



MONDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Read: Galatians 1:1-5

Plug In...

In Deuteronomy we learn that the Law of Moses, while good, reveals the inability of humans to achieve life. Life would only come to people who trust in the promised future work of God.

Paul here opens his letter to the Galatians proclaiming that God has rescued us from the evil age where our sinful nature trapped us from finding life.

Chew It Over...

The 500 year anniversary of the Reformation occurs this October 31st, 2017. Martin Luther kick-started the Reformation when he nailed a document to a Roman Catholic church in 1517. He had just read his Bible, from the Greek original, and discovered that [Romans 3:21-22](#) said that *apart* from law God gave the required righteousness a person needs through Jesus Christ. The Roman Catholic Church that Luther had grown up in had diverted from this truth. They kept telling people that they still have to do *works* to earn God's favour. Martin Luther then made it his mission to take people back to the truth of the Bible. He often preached from the book of Galatians, at one time calling it his favourite book of the Bible.

Over the next few weeks, leading up to the anniversary of the Reformation, we will consider the 5 big truths of the Bible, rediscovered by the Reformers. They were discovered simply by going back to the Bible. Each is clearly taught from the book of Galatians which we'll track through in the coming weeks.

Prayer Suggestion

Paul has given us the words of response to this great news of righteousness in Christ in his opening to Galatians. Prayerfully reflect on each line.



TUESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Read: Galatians 1:6-10

Plug In...

These are the strongest words recorded by Paul. To turn away from the gospel, to promote a different gospel other than the one in Scripture results in curse. This is language from Deuteronomy. The list of curses in Deuteronomy 27 start with, "*Cursed is anyone who makes an idol – a thing detestable to the Lord*" and the list ends with, "*Cursed is anyone who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out*". In Galatians 2 it will be apparent that the particular false gospel entrapping some Galatians is one that says, 'Believe in Jesus, fine, but you still need to do this from the Law of Moses to find acceptance before God'.

Chew It Over...

Given this curse danger in Galatians, this brand of false gospel, no wonder Martin Luther resonated with the letter to the Galatians.

"Wherefore it ought to be the first concern of every Christian to lay aside all confidence in works and grow in the knowledge, not of works, but of Christ Jesus, who suffered and rose for him." – Martin Luther

Prayer Suggestion

Ask that the Lord protects us from seeking the favour of humans, thereby abandoning the gospel of Jesus Christ. Should we do good today, should we sin today, request that our assurance in our salvation comes from relying, not on ourselves, but Jesus Christ.



WEDNESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Read: Galatians 1:11-12

Plug In...

Given Paul is in a battle that stakes out what is the true Christian gospel, he stresses that he got this gospel first hand from direct revelation of Jesus. That is, he saw Jesus face to face, it was not a human passing it on. He didn't learn enough so to get the title apostle, he wasn't installed by people to be an apostle, it was Jesus Christ directly that turned him around and appointed him with the task to be an apostle to the Gentiles (*cf.* [Acts 9:1-19](#)).

Chew It Over...

Verse 12 echoes verse 1. Paul is claiming authority as an apostle because he received the gospel directly from Jesus Christ. It is the only gospel that saves (vv. 6-7). Paul is saying truth matters. Get this wrong, what happens in eternity is at stake: blessing or curse?

If truth matters, this means never just accept an opinion, never merely do something because it worked over there. Always check out the basis for that truth. Paul is about to say check me out. Check out what I claim.

Who has been giving you flack over your belief in Christianity? They're essentially asking you, how can you be sure? Well share what you know. Explain the change in you. Point out the concrete evidence. And...then ask them, well how can they be sure about the way they see things?

Prayer Suggestion

Pray for your friends who are being hit with competing truth claims. Ask that God will intervene and turn them around.



THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Read: Galatians 1:13-17

Plug In...

In the public square, there are question marks over Paul. After all, he was zealously opposed to Christianity and set about trying to squash it. Then there is this moment. Paul doesn't describe the outward moment (e.g. the light, hearing a voice) or his inner feelings (relief and peace). Instead he describes it from God's perspective: "But when God, who from my mother's womb set me apart and called me by His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me, so that I could preach the gospel among the gentiles" (v.15).

Chew It Over...

It is worth reflecting on how we often present our testimonies. Paul is speaking not personally, nor psychologically, but theologically. He sees that all his previous life was not outside of God's plan, and that it was God's decision for him to become a Christian and an apostle, not Paul's.

Reflect on your circumstances theologically. No matter what causes (yours or others) have brought you to this time and place in life, the primary cause is God's plan. This should help us entrust our lives to Him, reduce anxiety, and cause us to recognise our calling and grasp it.

Prayer Suggestion

Thank the Lord that He called you by His grace. Ask for further trust that you will have confidence that events which seem random or fortuitous are all part of God's great missional plan to glorify Jesus in us.



FRIDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Read: Galatians 1:18-24

Plug In...

In Galatians, those with the false gospel are trying to connect to Moses, to the Law, to Jerusalem. The false gospel still included Jesus, sounded “Christian”, but it was a Jesus plus some of Moses’ law (e.g. [Galatians 5:2](#)). It seems that those promoting the false gospel tried to prove their credentials to those in Jerusalem (perhaps the 12 apostles). Maybe part of their charge was Paul had left the stream of teaching he got from the apostles.

In reply, Paul says he never connected with the apostles until after three years. Again, underlining that he received his gospel and commission directly from Jesus. This actually puts Paul not under the apostles, but next to them. For like them, he received the gospel directly from Jesus.

When Paul does go to Jerusalem, they compare notes so to speak, and find they have exactly the same gospel being taught.

Chew It Over...

Martin Luther was clearly critical of the false gospel in his day – just like Paul. Yet both Luther and Paul did not have as their end goal to kick people down. [NB: Luther’s goal was not to destroy the Roman Catholic Church.] Their goal was that people would *reform*, that is, come back to the truth of the gospel.

Martin Luther had this now famous adage: “In Essentials Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity.”

It is a worthy goal to unite with other denominations, but we can only unite if we hold the same essential gospel truth. As we look at the intensity of Paul in parts of Galatians, let's learn what counts as 'essential' for unity to take place.

Prayer Suggestion

Ask the Lord for a posture of not wanting to destroy but build up. Help us Lord to know when certain beliefs cancel out the gospel of Jesus and be bold in trying to get people to come back to the only gospel that saves.



WEEKEND 23-24 SEPTEMBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Martin Luther – Faith Alone

Plug In...

Martin Luther held Galatians as his favourite book in the Bible. From Luther's commentary on Galatians 1:1:

The world bears the Gospel a grudge because the Gospel condemns the religious wisdom of the world. Jealous for its own religious views, the world in turn charges the Gospel with being a subversive and licentious doctrine, offensive to God and man, a doctrine to be persecuted as the worst plague on earth.

As a result we have this paradoxical situation: The Gospel supplies the world with the salvation of Jesus Christ, peace of conscience, and every blessing. Just for that the world abhors the Gospel.

Prayer Suggestion

Given this dynamic, we know people only come to faith alone through God's enabling. We must pray for those we love.