

BOOK OF GALATIANS

“The Favor of Men”

Scripture Reading: GALATIANS 1:6-10

-) **SLIDES 1-6.** Bible Jeopardy!
-) Read today’s Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 7.** We are in an expository study of the Book of GALATIANS. This is message #5. I have titled today’s message *“The Favor of Men.”*
-) In our last two lessons in GALATIANS, we covered verses 6 through 9 and learned that false teachers were creeping into the churches at Galatia, presenting to them a false gospel. Paul is very adamant in saying that those who present false gospels are to be anathema (cursed by God). Why? Because a false gospel or an incomplete gospel cannot save anyone. It’s not a position one wants to be in.
-) Today we are going to include verse 10 along with verses 6 through 9 to determine why this was happening. So, here’s today’s question. Why would a person or persons come into a church and want to present a gospel message to the people that is not true? Let’s look at some Biblical answers.
-) **SLIDE 8.** What does verse 10 tell us? *“For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.”*
-) So, lets combine what we know from verses 6-9, with this statement from Paul in verse 10 because it’s all in context. We can accurately conclude that the false teachers in the churches at Galatia found that by presenting their false gospel, they were pleasing the people and gaining their favor.

-) And we all know that there are some people who love to please other people and gain their favor.
-) Now you may be asking yourself, “*What was the false gospel they were presenting?*” The answer to that question will be found later on in this book. And that will be a future message. For now, let’s be content in knowing that a false gospel is being presented and the people like it. Let’s talk about favor.
-) **SLIDE 9.** What is favor? Webster defines “*favor*” as: “*friendly regard shown toward another especially by a superior; partiality.*” We get the word “*favorite*” from that. We may have a favorite movie, song, etc. One which we are partial to.
-) These false teachers infiltrating Galatia wanted friendly regard. They wanted the people to be partial to them and not to others and their teachings. They did not want to make any waves with the congregation. Imagine that. The bottom line is they were people pleasers. Ever heard that term?
-) **SLIDE 10.** People-pleasing is the motivational force that drives a person to make decisions based solely on the level of **APPROVAL** they believe they will receive. People-pleasers have learned that it feels good to be liked by others, so they steer their words and their actions in a direction that offers the most approval for them.
-) So, I go into one of these churches in Galatia, and I find that by feeding them something contrary to Paul’s gospel (error), they like me. I find that I am gaining their favor. I like this. I like to be liked. I really do.
-) **SLIDE 11.** Warning! When the **MOTIVE** becomes pleasing people over pleasing God, then that becomes **IDOLATRY**. When our motive is popularity (to gain favor), which in reality is solely to make me feel good about myself, we have switched gods, and we have erected a shrine to a competing god—self. And that folks is idolatry.

-) Listen. People-pleasers strive to please everyone because they are trying to please themselves. And unfortunately, such people-pleasing words and actions as we see here in Galatia will come with a cost when it concerns the gospel of Jesus Christ. And that cost is a pronouncement of anathema on those who place themselves above the true gospel of Christ.
-) Folks, this is serious!
-) **SLIDE 12.** We see a similar issue going on with Jesus and some of the Jewish rulers. JOHN 12:42-43 tells us this:
“Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.”
-) In this situation, some of the religious rulers were believing in Jesus. That’s the good news. But they would not say that publicly because, in doing so, would get them cast out of the synagogue. Certainly, can’t have that. The question becomes:
“Whose approval are you seeking?”
-) **SLIDE 13.** Jesus also addresses this issue in MATT 10:32-33. He says this: *“Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.”*
-) It may sound something like this: *“I didn’t exactly deny Christ. I just didn’t want my coworkers knowing that I am a Christian.”* Sounds like one who would rather have the approval of men than the approval of God. Sounds like a people-pleaser to me.
-) If I’m not mistaken, Peter found himself in a similar situation. When confronted with knowing Jesus, how did Peter respond? *“I don’t know the Man.”* He wasn’t about to be associated with a person who was about to be put to death. In that moment, Peter placed the approval of men above the approval of God.

-) **SLIDE 14.** This situation we see here in Galatia, we are seeing in many churches today. And the apostle Paul warned us it would happen. In 2TIM 4:3-4, he writes this: *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”*
-) And people-pleasing is a two-way street. It’s a little bit of what the people want to hear, and a little bit of what the false teacher will graciously provide. They actually feed off each other.
-) It’s not that the false teacher goes busting down the doors of a church and inundate the congregation with false doctrine. No. That’s too much in-your-face. They find out what the people want to hear, and then they tell them what they want to hear. It’s a little bit me, it’s a little bit you.
-) And folks, that is exactly what is happening in too many churches around the world today; especially here in America. And it has happened so subtly over the past 120 years, that today we find ourselves in a terrible mess.
-) Sure, there are people who thirst for the truth. That’s you. I know that’s why you’re here. And I’m convinced that all of you would not settle for anything less than the truth. But people like you (us) and no longer the norm. We are the exception. And we are a minority.
-) So, let’s look a little more at these words from Paul to Timothy. Why are people not seeking the truth? I want to give you two reasons (there’s more) why people have itching ears.
-) **SLIDE 15.** #1. Too many people today are not seeking truth. They are seeking fulfillment of their **CARNAL** desires. Just look at the Word-Faith movement. They turn Jesus into a genie who will provide all your needs, get you out of debt, make you well, and find you the best parking spot at Walmart.

-) This Word-Faith false gospel delivers exactly what the human condition (our flesh) craves. There is nothing in their gospel about denying oneself, taking up your cross, and following Jesus. There is nothing in their gospel about how trials will test and perfect our faith. Actually, their message is that if you have trials, you don't have enough faith.
-) But you see, the bottom line is theirs is a message the people want to hear. It's a message of self-fulfillment.
-) And there's a good chance that if you turn on "Christian" TV, you will see this. Why? Because satisfying our carnal desires is popular, desirable, and it sells—all while making the TV preacher rich. That TV preacher is a people pleaser.
-) **SLIDE 16**. #2. Too many people today are not seeking truth. They are seeking a message that is not **OFFENSIVE**. This works both ways too. The people do not want to hear about sin and judgment. They do not want to hear that their actions have consequences. They want to hear that God loves them and approves of them just the way they are.
-) They want a church and a preacher who will tell cute stories; one who never makes any demands of the people to rise in their roles as men and women in the church and in the home; one who never challenges the people to get out of their comfort zone and share the gospel or get involved in any kind of ministry work. They want a country club that has a church name over the front door.
-) And there are leaders of churches who will never preach a message that is offensive because, if they do, people and their money will go away. Can't have that. They prefer prestige, power, and popularity. After all, big numbers mean I must be really good at what I do. It's all about people pleasing and tickling itching ears. It reminds me of Sally Fields' 1984 acceptance speech for winning an Oscar when she said, "*I can't deny the fact that you like me, right now, you like me!*"

-) When God is in the equation of who we need to please, the answer is obvious. We please God, not people or anything else. And Paul makes it clear what is at stake if our desire is to please the people. What does he say? If we are trying to please men, then we are not a bondservant of Christ.
-) We all need to decide. Who do we really desire to please? Or let me ask it this way. Do you desire to be a bondservant of Christ?
-) Eventually we will arrive at the place in this epistle where we will identify exactly what the false teaching was in these churches. At that time, we will revisit this message to find how and why these false teachers were people-pleasers.
-) The truth isn't always easy, but it does matter. And it will set you free!

3/8/2020 at Beech Grove Christian Church