

The Authentic Gospel

Ice-Breaker

Think of someone who 'talks it up' about their ability or possessions. What gives them away? Compare this with someone who is genuine about what they have. What makes them authentic?

Read 1:1-5

Discuss what you think is the main idea or direction of the writer. Address any words that you're unsure of and discuss any repetitive words or ideas.

Q. Who is the letter addressed to? _____

Q. How does Paul qualify his apostleship?

Q. What is the will of the father (v4)?

Read 1:6-10

Q. What seems to be the problem in these churches? (v6-7)

Think About It.

In what ways have you witnessed people or organizations in today's context distort or divert from the true gospel? (Think about various teachings you have heard, maybe churches you have visited etc)?

Where do you think other religions have failed in understanding the true gospel and therefore the means to being right or 'justified' before God?

Discuss what you think Justification is.

In the opening verses Paul challenges the churches in Galatia about the direction they have gone and in particular the gospel they are preaching. This gospel in being changed even slightly, has now become useless, and no gospel at all. It is useless because it has deviated from the original and authentic gospel handed to them at the beginning by Paul.

Read 1:11-24

Q. What do you think the main idea or subject of this passage is?

Q. How did Paul receive this gospel?

Q. What is the difference between the belief Paul had initially and the revelation He received from Jesus?

Paul's belief system was built around the traditions of Judaism. It was in essence handed down by men, refined by men, proclaimed and distorted by men. (The very gospel he once tried to destroy was the true message from God). In this section he is at pains to prove that this new revelation given to him was not by the same mode as Judaism. In stark contrast, this gospel was not man-made or handed down to him by any man. It was a direct message or revelation given to him by Jesus.

How long was it that Paul was proclaiming his gospel, before he saw Peter and James? V18

Why do you think Paul labors the point in verses 17-24 that He did not get any revelation or teaching from Peter and the apostles and that he also did not get his revelation from men?

The authenticity of his gospel is the main idea which Paul establishes early in this letter. There are others who are in the church proclaiming another gospel. Ch2:3 implies that circumcision of believers may have been encouraged by some leading Christians in Jerusalem. This small addition to the gospel message has big implications for how someone is in a right relationship with God. Circumcision nullifies the power of Jesus' death and destroys the doctrine of Justification by faith alone in Jesus. Paul begins his defense for the preservation of the authentic gospel. He is at pains to drive the first peg into the ground that both Peter's gospel and his have not been a collaboration. Both were given by Jesus, the former while Jesus was alive, and Paul's by direct revelation from Jesus after His ascension. Although Paul and the apostles do not cross paths (apart from a brief meeting with Peter and James) their messages are both consistent in content. This is the basis of Paul's charge that his gospel is authentic.

He and Peter have both been given the same revelation from God, which is now in opposition to the traditions and works-based theology of the Jews.

The gospel of grace has arrived and Jesus is the centerpiece!

Summarise the passage you have read tonight in a brief sentence:

Pray- Spend some time praying for three people you have a connection with, who might be interested in coming to church.
