

## Trinity Lutheran Church

Norman, Oklahoma – www.tlcnorman.org

### The Book of Galatians

Theme: “The True Gospel You Have Received”

Date: 2-27-22

Lesson: 1 - Chapter 1:1-5

### TEXT AND STUDY



(1) Paul, an apostle--not from men nor through man, but through **Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—** (Acts 1:22; 2:24, 32; 9:1,15; 17:18; 20:24; Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 1:1; 15:8,20; Php 3:4-14; 1 Pet 1:3)

(2) and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: (Acts 13:14 – 14:23; 16:6; Php 4:20,21; 2 Tim 4:10; 1 Pet 1:1)

(3) Grace to you and peace from **God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,** (John 14:27; 20:19; Rom 1:7; Eph 1:2)

(4) **who gave himself for our sins** to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, (Mt 1:21; 20:28; Jn 1:29; 1 Cor 1:20; 15:3; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; 6:12; 1 Pet 2:24)

(5) **to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.** (Rom 9:5; 11:36; 16:27; Eph 3:21; 1 Tim 1:17)

### God's Grace in Galatians †

God's grace cannot be compromised. Law and gospel cannot be mingled. That is the situation which Paul encounters in Galatians. Some very sincere Jewish Christians from Judea were troubling newly founded churches by insisting that the Gentile members submit to circumcision and other aspects of the ceremonial law, for in their view faith in the gospel was not sufficient—observance of the ceremonial law must be added.

Paul immediately and emotionally counteracts the claims of these Judaizers by sending a scorching letter, although he no doubt was aware that this specific item would soon be discussed by the council at Jerusalem. He bluntly supposes a hypothetical situation: “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!” (1:8) and later asserts: “I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” (2:21). False doctrine which affects God's grace, in Paul's judgment, must be “nipped in the bud.”

### Luther on Galatians †

“He [Paul] boasts that his doctrine and office are from God alone, in order that he might silence the boast of the false apostles . . . He says it is not true, even if an angel were to preach differently, or he himself . . . and concludes that everyone must be justified without merit, without works, without law, through Christ alone.

“ . . . He shows that the law brings sin and a curse rather than righteousness. Righteousness is promised by God, fulfilled by Christ without the law, given to us—out of grace alone.

“ . . . he teaches the works of love that ought to follow faith” (LW 35:384).

## Author

The opening verse identifies the author of Galatians as the apostle Paul. Apart from a few 19th-century scholars, no one has seriously questioned his authorship.

## Date and Destination

The date of Galatians depends to a great extent on the destination of the letter. There are two main views:

1. *The North Galatian theory.* This older view holds that the letter was addressed to churches located in north-central Asia Minor (Pessinus, Ancyra and Tavium), where the Gauls had settled when they invaded the area in the third century B.C. It is held that Paul visited this area on his second missionary journey, though Acts contains no reference to such a visit. Galatians, it is maintained, was written between A.D. 53 and 57 from Ephesus or Macedonia.

2. *The South Galatian theory.* According to this view, Galatians was written to churches in the southern area of the Roman province of Galatia (Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe) that Paul had founded on his first missionary journey. Some believe that Galatians was written from Syrian Antioch in 48-49 after Paul's first journey and before the Jerusalem council meeting (Ac 15). Others say that Galatians was written in Syrian Antioch or Corinth (between 51 and 53.)

## Occasion and Purpose

Judaizers were Jewish Christians who believed, among other things, that a number of the ceremonial practices of the OT were still binding on the NT church. Following Paul's successful campaign in Galatia, they insisted that Gentile converts to Christianity abide by certain OT rites, especially circumcision. They may have been motivated by a desire to avoid the persecution of Peter and his associates. To their fraternizing with Gentiles (see 6:12). The Judaizers argued that Paul was not an authentic apostle and that out of a desire to make the message more appealing to Gentiles he had removed from the gospel certain legal requirements.

Paul responded by clearly establishing his apostolic authority and thereby substantiating the gospel he preached. By introducing additional requirements for justification (e.g., works of the law) his adversaries had perverted the gospel of grace and, unless prevented, would bring Paul's converts into the bondage of legalism. It is by grace through faith alone that man is justified, and it is by faith alone that he is to live out his new life in the freedom of the Spirit.)

## Theological Teaching†

Galatians stands as an eloquent and vigorous apologetic for the essential NT truth that man is justified through faith in Jesus Christ—by nothing less and nothing more—and that he is sanctified not by legalistic works but by the obedience that comes from faith in God's work for him, in him and through him by the grace and power of Christ and the Holy Spirit. It was the rediscovery of the basic message of Galatians that brought about the Reformation. Galatians is often referred to as "Luther's book," because Martin Luther relied so strongly on this letter in his writings and arguments against the prevailing theology of his day. A key verse is 2:16 (see note there.)

## Outline †

- I. Introduction (1:1-9)
  - A. Salutation (1:1-5)
  - B. Denunciation (1:6-9)
- II. Personal: Authentication of the Apostle of Liberty and Faith (1:10-2:21)
  - A. Paul's Gospel Was Received by Special Revelation (1:10-12)
  - B. Paul's Gospel Was Independent of the Jerusalem Apostles and the Judean Churches (1:13-2:21)
    1. Evidenced by his early activities as a Christian (1:13-17)
    2. Evidenced by his first post-Christian visit to Jerusalem (1:18-24)
    3. Evidenced by his second post-Christian visit to Jerusalem (2:1-10)
    4. Evidenced by his rebuke of Peter at Antioch (2:11-21)
- III. Doctrinal: Justification of the Doctrine of Liberty and Faith (chs. 3-4)
  - A. The Galatians' Experience of the Gospel (3:1-5)
  - B. The Experience of Abraham (3:6-9)
  - C. The Curse of the Law (3:10-14)
  - D. The Priority of the Promise (3:15-18)
  - E. The Purpose of the Law (3:19-25)
  - F. Sons, Not Slaves (3:26-4:11)
  - G. Appeal to Enter into Freedom from Law (4:12-20)
  - H. The Allegory of Hagar and Sarah (4:21-31)
- IV. Practical: Practice of the Life of Liberty and Faith (5:1-6:10)
  - A. Exhortation to Freedom (5:1-12)
  - B. Life through the Spirit, Not by the Flesh (5:13-26)
  - C. Call for Mutual Help (6:1-10)
- V. Conclusion (6:11-18)