so shine before men that when they see your good works, they will glorify your Father, which is in heaven. It's glorious when a person serves God in such a way that they do not become prominent, they do not become famous, but the work of the Lord becomes known. And people glorify not the man but the work of God. They glorify God who has done the work. That's what Jesus said it should be and that's how it should be that we do things, not in a very ostentatious way, not in a showy way. Not in a way that draws and attracts attention to ourselves, but we do things in such a way that it draws men to Jesus Christ and attracts men to our Lord!

Father, we thank You for the glorious gospel of grace that You revealed to Paul, that he shared with us, the grace of God that has set us free, the grace of God wherein we stand. And Lord we pray that as we go through the Book of Galatians, the we will come to a deeper, richer appreciation for the work that You have done for us for the grace of God, manifested to us through Jesus. And Lord, may You help us to be on guard, that when some would come preaching another gospel, which is not really a gospel. That we will be alerted and that we, Lord, will not leave this position of relationship through the work of Jesus to try another relationship through our works. And Lord, we will just continue in the grace of God, wherein we are set free. Bless, Lord, the study of Galatians. Open our hearts. May we hear what the Spirit would say to the church. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.