

Trinity Lutheran Church

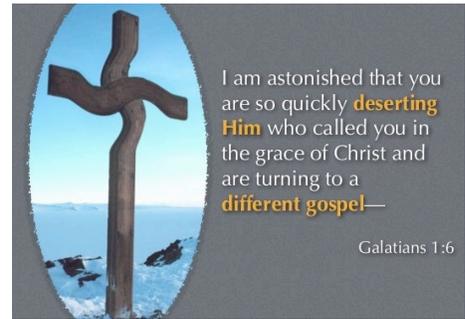
Norman, Oklahoma – www.tlcnorman.org

The Book of Galatians

Theme: “The True Gospel You Have Received”

Date: 3-20-22

Lesson: 4 - Chapter 1:5-9



TEXT AND STUDY

(5) **to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

(Doxology = praise of God; Rom 9:5; 11:36; 16:27; Eph 3:21; 1 Tim 1:17; 2 Tim 4:18)

(6) I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in **the grace of Christ** and are turning to a different gospel-- (7) not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort **the gospel of Christ.**

(Jer 23:16,36; Ac 4:12; 15:1,24; 16:6; 18:23; Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 3:11; 2 Cor 11:4,13; Eph 1:13; 1 Th 2:2; 2 Th2:14; 1 Tim 1:3)

(8) But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you **a gospel** contrary to **the one we preached** to you, let him be accursed. (9) As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you **a gospel** contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

(anathema = cherem = cursed = something devoted to destruction by God;

Lev 27:28,29; Dt 7:26; Jsh 6:17;

1 Cor 15:1; 1 Cor 12:3; 16:22; Rom 9:3; 16:17)

Luther's Commentary. Vol. 26

5. To whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

In their writings the Hebrews make it a custom to mingle praise and thanksgiving, a custom observed both by the Hebrews and by the apostles, as is evident very often in Paul. For **the name of the Lord** should be held in great reverence and should never be mentioned without praise and thanksgiving, which are a certain kind of worship and divine service. In secular matters, when we speak the name of a king or a prince, we make it a custom to do so with some nice gesture, reverence, and genuflection. Much more should we bow the knee of our heart when we speak about **God**, and we should mention **the name of God** with gratitude and the greatest reverence.

6. I am astonished.

You see here the art and skill with which Paul treats his Galatians, who had fallen away and had been led astray by the false apostles. He does not attack them with harsh and stern words; he speaks paternally, not only bearing their fall with patience but even excusing it somewhat. He also shows maternal affection toward them; he speaks gently to them, and yet in such a way that he scolds them, though with words that are very appropriate to the purpose.

Toward their betrayers, by contrast, he is extremely violent and indignant. He blames everything on them, and so at the very opening of his epistle he erupts into fulminations against them. “If anyone,” he says, “is preaching to you **a gospel** contrary to that which you

received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:9). Later on, in the fifth chapter, he threatens them with condemnation: “He who is troubling you will bear his judgment, whoever he is” (Gal. 5:10). He also invokes a terrible curse upon them: “I wish those who unsettle you would mutilate themselves!” (Gal. 5:12.) These are dreadful words against the righteousness of the flesh or of the Law.

Paul could have treated the Galatians with less courtesy and denounced them more roughly, something like this: “A plague on your apostasy! I am ashamed of you. Your ingratitude wounds me. I am angry with you.” Or he could have exclaimed against them tragically: “O what an age! What habits!” But since it is his aim to raise up the fallen and, with fatherly care, to recall them from their error to **the Gospel**, he refrains from these harsh words, especially at the beginning, and addresses them with great gentleness and mildness.

Seeking as he was to heal the wounded, it would not have been right for him to make their wound worse by applying a sharp and painful plaster to it and thus to hurt the wounded instead of healing them. Therefore he could not have found sweeter or gentler words than these: “I am astonished,” by which he made clear both that it saddened him and that it displeased him that they had fallen away from him

Here Paul lives up to his own rule, which he gives later on in the sixth chapter (Gal. 6:1): “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual, etc.” We, too, should follow this example. We should show that toward those poor disciples who have been led astray we feel as parents feel toward their children, so that they may see our paternal zeal and maternal feelings toward them and may see that we seek their salvation.

But when it comes to the devil and his servants, the originators of perversion and sectarianism, we should follow the example of the apostles. We should be impatient, proud, sharp, and bitter, despising and condemning their sham as sharply and harshly as we can. When a child has been bitten by a dog, the parents chase the dog but console and soothe the weeping child with the sweetest of words.

Paul has wonderful skill in treating the troubled consciences of those who have fallen. By contrast the pope erupts like a tyrant and hurls his fulminations and curses against those who are miserable and troubled in their consciences, as one can see in his bulls, especially in the bull on the Lord’s Supper. The bishops are not a bit better in the performance of their duty. They do not preach the **Gospel** or concern themselves with saving men’s souls. All they try to do with everything they say and do is to establish and maintain their sovereignty over men.

That so quickly.

You see that Paul is complaining about how easy it is to fall from faith. In the same vein he warns Christians in another passage: “Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). By our own experience we are proving daily how difficult it is for the mind to acquire and keep a steadfast faith, and how difficult it is to present a perfect people before **the Lord**. A man may labor for a decade before he puts some small church into proper order. And once it is in order, along comes some fanatic who cannot do anything.

LIFE APPLICATION

Why is that we can so quickly desert the true Gospel and follow a false Gospel?