

BOOK OF GALATIANS

“A Transformed Man”

Scripture Reading: GALATIANS 1:13-18

-) **SLIDES 1-6.** Bible Jeopardy!
-) **SLIDES 7-8.** Read today’s Scripture text.
-) We are in an expository study of the Book of GALATIANS. Since we have missed over 2 months since I preached on this Book, here’s a quick review of what we have covered from our study in the Book of GALATIANS.
-) **SLIDE 9.** In week #1 we learned that the Apostle Paul wrote this book. The main thrust of this book is to warn the people in the churches at Galatia about false teachers and false doctrine. Paul wants to make sure the people know that he is an apostle sent by God.
-) **SLIDE 10.** In week #2, Paul grants peace upon the churches, have been set free from their sins, and they should praise God for His provision.
-) **SLIDE 11.** In week #3 we learned that in less than five years after their formation, the churches in Galatia were already beginning to embrace false doctrine.
-) **SLIDE 12.** In week # 4 we learned that an incomplete gospel cannot save anybody and that both grace and law must be preached. If not, there’s missing pieces.
-) **SLIDE 13.** In week #5 we learned that the false teachers wanted to gain the favor of men. Those who desire the favor of men are not servants of God.
-) **SLIDE 14.** And in week #6 we learned that all the words of Paul have authority because he received a revelation from God and his teachings are that of Jesus Himself.

-) **SLIDE 15.** That brings us up to today. This is message #7. I have titled today's message "*A Transformed Man.*" This message complements message #6 "*A Revelation to Paul.*"
-) Whatever you do, Paul, don't upset the apple cart. Don't make waves in the synagogue. Many people don't like change. They are comfortable with their Jewish ways and their Jewish laws under the instruction of their Jewish teachers.
-) But the apostle Paul is introducing a new teaching and a new path of salvation to all the churches he is founding. Sometimes this teaching of the Christ, the arrival of the promised Messiah, is embraced with open arms. Sometimes it is met with fierce opposition. Paul must defend his calling and his ministry.
-) **SLIDE 16.** We have already laid down two important truths Paul uses to defend his ministry. 1) he received direct revelation for his teachings by Jesus Christ Himself (v12), and 2) he was not sent by man, sent through Jesus Christ (v1).
-) This is where the people at these churches in Galatia (and us) come to a crossroads. Do we believe his credentials, or not? If they are believed, then we move on accordingly, learning from the deep truths he proclaims. If they are not believed, then we remain in our own belief system—which is one with no hope. I believe Paul because I believe this is the inspired Word of God.
-) **SLIDE 17.** This morning let's unpack these six verses and look at Paul's 1) admission, 2) recommission, and 3) intermission.
-) **SLIDE 18.** First his admission. What is an admission? An admission is an acknowledgment of the truth of something. The truth of something. The truth isn't always easy, but it does matter. And it will set you free.
-) One of the most difficult tasks for a human being to do is admit that they are wrong or have done or said something wrong or have believed the wrong thing. Adam blamed God. Then he blamed the woman. Then the woman blamed the serpent.

-) Admitting the truth, when the truth is painful, is a difficult thing for a human being to do.
-) **SLIDE 19.** But that is exactly what Paul does in verse 13. *“Hey, have you heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and I tried to destroy it?”* That is what Paul did. He understands he cannot change what he used to be.
-) **SLIDE 20.** And then he continues in v14 to explain why he did those things: *“I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.”*
-) **SLIDE 21.** So, what was Paul’s admission? Paul admitted that his **ZEAL** for Judaism drove him to persecute the church. He loved the Law. He loved Judaism. He loved the traditions of men. He loved enforcing what he believed to be right. And how dare anyone introduce new teachings contrary to the Law.
-) We have certain beliefs too, don’t we? We have beliefs about the way we keep house or beliefs how to raise children, and beliefs about this issue or that issue. We also have beliefs about Biblical issues we take stands on. I know I do.
-) **SLIDE 22.** Have you ever had a change in belief about a Biblical issue because the Word of God was convicting you otherwise? I know I have.
-) I thought one way about a Biblical issue until I heard sound Bible preaching over and over from trusted preachers and finally came to the point where I couldn’t disagree any longer with what the Scriptures taught.
-) That’s what happened to Paul. He had a Damascus Road experience (ACTS 9:1-19). He had an encounter with Jesus Himself. And this encounter changed the heart and the mind of Paul. Because that is what Jesus does. He transforms people.

-) **SLIDE 23.** With that in mind, let's move on to the Paul's recommission. What is a recommission? A recommission is to appoint or assign to a task or function a second time. Paul was first commissioned by his fellow Jewish leaders to persecute the church (the Way) and destroy it. Again, we see that in v13. Now he's about to be recommissioned.
-) **SLIDE 24.** How does that recommission happen? Paul explains that change in v15-16a. *"But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles."*
-) **SLIDE 25.** How did Paul get recommissioned? **GOD** set him apart from his mother's womb. This is deep. This is where our theological truths are going to go pretty deep. This is where we must talk about the sovereignty of God and divine election. Not a popular topic in churches and among Christians today.
-) I spoke earlier about Biblical issues where I once believed this way, then I had a change of mind and heart. This is one of them. And I want to explain this issue to you in the simplest, and most sincere, and the best Biblical way I can.
-) In America we have many freedoms. We can do most anything we want within the scope of the law. We have volition which is the ability to choose. We can move to Montana if we want. We can eat at any restaurant. Choose where we shop.
-) For the most part we are only limited by our resources.
-) **SLIDE 26.** But what about God? The Bible teaches us that God is sovereign. PSALM 135:6 defines this word "sovereign" well: *"Whatever the Lord pleases, He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps."* I like that. God in control.
-) **SLIDE 27.** There are usually two reason why many Christians struggle with the concept of God's sovereignty: 1) they can't quite grasp the concept. It's deep. And I understand that.

-) It's a divine concept and we do not know the secret things of God. 2) They just don't want to believe in God's sovereignty because it's an infringement on their freedom of choice.
-) **SLIDE 28.** But the bottom line is we fail to let God be God. Or maybe we don't want Him to be God. We want Him to be just like us. PSALM 50:21-22: "*These things you have done and I kept silence; You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes. Now consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you in pieces, and there will be none to deliver.*" Explain.
-) **SLIDE 29.** ISAIAH 55:8-11: "*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.*" Explain.
-) **SLIDE 30.** ISAIAH 46:9-11. "*Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.*" Explain.
-) **SLIDE 31.** In ACTS 9:13-16, Ananias is not certain about what the Lord is asking Ananias to do. He is afraid of Saul. The Lord responds to Ananias in 9:15-16 and says this: "*Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake.*"
-) This is exactly what happened to Paul. God set him apart from his mother's womb for God's purpose for God's good pleasure.

-) And I have to sit back and ask myself, “*Who am I to argue with God’s purpose or God’s plan or God’s good pleasure? Will the clay talk back to the potter?*”
-) Paul has now become a new creation in Christ—not by his choice but by a divine decree from God. This now becomes a two-way street in the life of Paul. Not only does Paul himself need to relearn his theology, but he is now on a mission to see other people changed by the same Word of God.
-) **SLIDE 32.** And that leads us to Paul’s intermission. What is an intermission? An intermission is an interval between periods of activity. And we see that intermission in verses 16 through 18.
-) **SLIDE 33.** “*God ... was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem.*”
-) If we go back to ACTS 9, we know that there were those who wanted to take Paul’s life after his conversion. He was lowered in a basket outside the walls of Damascus. Where did he go from there? If we only had the Book of ACTS, it appears he went immediately to Jerusalem.
-) But our text here in GALATIANS gives us more history. Before Paul ever went to Jerusalem (v18), he spent three years in Arabia and Damascus. This was Paul’s intermission. So, what was the purpose of this intermission.
-) **SLIDE 34.** The **PURPOSE** of Paul’s intermission was for Paul to let everyone know that he was neither trained by nor sent from men. Why is this important? We must get back to his defense for his ministry.

-) His defense is he is an apostle—one trained directly by and sent directly by Jesus Himself. Three years. The same amount of time the other apostles spent walking with Jesus.
-) Had he gone immediately to Jerusalem after his conversion, everyone could say he was trained and sent by men. But as one who is critical in the foundation of the church, he could or would lose credibility if that were the case.
-) Let's conclude. Paul makes an admission of a blemished past. Paul states his recommissioning because he was set apart by God for His purpose and His plan and His pleasure. Then Paul takes a 3-year intermission to prove that his calling, his training, and his apostleship are all from Jesus Himself. I believe that's a very good case for the authority of Paul's teachings.
-) The truth isn't always easy, but it does matter. And the truth will set you free!

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