

Free: The Message of Galatians Then & Now

Lesson Two – Born Free!

Galatians 1:11-24

*For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God?
Or am I striving to please men?
If I were striving to please men,
I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.
Galatians 1:10*

We live to please the Lord. Thus, He must be preeminent in our lives. That is why we “study to show [ourselves] approved unto God: workmen that [do not need] to be ashamed” (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV).

We do not lower the bar; we raise the bar. The Bible is not just words to you, but it is your life (Deuteronomy 32:47).

We have through Bellevue Women what Jen Wilkin calls the three-legged stool of active learning.

- A. Independent Study
- B. Small Group Discussion
- C. Teaching

I. Grace – What God requires, God provides!

God’s Riches at Christ’s Expense

Genesis 3 - The shedding of the blood of the innocent on behalf of the guilty to cover sin – God provides the skins of the animals to cover Adam and Eve.

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel...The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:15 & 21).

We have the promise and the provision.

Genesis 6-9 - Noah, God commanded the number and type of animals and then caused them to come to the Ark and to enter, then God closed the door.

"Of clean animals and animals that are not clean and birds and everything that creeps on the ground, there went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded Noah" (Genesis 7:8-9).

Genesis 22 - God provided the ram on the mountain as the offering that He required – the substitute for Isaac. Abraham called God, *Jehovah Jireh*.

"Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. Abraham called the name of that place The Lord Will Provide, as it is said to this day, 'In the mount of the Lord it will be provided'" (Genesis 22:13-14).

Exodus - Moses – God told the people what to ask for from the Egyptians. They plundered the Egyptians and had everything they needed for the construction of the tabernacle.

"I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians" (Exodus 3:21-22).

Romans 3:23 & 6:23 - We see God's ultimate provision in Christ - God demands holiness and provided it for us through His Son, Jesus, Who entered the world through the womb of a virgin. He lived a sinless life and died an atoning death on the cross, paying our sin debt. He paid the debt we could never pay that we might have our sins not only covered but wiped away! We become the very righteousness of God in Christ. God provides what He requires for salvation.

In Galatians, Paul gives an in-depth description of our freedom from the law. God's requirement of holiness has not changed. We now have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us – as He is released in our lives, He provides the holiness God requires. He conforms us to Christlikeness through sanctification and will ultimately complete the transformation in glorification. We will look at this more in-depth next week in Galatians 2.

Peace – *Shalom*

“The ancient Hebrew concept of peace, rooted in the word ‘shalom’, meant wholeness, completeness, soundness, health, safety and prosperity, carrying with it the implication of permanence” (JewsforJesus.org). The peace of God and peace with God.

II. Paul’s Revelation (Galatians 1:11-12)

Paul did not receive the gospel from men but from a direct revelation of Jesus Christ. It was an unveiling of salvation that completely changed his life.

“A term expressive of the fact that God has made known to men truths and realities which men could not discover themselves” (*Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1966, 922).

God must unveil the gospel for any of us to be saved. The Lord pursues us, calls us, and convicts us of our sin. We must choose to turn toward Him instead of running from Him.

Paul walked by faith and listened and obeyed the voice of the Lord. God spoke and He is still speaking! He speaks primarily through His Word, but He also speaks through the inner witness of His Spirit, through nature and through others.

“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Andrew Murray wrote:

Each word carries with it all the life of God, all His saving power and love. God speaking in His Son! Surely they who have begun to know Him will be ready to cast aside everything for the sake of hearing Him...But the words of God – they are creative deeds, they give what they speak... When God speaks in His Son, He gives Him to us, not only for us and with us, but in us (*The Holiest of All*, Andrew Murray p. 33).

When you read the Bible and pray, spend time listening for His still small voice. As you go throughout your day, ask the Lord to speak to you and allow you to be Christ to someone in need.

III. Paul's Pedigree (Galatians 1:13-14)

"For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless" (Philippians 3:3-6).

IV. Paul's Conversion and Proclamation (Galatians 1:15-24)

Acts 9; Acts 22:3-16

Paul was saved in Damascus. He then spent three years with the Lord in Arabia, being taught by the Holy Spirit. Paul went to Jerusalem for 15 days to meet with Peter and he also met James. He then spent 14 years in Syria and Cilicia and was the pastor of the church in Antioch. It was from there that Paul and Barnabas left on the first missionary journey. Paul's visit to Jerusalem described in Acts 15 was most likely his third visit to Jerusalem which explained why he was still unknown by sight to most of the Jews.

"But only, they kept hearing, 'He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy.' And they were glorifying God because of me" (Galatians 1:23-24).

Paul's life was radically changed by Christ!

Salvation is by grace through faith. Grace alone saves us. Not salvation plus good works, church membership, or (you fill in the blank). It is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone!

Grace – What God requires, God provides!