

## **“The Unique Gospel”**

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Galatians 1.1-24  
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Today we are starting a new series of sermons, in this epistle Paul allows us to see the reason why he is sending this letter but also the passion with which Paul defended the gospel and the centrality of the gospel for the rest of the Christian faith. If the gospel is negotiated, if the gospel is compromised, there is no Christianity and the churches cease to exist. Because the gospel was and is what gives rise to each church and what sustains each church, when we lose the gospel we stop being a church even though we sing, even though we preach every Sunday it is no longer a church.

The main purpose for Paul writing the epistle of Galatians comes out from the first chapter: the defense of the Gospel against the false teachings of the Judaizers (Galatians 1:6-10). Second, Paul writes this letter to defend his God-given apostleship (Galatians 1:11-2:10). Third, Paul wrote to teach that salvation is by grace alone and not by works (Galatians 3-4). Finally, fourth and last, the letter was sent to help the Galatians live out their freedom in Christ.

Galatians is the earliest epistle of the Apostle Paul and, together with the epistle of James, represents the two earliest documents in the entire New Testament. Both letters are trying to correct problems, in this case Paul is trying to correct a serious problem regarding the understanding of the gospel and, in the case of the letter of James, he is trying to correct practices that do not correspond to what the church is.

It is not as extensive as the letter to the Romans or the Hebrews, but its importance goes beyond its length given the clarity and vitality of its doctrinal content, especially regarding the doctrine of justification by faith.

Perhaps the apostle Paul hastened to write to the churches in this region of Galatia because the Judaizers were infiltrating the community of believers with ideas related to the need for circumcision and other typical Judaism practices as a requirement for

salvation, this group of people were having great success with their ideas as they had already convinced many to embrace the practices of Jewish law and then accept the gospel message.

It is as if the Judaizers were trying to define the gospel as the work of Christ plus the law of Moses. However, the reality is that the gospel plus anything else is not the gospel; the gospel alone defines the gospel. Adding the works of the law as a requirement for salvation represented a threat to the gospel that Paul was not willing to tolerate.

Paul begins to identify himself as an apostle and because of this letter and how he continues to defend the purity of the gospel, he has been known as the apostle of Christian freedom and, this letter, in turn, has been defined as the magna carta of Christian freedom.

With Christian freedom we are referring to understanding the meaning of holiness, as far as humanly we can understand it. Freedom is not about taking God's grace and turning it into debauchery, it is understanding God's grace as a gift that allows us to be free from fear, suffering and death.

This is an energetic letter, and it is related to what happens in the council of Jerusalem, reported in Acts 15. This council happened to make it clear that the Law of Moses is not necessary for salvation. Even so, Judaizers continued to infiltrate the churches in the Galatian region.

What was happening in Galatia outraged Paul because he had recently been among them and had taught him that salvation was by grace, through faith in Jesus alone. Therefore, he felt obliged to write this letter to defend the gospel and the future of believers, because these people were beginning to follow another "gospel", or rather another ideology that was anything but the gospel; For as Paul says in v. 6-10, there is only one gospel: the gospel that Jesus Christ.

Look that Paul in this first chapter uses and legitimizes his authority to write, to regulate and to correct and, Paul who was ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ himself when he received revelation of the gospel through Jesus for the three years that he remained in Arabia.

The greeting with which Paul addresses these churches is very interesting, because from this moment he is making clear the true gospel message v.3 and 4. Grace and peace, these two words are always used by Paul, Luther mentions that These two words summarize the Christian faith since thanks to our sins are forgiven and peace, the peace we have with God through his Son.

Jesus who gave himself for our sins to free us from this present evil century. Paul tells us that we have been made free from two things: from sin and from this world. In other words, the death of Christ frees us from living as this world lives: in corruption, without purpose, without meaning, lost in our own misery.

And for this the works of the law helped us at all, on the contrary, the works of the law let us see our impossibility that we have to break them, so the possibility of reaching divine standards is practically impossible. But in Christ, on the cross, we can see divine love and grace reflected, where, although we see the cause of our sin, we also see access to forgiveness and salvation and that is the freedom we receive from Jesus.

This is the greatest declaration of freedom, our sin is so immense that there was nothing we could do or offer to receive forgiveness. The only thing is the infinite holiness of the Son hanging on a cross offered in our favor.