

Trinity Lutheran Church

Norman, Oklahoma – www.tlcnorman.org

The Book of Galatians

Theme: “The True Gospel You Have Received”

Date: 4-10-22

Lesson: 7 - Chapter 1:13-24



TEXT AND STUDY

(13) For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted **the church of God** violently and tried to destroy it. (14) And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.

(Mt 15:2; Mk 7:5; Ac 8:1-3; 21:20; 26:1-18; 1 Cor 10:32; Php 3:6)

(15) But when **he who had set me apart** before I was born, and who called me by **his grace**, (16) was pleased to reveal **his Son to me**, in order that I might preach **him** among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; (17) nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

(Is 49:1-5; Jer 1:5; Mt 16:17; Ac 9:1-31; Rom 1:1; 8:28; 1 Cor 15:9,50; Eph 6:12)

(18) Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. (19) But I saw none of the other apostles except James **the Lord's** brother. (20) (In what I am writing to you, before **God**, I do not lie!) (21) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. (22) And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are **in Christ**. (23) They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." (24) And they **glorified God** because of me.

**(Mt 9:8; 13:55; 16:18; Mk 6:3; Lk 2:2; 8:19; Jn 1:42;
Ac 6:7-9; 8:3; 11:30; 12:17; 15:13; 21:18,19;
Rom 1:9; 9:1; 16:3; 1 Cor 1:9; 1 Th 2:14)**

Luther's Commentary - Vol. 26

“Paul is citing his own example: “I once defended Pharisaism and Judaism more vigorously and steadfastly than you and your false teachers did. Therefore if the righteousness of the Law were worth anything, I would have remained a Pharisee. For I, too, was a Pharisee, and I pursued the traditions of the fathers with greater zeal than the false apostles do today. And yet I regarded them and all Judaism as of little worth.” ...

Here Paul does not call the traditions of the fathers “pharisaical” or “human” traditions... For in this passage he is not discussing the traditions of the Pharisees; he is discussing a much sublimer issue. Therefore he calls even **the holy Law of Moses** “the traditions of my fathers,” in the sense that they were handed down and received as a legacy from the fathers.

“For these,” he says, “I was very zealous when I was a part of Judaism.” He speaks the same way to the Philippians (3:5–6): “As to the Law I was a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under **the Law** blameless.”

It is as though he were saying: “Here I may brag openly and put myself against the entire Jewish people, even the best and holiest of all those who belong to the circumcision. Let them show me, if they can, a more zealous and earnest defender of **the Law of Moses** than I was! I was an outstanding zealot for the traditions of the fathers, a devotee of the righteousness of the Law. This in itself, you Galatians, should have persuaded you not to believe these deceivers, who lay great stress on the righteousness of the Law as an issue of great importance. For if there were any grounds for boasting in the righteousness of the Law, I would have more grounds for boasting than anyone else.”

This refers to Paul’s first journey...

Here Paul testifies that immediately after he had been called by **the grace of God** to preach **Christ** among the Gentiles, he went to Arabia—and that not on the advice of any human being—to perform the task to which he had been called. This text tells you who taught him and by what means he came to the knowledge of grace and to his apostolate. “When **God** was pleased to,” he says. It is as though he were saying: “I did not deserve this; for I was zealous for **the Law of God**, but without judgment.

In fact, my foolish and wicked zeal so blinded me that, with **the permission of God**, I fell straight into even more abominable and outrageous sins. I persecuted **the church of God**; I was an enemy **of Christ**; I blasphemed **His Gospel**; and finally I was responsible for the shedding of much innocent blood. This was what I had deserved myself.

But in the very midst of this cruel rage I was called to such grace. On what grounds? Because of my outrageous cruelty? Of course not! But the **abundant grace of God**, who calls and shows mercy, pardoned and forgave me all those blasphemies. And in place of these horrible sins of mine, which I then regarded as a service most pleasing **to God**, He gave me His grace and called me to be an apostle.”

This is as though Paul were saying: “It is only **the unspeakable kindness of God** that He has not only spared me—a good-for-nothing, a criminal, a blasphemer, and a sacrilegious man—but that He has also given me the knowledge of salvation, **His Spirit, Christ His Son**, the apostolic office, and life eternal.” Seeing us in similar sins, **God** has not only pardoned our wickedness and blasphemies out of His sheer mercy **for the sake of Christ**; but He has also showered us with His great blessings and spiritual gifts.”

LIFE APPLICATION

God also called you by **his grace and** was pleased to reveal **his Son to you**.
How do we now proclaim Jesus among the nations?