

“The Power Of God!”
Galatians 1:13-19

Introduction:

1. This Morning - We Are Going To Head Back To:
 - Paul’s Letter To The Galatian Churches:
 - As We Continue Our Study Through This Inspired Book!
 - We Need To Remember:
 - That These Churches:
 - Were Near & Dear To Paul’s Heart!
 - Because Just A Few Years Earlier:
 - God Had Used Paul & Barnabas To Establish These Churches Through The Clear & Complete Preaching Of The Gospel!
 - And In Acts 13-14:
 - We Have Recorded For Us:
 - Just What Their Message Was!
 - Whether They Were Speaking:
 - To The Jews In Their Synagogues!
 - Or Whether They Were Speaking:
 - To The Gentiles In Their Town Squares!
 - The Message Stayed The Same!
 - And That Message Of The Gospel:
 - Proved To Be “The Power Of God” In Their Lives!
 - And Changed Them From Living In Darkness To Living In God’s Light!
2. So - When We First Read:
 - In Galatians 1:6-7 - That They Were:
 - “So Soon Removed” From The True Gospel:
 - To “Another Gospel: Which Is Not Another!”
 - We Are As Surprised & Shocked:
 - As The Apostle Paul!
 - Who “Marveled” At What Was Taking Place In Their Churches!
 - So - All Throughout This First Chapter:
 - Paul Is Seeking To Prove Once Again:
 - The Gospel He & Barnabas Preached Unto Them:
 - Is The True Gospel & The Only Gospel That Can Change Their Lives!
 - In Fact - This Is Such A Serious Matter:
 - That He Wrote In 1:8-9:
 - “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. / As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed!”
 - The True Gospel Which He Preached Unto Them:
 - Is The Same Gospel He Received Directly From Jesus Christ!
 - As He Says In 1:11-12 - “But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. / For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ!”
3. And So - In Our Text For This Morning:
 - 1:13-19 - Paul Will Demonstrate:
 - That Only The True Gospel – Which He Preached Unto Them:
 - Could Change His Life In The Way It Did!
 - And So We Read:
 - “For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: / 14 And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. / 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, / 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: / 17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. / 18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. / 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother!”

- Just Like We See Here In Paul's Life:
 - It Is Only The True Gospel Of Jesus Christ:
 - That Has The Power To Change Our Lives!
 - So Let's Look More Closely This Morning:
 - At The Change That Took Place In Paul's Life:
 - And Can Take Place In Our Own!

* First - Only The True Gospel Has The Power To Change:

1. From A Dark Lifestyle!

- Like The Kind Of Lifestyle:
 - Paul Had Before Jesus Met Him On The Road To Damascus!
 - And He Describes His Former Lifestyle In 1:13-14!
 - In Fact - His Past Was Well-Known To His Readers:
 - "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: / And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers!"
 - Now - For Most Jews - Everything He Just Wrote:
 - Would Have Made A Great Resume!
 - He Was Deeply Devoted To "The Jews Religion" – Judaism – Which Had Strayed Far From God's Original Intent!
 - And Even Gentiles Would Understand The Devotion Paul Had For His Own Religion & God!
 - But, I'm Sure It Pained Paul To Recall His Past – Its Darkness & His Defiance Against God!
 - But It Was Important For Him To Share This Once Again:
 - Because It Displays Just How Powerful:
 - The Gospel Is!
 - And Because It Proves That The Gospel:
 - Could Never Have Just Been An Invention Of Man!
 - What Did The Gospel Change?
- From His Dark Activities!
 - Against God & His Church!
 - "How That Beyond Measure I Persecuted The Church Of God, And Wasted It!"
 - In His Past, Paul Pursued Those Who Believed In & Followed Christ:
 - And Never Let Up! Even In Damascus, Right After His Conversion, The People There Knew What He Was Like!
 - Acts 9:21 - "But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?"
 - It Seems Like Paul Was Even Achieving A Measure Of "Success" In His Violent Campaign Against Christians!
 - Perhaps The Numbers Seemed To Even Decrease! The Christians Either Fled, Were Imprisoned, Or Killed!
 - And Before Paul Met Jesus Christ:
 - This Is What His Life Was Like!
 - He Was Not Apathetic!
 - He Was Not Agnostic!
 - He Was Atagonistic Against God & His People!
 - How Could Someone Like Paul Ever Change? Or:
- From His Dark Accomplishments!
 - He Writes In 1:14 - "And Profited In The Jews' Religion Above Many My Equals In My Own Nation!"
 - Paul Worked Hard At Was He Was Doing!
 - He Wanted To "Be Somebody" In Judaism!
 - And He Was Getting There!
 - He Was Starting To "Make A Name For Himself!"
 - He Was Even Accomplishing More Than Anyone Else Who Was Of The Same Age & Had The Same Aim As Himself!
 - He Took Pride:

- In Comparing Himself To Others:
 - And Proving Himself Better!
- How Could Someone Like Paul Ever Change? Or:
- From His Dark Ambition!
 - He Was Also: “More Exceedingly Zealous Of The Traditions Of My Fathers!”
 - He Had A Burning Zeal To Do What He Was Doing!
 - He Was Very Committed & Very Sincere!
 - But - He Was Sincerely Wrong!
 - He Had A Zeal - But “Not According To Knowledge!”
 - See - He Even Admits Here That His Zeal Was Not For God:
 - And Not Even For The Word Of God:
 - But Instead - For The “Traditions” Of His Fathers! The Traditions Of Men!
 - How Sad!
 - But What Is Our Zeal For?
 - Sports? Politics? Career? Family? Or God & His Truth!
 - How Could Someone Like Paul Ever Change?
- The Point Of Paul Rehearsing All Of This From His Past:
 - Is To Show That Only God Could Have Changed Him:
 - Through The True Gospel Of Jesus Christ!
 - Everything In His Past:
 - Was Vain & Empty! As Peter Puts It In 1 Peter 1:18 - “Your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers!”
 - But Paul Was Very Passionate About Those Things!
 - How Could He Ever Change?
 - The Change Could Never Come From Another Man! It Can Only Come From God!
 - And This Is What We Need To Remember Ourselves!
 - When We Need Change!
 - From The Darkness Of Our Past!
 - Even From The Darkness Of Our Present!
 - True & Lasting Change Is Impossible If We Rely On Ourselves Or On Other Men!
 - It Can Only Come From God!
 - And This Is What We Need To Remember About Others:
 - Who Need To Be Changed!
 - When It Seems Impossible!
 - Mark 10:25-27 - “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. / And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? / And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible!”
- Only The True Gospel Has The Power To Change:
 - Anyone From Their Dark Past & Lifestyle!

* But We Also See That The True Gospel Has The Power To Change:

2. ***Through A Divine Intervention!***

- Like The Intervention That Took Place In Paul’s Life:
 - Which We Read In 1:15-16 - “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, / To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood!”
 - How Could Someone Like Paul Ever Change?
 - Only Through The Direct Intervention Of God!
 - God Saved Paul Through The Gospel!
 - And God Changed Paul:
 - In The Words Of Paul - “When It Pleased God!”
 - Or - “At The Pleasure Of God!”
 - This Speaks To God’s Own Sovereign Will To Intervene In Paul’s Life & Save Him & Change Him Through The Gospel!
 - Only God Can Design Such A Gospel!
 - Every “Gospel” Man Attempts To Come Up With Deals With What Man Can Do Or Must Do!
 - But The True Gospel Deals With What God Must Do – According To His Own Good Pleasure &

- Will!
 - And This – Only This – Is What Could Change Paul!
- And We Need To Remember The Same Thing:
 - About The Change That We Need & That Others Need:
 - In Their Lives!
 - This Change Will Come:
 - At The Pleasure Of God – And:
 - In The Timing Of God!
 - “When It Pleased God!”
 - God Saved Paul & Changed Paul Exactly *When* He Wanted To!
 - I’ve Known Some Who Were Saved Later In Life - And Sometimes Fretted About How Many Years They Wasted! And I Understand That Feeling!
 - But We Also Need To Remember That:
 - God Saved You & Changed You:
 - According To His Timetable, Not Yours!
 - And We Can Give Him The Praise & Glory For It All!
 - This Change Also Comes:
 - By The Choice Of God!
 - “Who Separated Me From My Mother’s Womb!”
 - This Speaks Of God’s Own Choice Of Paul:
 - Even From Before He Was Born!
 - So - Even Before Paul Was Saved & Changed By God:
 - And Even When Paul Was His Enemy & Even Persecuting & Killing Christians!
 - God Had Set His Heart Upon Him!
 - And So - Through His Providence & His Perservation:
 - God “Waits To Be Gracious To Them!” (Gill)
 - This Change Also Comes:
 - Through The Call Of God!
 - “And Called Me By His Grace!”
 - God Called Paul - Only “By His Grace!”
 - It Was Not Because Of Paul’s Zeal As A Jew!
 - Thinking - “I Can Use His Zeal!”
 - No - God Called Paul In Spite Of His Zeal!
 - It Was Absolutely Nothing That God Saw In Paul:
 - Bot Only Because Of The Grace That Flows From God!
 - This Applies To Us As Well!
 - 2 Timothy 1:9 - “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began!”
 - This Change Also Comes:
 - For The Purpose Of God!
 - “To Reveal His Son In Me, That I Might Preach Him Among The Heathen!”
 - God Has A Special Purpose & A Plan For Everyone He Chooses & Changes!
 - And It Is A Two-Fold Purpose:
 - First Purpose - For Salvation:
 - Or In The Words Of Paul - “To Reveal His Son In Me!”
 - This Is A Vivid Description Of True Salvation!
 - God Did Not Just Reveal His Son “To” Paul – For Him To Figure Things Out For Himself!
 - And God Did Not Just Reveal His Son “By” Paul – As A Testimony Of His Grace!
 - But - “To Reveal His Son IN Me!”
 - It Was A Personal, Intimate, Saving Revelation Of Jesus Christ!
 - And This Is What Only God Can Do!
 - He Is The One Who Must “Reveal In Us”:
 - His Son! He Is The Only One Who Can Convince Our Minds & Woo Our Hearts & Transforms Our Wills To Receive Jesus As Our Savior!
 - Before - We Are All Absolutely Closed To The Truth Of Jesus!
 - But The Lord Is The One Who Breaks Down The Barriers:

- And Shines Forth The Light Into Our Souls!
- He Alone Can Open Our Eyes / Ears / Mind / Heart!
 - And This Is How Paul Was Changed & Transformed! And How We Are Too!
 - Even For The:
- Second Purpose - For Service!
 - "That I Might Preach Him Among The Heathen!"
 - There Is More To Salvation Than Self!
- God's Purpose For Paul:
 - Was To Serve Through Preaching To The Gentile Nations!
 - What Purpose & What Service Has God Given You?
- What A Change! What A Divine Intervention!
 - If This Has Taken Place In Our Life:
 - Rejoice! Give God Praise & Glory!
 - And Then Serve!
 - But If Not - Perhaps He Is Calling To You Right Now:
 - To Reveal His Son In You!
 - Turn To Him & Trust In Him!
- For He Alone Can Change You!
 - Just As He Changed The Apostle Paul:

3. ***To A Different Focus!***

- Which We Find In 1:16b-19 - "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: / 17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. / 18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. / 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother!"
 - What We Find In These Verses - That Describe His Early Travels After He Was Saved & Changed By Jesus:
 - Is A Transformation Of His Focus!
- Before He Was Saved:
 - His Focus Would Have Been On:
 - Important Places!
 - Like Jerusalem!
 - The Very Heart Of His Jewish Religion!
 - But Now - It Didn't Matter Where He Went:
 - He Would Go Wherever God Wanted Him To Go!
 - Even If It Was Into "Arabia"!
 - Now - What Took Place There In Arabia? And How Long Was He There? We Are Left To Wonder!
 - But Important Places:
 - Were Not His Primary Focus Any Longer!
- Before He Was Saved:
 - His Focus Would Have Been On:
 - Important Positions!
 - Like The Apostles!
 - Before - He Was Striving To Make A Name For Himself & Achieve An Important & Impressive Position!
 - But Now - It Didn't Matter What Position He Had:
 - He Would Do What God Whatever God Wanted Him To Do!
 - Apostleship Was A Position Of Service, Not Merely A Position Of Authority!
 - So He Didn't Need To Meet The Other Apostles Obtain Their Approval!
 - Important Positions:
 - Were Not His Primary Focus Any Longer!
 - Before He Was Saved:
 - His Focus Would Have Been On:
 - Important People!
 - Like Meeting Peter & James!
 - But Now - It Didn't Matter To Him "To Persuade Or To Please" Men!
 - But To Persuade & To Please God!

- Important People:
 - Were Not His Primary Focus Any Longer!
- What A Change:
 - In The Life & Conversation Of Paul!
 - And What A Change Takes Place In The Life Of Every Believer:
 - Through The True Gospel Of Jesus Christ, Which Alone Is The Power Of God!

Conclusion:

1. It Is Only The Power Of The True Gospel:
 - That Can Teach Our Hearts To Sing:
 - “What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought; Since Jesus came into my heart!”
 - Never Forget - Like Paul - What This Change:
 - Is From!
 - From Whatever Darkness That Is In Your Past!
 - Is Through!
 - A Divine Intervention - The Goodness & The Grace Of God’s Own Pleasure!
 - Is To!
 - A Completely Different Focus:
 - Of Our Lives!
 - Only The True Gospel:
 - Has The Power To Change:
 - Even You & Even Me!

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