

1. The Book of Galatians 1:1-5

Liberty From Lies

a message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(10-29-23)

Find this weeks' sermon audio and video message [HERE](#).

Last week we finished a series we entitled, "*A Journey in Joy thru Philipians.*"

It was different from any other teaching we've ever done here at Calvary.

The standard style of teaching that we do here at Calvary Chapel is verse by verse—but with our study thru Philipians we didn't go verse by verse thru the book (which we have done in the past)—this time we went topically thru the book according to its theme.

You see every book in the New Testament has a theme (which is especially true with the epistles)—the theme of the Book of Philipians is joy.

So, I took the main theme of *joy* and I isolated each place in the epistle where Paul mentions '*joy*' and '*rejoicing*.'

I then went to each of those verses and studied the passage to determine what the context was in which Paul was using the concept of joy—and then placed each passage under a specific heading ("Joy in Fellowship", "Joy in Service", "Joy in Giving" etc.).

Those headings then became the main points we built the series around.

Well, I'd like to do that again—but this time with the Book of Galatians. The main theme of Galatians is liberty—the liberty (or freedom) that is ours in Christ.

And since the main theme of Galatians is 'liberty' I'm calling this new series—"A Journey in Liberty thru Galatians."

The Key Verse of the Book is Galatians chapter 5 verse 1—

Galatians 5:1 (NKJV)

¹ Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

So, with that in mind, I'd like to focus our attention on 3 main areas (topics) of liberty that Paul brings up in this epistle—

I. Liberty from Lies

II. Liberty from Law

III. Liberty for Life

Now before we actually get into this epistle—let me give you some background.

Unlike Ephesus, which was a city in Western Asia Minor (modern Turkey)—Galatia wasn't a city but a province or a region in Central Turkey containing numerous cities. Paul visited this region on all three of his missionary journeys—the first time as recorded in Acts 13 & 14 where he planted churches in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.

Many believe that Paul wrote this epistle from Corinth sometime around the Spring of A.D. 53 shortly before he wrote the Epistle to the Romans.

In fact, some refer to Galatians as the '*first draft of the book of Romans*' because it essentially contains much of the same doctrinal material—but in a condensed form.

After Paul visited Galatia, he later learned that the Judaizers had come into the area after him trying to pervert the gospel that Paul had given to them—and the churches were listening to them!

Just who were the *Judaizers*?

The word *Judaizer* comes from a Greek verb meaning "*to live according to Jewish customs.*"

One author had this to say about the Judaizers—

"The Judaizers taught that, in order for a person to become a Christian, if he was a Gentile—he first had to become a Jew! He had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses. Then he could put his faith in Christ and be saved. Their message was a mixture of Christianity and Judaism—of grace and law—of faith plus works. This false doctrine was dealt with in Acts 15 and strongly condemned in the book of Galatians."

The Judaizers also tried to discredit Paul and thus turn the Galatians away from him by saying he wasn't a genuine apostle of the Lord Jesus (after all he wasn't one of the twelve apostles)—and, therefore, his message was not reliable.

And so, the Judaizers sought to destroy confidence in Paul's *message* by undermining confidence in the *messenger* himself.

Paul wrote this letter to counteract *their* message by presenting clearly the one and only true gospel—the gospel of Jesus Christ—the gospel of grace!

This was the book that changed Martin Luther's life because of its emphasis on salvation by grace through faith. In fact, Martin Luther was so attached to this book he called it '*his wife*' and many church historians maintain that the foundation of the Reformation was laid with the writing of Martin Luther's commentary on Galatians.

Galatians is the most impersonal and businesslike of all of Paul's epistles—there are no '*pleasantries*' no '*say hi to this person or that for me*' just a quick introduction by Paul of himself and then—"*OK let's get down to business!*"

The reason for that was because the gospel was under attack and souls were at stake and as such Paul had no time for small talk or pleasantries—when it came to defending the gospel Paul was all business!

I. Liberty from Lies

There's an old Bing Crosby song that contains the line, "*Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies.*"

It seems that we are living at a time when lies have become so common and so pervasive in our culture that it seems to ask a question of any substance or importance—is to invite a lie! In fact, lying has become so widespread and so culturally accepted in our day that people will often lie when there's no reason for it—even when it's easier to tell the truth they'll often still lie!

This shouldn't surprise us because our Lord Jesus Christ warned us that the closer we got to His return the more deception (lies) would ramp up.

Of course, He was speaking primarily about spiritual deception (lies of the devil) that would target the truth of God (primarily the gospel)—but I believe His comments pertain to the overall dishonesty and deception that would characterize the last days in general.

But, with regard to *spiritual* deception, Jesus warned us that this deception would eventually reach a climax with the coming of the Antichrist. (Matthew 24)

We are told in the N.T. that when the Antichrist comes onto the world scene, he will deceive the human race with the greatest lie mankind would ever be subjected to.

This would be the very lie that Satan introduced in the Garden of Eden, the lie he told Adam and Eve that caused the Fall of mankind.

We are told that this lie would eventually be presented to the whole world under the Antichrist and False Prophet—a specific lie that the Bible, in Romans 1:25 and in 2Thessalonians 2:11, calls—'The Lie!'

So, the very lie that caused the human race to fall in the beginning will be the ultimate lie that the devil will use to cause the destruction of the human race in the end!

Just what is this lie you ask—it's the lie that man can become god—starting with the Antichrist himself!—

2 Thessalonians 2:3–4, 9-12 (NKJV)

³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God... ⁹ The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Understand, the Antichrist will not be the most wicked liar to have ever existed—that distinction goes to the devil whom Jesus called the 'father of lies' in John 8:44:

John 8:44 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ You are of *your father the devil*, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning and *does not stand in the truth*, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.

When Jesus referred to Satan as "**the father of lies, who was a murderer from the beginning**"—He no doubt had in mind how Satan lied to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and 'murdered' them.

As God told them, *“In the day you eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—you will surely die!”* However, Satan told them, *“You will not die, your eyes will be opened and you’ll become gods!”*

Satan has been a murderer from the beginning of time—in that he has been a liar (a master deceiver) who keeps people from the truth by feeding them his lies so that they die in their sins and spend eternity in hell.

This folks, is at the heart of Paul’s letter to the Galatian churches—he came and gave them God’s truth (the gospel) but after he left the region Satan sent his messengers (the Judaizers) to pervert the true gospel so that it couldn’t save them.

Only the true gospel can bring new life in Christ—a false gospel, no matter how sincerely it is believed and embraced—will not—cannot save anyone!

In John’s gospel Jesus said—*“I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved...”* (John 10:9)

So, Jesus likened Himself to the *door* that leads to salvation—He went on to say: *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”* (John 14:6)

There’s only one entrance into salvation/heaven and that is thru Jesus Christ—He is the Door—He is the Way! But any door that leads to something of great value is going to be locked! Likewise, the door leading to salvation (which is priceless in value) is locked and requires a ‘key’ to open it.

What is the key that unlocks the door and allows a person to enter into Christ and find salvation—**it is The Gospel!**

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| So, the gospel is to salvation what a key is to a lock. |
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However, we all know that a key won’t unlock a door if it’s somehow gotten bent or twisted.

The key must be straight and true if it’s going to be used to open a door—and the same is true with the gospel!

If Satan can twist and pervert the gospel—he can keep the door of salvation locked to seekers—and this is where we, as the people of God, come in!

The Lord has commissioned us to go into all the world preaching the true gospel to the lost—and no one took that commission more seriously than did Paul the apostle!

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| Galatians 1:1–2 (NKJV) |
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| ¹ Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), ² and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: |
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As I said, Paul is all business and goes right on the offensive against the false teachers who claimed that Paul wasn’t a true apostle because he wasn’t one of the Twelve chosen by Jesus.

Today we hear much the same thing as people try to challenge a man’s right to be a pastor—*“Where did you get your degree? What school did you graduate from?”*

Listen, graduating from seminary doesn’t make you a pastor—it makes you a graduate!

Schools bestow degrees on men and call them '*ministers*'—but only the Lord can bestow the anointing of His Spirit on a person and call them into the ministry.

Paul wasn't ordained by man; he didn't represent any particular denomination because he was not *appointed* by man. He was appointed and *anointed* by the Lord Jesus to be an apostle (one commissioned to go forth with a message).

Galatians 1:3–5 (NKJV)

³ Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

"Present evil age"—is a reference to the devil's control of this world's system starting with the Fall in the Garden of Eden and culminating with the return of Christ Who will break the devil's rule and establish His Kingdom upon the earth.

But right now, we are living under a cursed system—an evil age of man's rebellion and rule.

The word '**evil**' is a Greek word we get the word *pernicious* (deadly, destructive) and *pornographic* from.

It speaks of a moral and spiritual evil that causes people—not simply to be content with engaging in evil things themselves—but to have a perverted desire to draw others into them as well.

Galatians 1:4 (NKJV)

⁴ who gave Himself for [because of] our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.

The Greek word for '**deliver**' means to "*pull from danger.*"

Jesus entered into this world (a condemned world) on a search and rescue mission (Luke 19:10) to pull from danger those who were lost and destined to spend eternity in hell.

He did this by going to the cross and dying for their sins and rising from the dead.

And then by reaching His hand out to them, as it were, with the gospel which if received would rescue them from the wrath to come.

Author Willaim MacDonald—

"Verse 4 should be a reminder that God is not interested in improving the world, or making men comfortable in it, but in delivering men from it. Our priorities should coincide with His".

The word **gospel** literally means '*good news*'—which implies the presence of something bad.

The '*bad news*' that makes the **gospel** such '*good news*' is that—man having rebelled in the Garden of Eden was doomed to spend eternity in hell.

This would be the judgment that all of Adam's descendants (the whole human race) would be forced to endure—and there was nothing any of us could do to escape this eternal judgment.

Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9 (NKJV)

⁴ **But God**, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ... ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

That folks is truly good news—how that God so loved fallen sinners that He sent His Son to die in our place to save us from eternal punishment in hell!

“O, I don’t want to scare people into heaven by talking about hell—I’d much rather tell them about the love of God...”

Look, Jesus talked about hell more than anyone else—in fact, He talked about it more than He talked about heaven or even love—because He didn’t want anyone to go there!

Today almost all evangelism is based on the love of God, and we hear very little based on coming judgment. Do you realize that nowhere in the Book of Acts does anyone, apostle or otherwise, ever use the love of God as a basis for presenting the gospel? Now, that doesn’t mean we can’t ever talk about God’s love when we share the gospel—but there must be a balance between the love of God for sinners and the wrath of God poured out against sin!

Without any talk of coming judgment, the gospel is reduced from an *“emergency alert siren”* to ‘happy talk!’

The gospel isn’t a message that is designed to make people feel good or happy about themselves—it’s a brutal indictment of our sinful lives and how only by Jesus dying for us on the cross is there hope of escaping the fires of hell.

In that regard, the gospel is a *warning* for people to flee coming judgment by running to Christ for safety—kind of like a tornado siren today (no one feels comforted or happy when a tornado siren begins to sound!) Too many pastors and preachers have stopped urging people to receive Jesus as the One Who will save them from hell.

Instead, they have turned Him into a sanctified ‘butler’ whose job it is to save them from all the discomforts and unpleasanties of life.

As one pastor put it—*“For these folks, prayer then becomes tantamount to ‘ringing a little bell’, calling for Butler Jesus to come and bring them up another pillow.”*

Jesus Himself was the first *‘hellfire and damnation Preacher’* of the New Covenant (John the Baptist was technically the last prophet/preacher of the Old Covenant).

The whole point in preaching the gospel is to tell people that they are lost and hell-bound—but God loves them and gave His Son to save (rescue) them!

Nowadays, many are left to wonder—*“save me from what?!”*

Unfortunately, the answer from many pulpits today seems to be—save them from poverty, depression and low self-esteem!

→ NO! Jesus came to save them from eternal judgment in hell!

The preaching of coming judgment used to dominate pulpits all across this nation and was used by God to bring about periods of revival and the Great Awakenings.

Men like Jonathan Edwards in his sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” said,

“Unconverted men are walking on an icy plank over the pit of hell and at any moment their foot can slip, and they will fall headlong into eternal destruction. The wrath of God burns against them...”

Can you image a message like this being preached in this day of political correctness where the goal of so many preachers is to keep things positive, upbeat and non-confrontational?

How does a person escape the judgment of hell—by repenting and believing the gospel.

But of course, that would pertain to the one and only true gospel—the one the Lord committed to His Church to take into all the world and preach.

Folks, only the true gospel can save us from coming judgment—everything else is a lie from the devil designed to pervert and twist the gospel so that it won’t open the door of salvation—even if a person believes it with all their hearts.

Only the truth of God will save and protect people from the lies of the devil—even as Jesus said:

John 8:31–32 (NKJV)

³¹ ...“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).