

BOOK OF GALATIANS

“Missing Pieces”

Scripture Reading: GALATIANS 1:6-9

-) **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 #4. I have titled today’s message *“Missing Pieces.”*
-) Last week we looked at these same verses, 1:6-9. In that message we learned that the apostle Paul was extremely upset over the fact that false teachers were creeping into the churches at Galatia, presenting to them a false gospel—one that was contrary to the one true gospel—and they were doing this in less than five years after these churches were founded.
-) **SLIDE 8**. We concluded by saying that anything other than the true gospel cannot save anyone. How dangerous is that? A false gospel places people on a path of **ETERNAL** damnation.
-) Today I want to talk about another form of a false gospel. One that can equally damn.
-) There is a gospel message out there today that is not exactly a false gospel per se, but it is one that is just as deadly as a false gospel. And it is a message that is getting very popular in churches today.
-) What’s the danger? The danger is that this is what people will hear from preachers they trust. The deception is this message will fill their mind with information that when their days are over will take them straight to the pits of hell. Why? Because this is all they knew. This is what they were taught. And this is all they ever believed. This is who they are.

-) And, unfortunately, this is the only thing they will take to their grave with them. So, what is the “this” that I am speaking about? First let me tell you what it is not.
-) It is not where a denomination or a church or a pastor distorts the Scripture for their own justification and calls evil good and good evil. Although that in itself is wrong (GAL 1:6-9).
-) It is not where a denomination or a church or a pastor speaks blatant lies denying the Resurrection or the Virgin Birth or the Trinity. Although that in itself is wrong.
-) It is not where a denomination or a church or a pastor tells you that you are a little god and your faith ultimately has power and mastery over the sovereign will of God. Although that in itself is wrong.
-) It is not where a denomination or a church or a pastor is spiritually dead and preaches to a room full of spiritually dead people who are there strictly out of obligation. Although that in itself is the result of doing wrong over the years.
-) So, what is this? We now have some ideas of what it is not, so let me tell you what “this” is. I will tell you what it is by using an analogy, a story.
-) For a little over 10 years I worked at McClung Companies in their shipping department packing and shipping boxes. I had 6 customers that I served. The boxes I shipped went to the customers of my customers. Most shipments were sent via UPS or FedEx. Occasionally I ship internationally, and those orders would go via USPS.
-) On occasion, I would get very large orders. When I did, it is more cost effective to ship those orders via freight. Freight is when you skid it up, shrink wrap it, and have a truck come in to transport your shipment to the customer.
-) One day I got a large order—over 900 pounds of merchandise to ship. UPS and FedEx costs are outrageous.

-) So, I called my customer and explained to her that I could save her a lot of money in shipping costs if I would ship this order via freight verses UPS or FedEx. The shipment time will be about the same. She agreed and gave me the green light on freight.
-) I got the shipment ready (3 skids), the truck came in, I got it loaded, and away it goes. In a few days it will be arriving at the customer site.
-) In a few days I got a call from my customer and she is not very happy. I ask why. She explains that according to my recommendation this order should be shipped via freight. So, she agreed. And she did save a few dollars.
-) But the problem is this. Unfortunately, when shipping by freight the customer must have access to a dock where the truck can unload the skids. This customer does not have a dock, nor do they have access to one anywhere nearby. The truck is not equipped with a lift gate. In other words, the 3 skids cannot be unloaded. Sure, the shipment got there, the customer saved a bunch of money, but what good is it if the merchandise cannot be removed from the truck?
-) But here's my point. What I told my customer was correct. Shipping via freight for large orders will save them money. And it did. But what I failed to tell my customer was that any customer receiving a freight shipment must have a dock so the skids can be removed from the truck. I knew that. I just didn't tell her.
-) So, it's not that I told my customer a lie; I never presented false information, it's just that I didn't tell my customer the whole truth. There were missing pieces to my shipping arrangement that I failed to share. And my failure to do so led to a very unhappy ending to this shipment story.

-) The analogy I want to make with this story is what I see happening in many churches today. And it seems to be found more in larger churches than in smaller ones.
-) Here's the issue. The whole truth is not being taught. There are missing pieces to the gospel message.
-) There is a movement going on in churches today which virtually wants to stamp out anything related to the "Law" part of the gospel message. Let me explain.
-) **SLIDE 9.** The complete gospel message is made up of **LAW** and **GRACE**. Two sides. The Law teaches us that we have a **PROBLEM**, (sin), and grace teaches us that there is a **SOLUTION** (Jesus Christ). And both need to be preached.
-) **SLIDE 10.** ROMANS 6:23 sums this up rather well in one verse: "*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"
-) But what's happening is this. I go into a church and I hear about the love of God. And I can't deny that as a pastor. That is true. The Bible does teach that God is love. But then I go back the next Sunday and hear about the love of God. Then I go back the next Sunday and hear about the love of God. Then I go back the next Sunday and hear how God is love and loves me just the way I am.
-) So, every Sunday I go back to that church because the pastor makes me feel good about myself. The messages are uplifting. He's so positive. He's building my self-esteem. And I feel good when I leave the church. And boy, this church is growing and growing.
-) **SLIDE 11.** You may be asking yourself, "*Well, what's wrong with that?*" The problem is this. An **INCOMPLETE** gospel message, one with missing pieces, does not and cannot **SAVE** anybody.

-) As I go back and look at the steps of salvation, the first step is understanding that my sin has separated me from God. But false preachers do not and will not preach on sin. The word “*sin*” is not in their vocabulary anymore. The word “*sin*” is a bad word and you better not say it in church anymore.
-) But if I never hear about my sin, or made aware of what those sins may be, or given the opportunity to repent, then the atonement and the forgiveness made possible by Jesus Christ on the cross or His resurrection makes no sense.
-) And if I am not made aware of my sin (the law part of the gospel), then it is impossible for me to confess and ask forgiveness of those sins to God and also impossible to repent (turn away) from those sins. I will even think my sinful life is acceptable to God. After all, he loves me just the way I am because that’s what the preacher taught me.
-) ROMANS 10:13 says that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. So, I ask: Why should I call on the name of the Lord? Do I want a Savior, or do I want a loving God who accepts everything I am and everything I do? Do I want my sins to be atoned for or do I go on as part of a social club church that makes me feel really warm and fuzzy?
-) ROMANS 10:9,10 says that if I confess with my mouth that Jesus is Lord and if I believe in my heart that the Father raised Jesus from the dead I will be saved. So how can I understand and believe in the Resurrection if I’m really not sure why Jesus had to die and then rise from the grave?
-) The big deception going on in churches (big and small) today is this: the people in that church are not being told the whole truth. It’s not that what they are told is totally wrong. Oh yes. God is a God of love and grace. But He is also a God of justice and of wrath. He is perfect and holy and cannot look upon, be in the presence of, or condone sin in any form.

-) So, if the only thing I ever hear is how good and loving God is, (which is Touched by an Angel theology) and never hear about the consequences of my sin and my need to repent, then I hear an incomplete gospel message and an incomplete gospel message does not have enough power to save anyone.
-) The apostle Paul tells us in our Scripture reading this morning that if anyone preaches a gospel message other than the one he preached, let them be eternally condemned. I promise you Paul never preached an incomplete gospel message.
-) He preached the whole truth. He preached the message of the cross and the Resurrection. He preached that the wages of my sin is death. And he also preached the love of God through Christ (grace) .
-) A complete gospel message is paramount. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. And what you hear is what you know. And what you know is what you believe. And what you believe is the only thing that you will take to the grave with you.
-) The freight truck carrying the free gift of salvation is passing people's houses because many don't have a dock to unload the cargo because they were never told they needed one. A gospel message with missing pieces will never save anyone.
-) The truth isn't always easy, but it does matter. And the truth will set you free!

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