



MONDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Read: Galatians 2:1-10

Plug In...

Paul seems to be addressing the accusations being levelled against him. Essentially a group (called 'trouble-makers' 1:8) have come to the Galatians and said something like: *The apostles up in Jerusalem were directly appointed by Jesus. And, look at them, we don't see them abandoning circumcision or the Jewish regulations. If you want Jesus to be your Messiah, then you need to get circumcised. Paul should be taking his authority from these apostles. Instead, Paul is running rogue, telling people that they can be saved without these important God-given laws.*

Paul says, here are the facts which you can verify with the so called 'big guns!' *Actually, I went to Jerusalem – a long time after Jesus Christ commissioned me – and laid out the gospel message I've been preaching. James, Peter (Cephas), and John saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel message to the Gentiles. We all agreed on what the gospel message is. We didn't come to a compromise, it was evident from the get-go.*

Chew It Over...

This is not just autobiographical info Paul is giving but he's establishing the critical message of the gospel. Some of the lines Paul uses remind us not to be over-awed by high-profile names, popularity, peer-pressure, or even religious authority (e.g. which Martin Luther set about to combat in the 1500s).

Do you go along with the crowd a lot? Give in to peer pressure (this is not just a teenager problem)? Do you second-guess yourself a lot? Do you get embarrassed regularly? This could give you clues as to where you draw your authority from. Clarity over the gospel sorts lots of this stuff out. We will see in Galatians that it is people

identifying as Christians in danger of mashing-up the gospel message. Reflect over what exerts the most influence on you. In different spheres of life that reference point may change. Is it religious authority? A celebrity? A high-powered executive?

Prayer Suggestion

Ask the Lord to continually expose for us where we are vacillating from the gospel. May our message and our lives show Jesus as Lord and that our complete faith in Him is our confidence.



TUESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Read: Galatians 2:8

Plug In...

As the Apostles and Paul clarify their mission fields, Paul says that Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised (Jews) and Paul himself with the gospel for the uncircumcised (Gentiles). They are not different gospels, but different mission fields.

Paul shows elsewhere that he doesn't really care if someone is circumcised or not, or even if they want to get circumcised or not ([Acts 16:3](#)). Paul doesn't care if one person finds a special day on the calendar more significant than the next ([Romans 14:5](#)). However, should anyone say that circumcision, or any other law, or any special observance is *necessary* to salvation then Paul will express this in the strongest possible terms. Read [Galatians 5:1-12](#).

Chew It Over...

With the way we do church, do ministry, aim to reach others, we should always ask, 'Why do we do what we do?' Is something done for a theological reason? Is something done for a pragmatic reason? Theological and pragmatic are not always mutually exclusive. But we always want to know why we do what we do, and work from the theological principle first.

Paul pragmatically circumcised Timothy at one point in order to enter a Jewish community to have opportunity to share the gospel with them. He was not saying anything theological by that action. Here in Galatians, there is a group insisting that circumcision is *necessary* to be saved. This group is making a theological statement!

Always ask, why are we doing what we are doing? Check that our reference point is not primarily 'because it works', or 'because it will be accepted'. Our first principle is, *is this true?* From there we think about *what's the best way of expressing that or achieving that here in our context?*

Prayer Suggestion

Ask the Lord that we stay tight to what is true. That we know truth. That we work from truth.



WEDNESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Read: Galatians 2:11-14 & Acts 10

Plug In...

Peter held the same gospel message as Paul. That all people can be saved through Jesus. That faith in Jesus included you in the new group God had created called the church. Peter had famously preached this ([Acts 2:14-21](#)). Peter had this revealed to him ([Acts 10](#)). Now for some reason he feared a group of Jewish people and separated from the Gentiles when eating. Paul said this deviated from the truth of the gospel.

The gospel message is not making Gentiles into Jews; it makes Jews and Gentiles into a new community called the church through faith in Jesus as Lord.

Chew It Over...

This is Peter – senior Apostle. Saw the resurrected Jesus. Experienced Pentecost. Profoundly revealed to him by God that there was no longer a Jew/Gentile distinction. Yet he compromised on the gospel truth at this occasion.

What was the motivating force that caused Peter to deviate? Are there areas in your life where you've got people BIG and God small?

Prayer Suggestion

Lord we often succumb to fearing man. Help us to realise they are dust, we are dust, you are Lord! May we act accordingly.



THURSDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Read: Galatians 2:11-21

Plug In...

At verse 15, Paul uses the language that Jews by birth would have used. Given God had chosen only Abraham's people (the Israelites, so Jews) from the whole world to be His people, the rest were considered pagan, therefore sinners. This was evident by their rank idolatry and immorality. Paul is not saying that Gentiles are more sinful than Jews – elsewhere he says they are the same before God ([Romans 3:9](#)) – but Paul is using language that reflects the way he used to think as a Jew, i.e. “We’ve got the Torah (Law), and those *sinners* don’t; we’re the special people of God, and they’re not”.

Verse 16, Paul tells the Jew, no matter what moral superiority or self-esteem you can point to, whatever advantage you find in possessing the Law, being selected as a special people, when it comes to establishing and proving your righteousness before God you are found tragically short!

The only means of claiming something before God is to claim Christ.

Chew It Over...

Verse 16 can be translated in two ways:

- “Know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by *faith in Jesus Christ*”.

- “Know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by *the faithfulness of Jesus Christ*”.

With the point Paul is making, which do you find most likely? Even if both are Scripturally true, where does the emphasis lie with each?

Prayer Suggestion

Give thanks to Jesus for paying our debt of sin on the cross. Honour Jesus for being completely obedient and earning perfect righteousness before God's Law and then giving that merit to us.



FRIDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Read: Galatians 2:19-20

Plug In...

"I've been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me".

Chew It Over...

Weave this truth into your heart.

If you are pessimistic, weighed down with guilt and regret, you despair, then understand: *you no longer live, Christ lives in you.*

If you feel good, proud at times, somewhat superior, then understand: *you are actually 'dead' in God's eyes and the good you see coming out is actually Christ living in you.*

Prayer Suggestion

May the life we now live in the body be lived by faith in the Son of God who gave Himself for us.



WEEKEND 30 SEPTEMBER - 1 OCTOBER 2017

SERIES: IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Read: Galatians 2:21

Plug In...

Paul: "I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing."

Chew It Over...

Martin Luther kick started the Reformation in 1517 after rediscovering this truth. He says on this verse:

Did Christ die, or did He not die? Was His death worthwhile, or was it not? If His death was worthwhile, it follows that righteousness does not come by the Law. Why was Christ born anyway? Why was He crucified? Why did He suffer? Why did He love me and give Himself for me? It was all done to no purpose if righteousness is to be had by the Law.

Martin Luther emerged from the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages who for centuries had taught a false and destructive message, calling it the gospel. Luther's commentary on this very verse goes on to critique the false teaching of the Roman Catholic Church of his day. [You can scroll to verse 21 [here](#).]

Prayer Suggestion

Thank you Jesus for your complete righteousness. May I never set it aside.