

To reveal His Son in me

Galatians Explained

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Bible Text: Galatians 1:10-24
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Congregation, this morning I would like to focus on Galatians 1, the verses 10 through 24, but let me only read verse 15 and 16.

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:

So far.

The theme in this piece is found in this text, "To reveal His Son in me." So that's the theme and let us go over those verses this morning hour.

Congregation, you may remember from the last few times we preached on Galatians 1, that the Apostle Paul is kind of concerned and angry. Concerned about who? About God's people. About God's people in the congregations of Galatia. Concerned that they are off the path, that they start mixing the law with the gospel again, and he's concerned about that. He still believes they are God's people but yet concerned. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." He made it so clear that the Lord had called them out of the darkness so he was concerned about God's people falling back, and he was angry. "Let them be accursed." Angry with those false teachers, with those Judaizers, we call them. Judaizers, them that had secretly come in from Jerusalem and were teaching the congregation that in spite of Christ as their Savior they also needed those ceremonial laws and circumcision and you name it.

So he was angry with the false teachers and concerned about God's people because there's only one gospel. There is no other gospel. And two times he said to let them be accursed if they teach another gospel. So those first nine verses were an introduction, actually two pieces in there: the salutation and the situation, right? In the salutation, he greeted the people, and the situation, he explained what his concern was and now the verses 10 through 24, they are autobiographical. What does that mean? Well, the Apostle Paul kind of tells his conversion story. He is telling what happened to him and what he did, and where he went. So he's telling about himself in those verses 10 through 24. Why? To

explain that he is the most unlikely convert. To explain that it is really by grace only, he has seen that in his own life, and it touches his heart what the Lord has done, that the Lord faithfully has continued his labors among the people, that he has stopped him and separated him and called him and encouraged him. It's all from the Lord, that one-sided work of God comes out so clearly in his life.

Verse 10. Let's go through the chapter. Verse 10, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." Persuading men, persuading God, what do you mean? Preaching, right? Preaching is a type of persuading. So who is he preaching to? Is he preaching to God? Is he preaching to men? Is he preaching according to God? Is he preaching according to what men want to hear? What do you think, what's the purpose? Well, of course, he wants to preach unto God, to please God as is clear in the context, "or do I seek to please men?" What a danger. What a danger for preachers to please men, to preach according to what they want to hear, to be concerned about your status. All that is detrimental but the Apostle Paul says, "I don't seek to please men, that's not my purpose, I want to preach unto God and to please him."

You know, you see how often he talks about men? Four times, do you see that? In verse 10, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man." Not after man. "I have not received of a man, I have not been taught by a man, it's not by a man, it's by God." So in his previous life before his conversion, the Apostle Paul was so much involved in pleasing men. He preached according to what he liked himself and what the people loved to hear. He was a Pharisee and he loved it. It was exactly what he had desired, to be someone, to have something, to have a reputation but really for himself. But that changed on his way to Damascus. The Lord stopped him and showed him something else.

He is the servant of Christ. Servant of Christ. We talk a lot today about serving God and service but don't forget the word servant here, the servant of Christ means slave, the willingness to serve the Lord not part-time but full-time and to be completely dedicated, to give everything away for Christ's sake, to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ wholeheartedly. And if he would preach according to men, he would not be the servant of Christ because the Lord has servants. We are completely in his service 24/7, all the time in his service, and he can't teach and say anything else but what the Lord has taught him.

"But I certify you, brethren," verse 11, "I certify you," he is so convinced. "I certify you, brethren." Brethren, see? He still has that connection with God's people. "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man." Now you don't see that in English but there is a pun. Let me translate a little different. "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was gospelled of me." The gospel that was gospelled.

There are two times the word "evangelize" in there. Evangelize. Evangelizing the gospel means the glad tidings. "I glad tidinged the glad tidings unto you. I had that special message for you, the good message, the gospel message, the glad tidings of God. I certify

you, brethren, that the gospel which was gospelled of me is good," right? It's good, that's the emphasis, good. It's gospel, after all but it's "not after man." It's not after man but it is good. It is for people but not according to people, not after man.

After. What is the gospel after John? The gospel after John is the gospel according to John, right? And that's the word here as well. It is not after man, it is not according to man, there's something in that gospel, although it's so good, that irritates. There's something in the gospel that is offensive, something in the gospel that just turns us off. "I don't like to hear that. That's so against the grain." The gospel I have gospelled unto you, it's not after man. I understand it. I understand you. We don't like it. It's good but we don't like it.

So what is that, then? Why is it good? Oh, it gives hope, right? There is opening, there is gospel preaching that is the arms of God stretching out wide to the people. It's a good gospel but why is it not according to man? What irritates? It irritates that I cannot do anything myself. It irritates that I cannot qualify for that. It irritates that I have to confess my sins, that I have to lose in order to gain, that I have to die in order to live, that I need to be sick in order to be healed. That's against the grain, remember that? That's something irritating in the word of God. By faith only, faith is a gift of God, there's something of resistance in the hearts. "I don't like to hear this." You have to be conquered in order to see it, and the Apostle Paul said, "It was a gospel. I gospelled the gospel but you didn't like it. It is not according to man." That's why we don't want to hear about election. That's why we don't want to hear about the state of death. That's why we don't want to hear about the one-sided word of God. That's why they hated to hear about that our will is not free but bound.

So have you been persuaded? Has your heart been conquered? Do you now finally see that the gospel is the gospel but not according to man? And even afterwards even for God's people, even for God's people, they have to learn that lesson over and over. You would say they learned the lesson about free grace and then they know it. Apparently not. It's over again and very new all again.

You know, the Galatians would like to have a human, a humanized gospel, something that tastes better and that's impossible. It's only Christ, no additions, nothing else but him or nothing. The Apostle Paul is very blunt about those things. It's Christ only or nothing and that's so good and that is so irritating, that is not according to man. Until the Lord shows you and then there is no irritation left, you're not offended anymore, and that you love it but you have to learn it again.

"I certify you, brethren." Hear the love, brethren? "That the gospel which was preached," gospelled, "of me is not after man." No wonder. Verse 12, "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Three negatives and a positive. It's not after man. I did not receive it of man. I have not been taught it by man. Do you see those three? Not after man, not received by man, not taught by man. Didn't he talk about that before in chapter 1, verse 1? "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father." Do you see, not by man. Not according to

man, not received by man, not taught by man but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. By the revelation of Jesus. It says but not, not, not, but.

So we need to be taught not by man but by God himself. I can't teach you that, those things. I cannot bring it to your heart. I feel paralyzed. It's impossible from my side as a preacher because that gospel is not according to what you want to hear, and that gospel is not something people like to receive, and it's a gospel that you can't learn from people. So our eyes need to be opened. We need God teaching us.

"For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." By the revelation of Jesus Christ. He revealed himself. That's his point. Christ revealed himself. He showed himself. He exposed himself. He says, "Here I am. Here I am," in the gospel preaching. He showed himself so clearly that he is the Savior, Jesus Christ, and that is the Apostle Paul's joy. That's what he is going to show in his personal life because he is not talking about them, he's talking about himself, right? "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."

Jesus Christ, you know, you could preach a whole sermon on Jesus and a whole sermon on who Christ is but you understand what he is meaning, what he is talking about. The revelation of Jesus Christ, he revealed himself. Let me ask you a question: has he been revealed to you? Because how can you believe in someone who has not revealed himself? How can you believe in something so unknown? Impossible. Believing is the work of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit teaches a sinner to trust in someone he reveals in the scriptures. In the scriptures, not an audible voice or something extraordinary, just in the Bible. The Holy Spirit opens it up and shows you the Savior Jesus Christ, opens your eyes.

Verse 13, "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." You have heard, right? The Apostle Paul says, "You know this. You have heard this. It's not the first time. This is not new to you. You have heard about me, haven't you?"

You have heard of my conversation. The conversation, who was he talking to? You know, the word "conversation" in the King James means "walk." Conversation means lifestyle, how I behaved, how I acted, how I carried myself. So you have heard of my lifestyle, my walk "in time past in the Jews' religion." It was my life, the Jews' religion was my life. I loved it with a passion, all those rules and all those ordinances and all those commands. I loved it. I thrived with it.

So you have heard of my walk in time past in the Jews' religion, "how that beyond measure." Beyond measure. What an unlikely apostle. He was an unlikely convert. Above measure, he said, I can't even express it. "I persecuted the church of God and wasted it." I destroyed it. I was a murderer. I went with letters of the high priest to Damascus and I delivered them over unto death. Beyond measure I persecuted the church of God.

So why is he telling this all to the congregation? It's not good. Well, he wants to make his point. By grace only. That's his purpose. Beyond measure and he is not done with those superlatives. He is not exaggerating but he's saying, "how that beyond measure I persecuted and profited in Jews' religion above many of my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." So the Apostle Paul was an enemy of the church, an enemy of Christ, an enemy of God. Not just one but extremely obnoxious, extremely hostile against God and Christ, and he did not know it. He thought the world of himself. He felt okay. He felt completely fine. You have heard about that Jews' religion, persecuting the church of God, God's bride, God's beloved ones, and I persecuted them and I profited in the Jews' religion. Do you know what that means, profited? I profited in it, meaning I advanced in it, I increased in it, I went from bad to worse. I was increasingly hostile. It went from bad to worse.

"I profited in the Jews' religion above many of my equals in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." He was very traditional. Those traditions of his father and grandfather, he felt close to those, he felt close to the elect people of Israel, and it was in his system. It was his identity. His religion, his Jewish religion was his identity. If you took the religion away, he was not himself anymore and he was not so much listening to God and the Bible but listening to the fathers. My father, my grandfather said. But you know, although he was in such a bad situation and although it went from bad to worse, more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers,

Verse 15, "But." I was so far gone, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace." But. He was running away from God, persecuting the church, exceedingly bad, and the Lord said, "Yes, you're mine." But when it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, it was not Paul's choice, it was not people's choice, it was God's pleasure, it was God's will and the Lord said, "So far and no further."

You know, there is again a pun in here, "pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb." Separated. Aphorizo. You say, oh, you know that word, you know the word "aphorizo, separated." Don't you hear the word "Pharisee" in that? Aphorizo. A Pharisee is someone separated from the heathen, so set apart they felt different, they felt aphorizo, they felt Pharisees. And although he had separated himself from the Gentiles, God said, "I separate you to go to the Gentiles." Do you see that? So the Apostle Paul felt separate from the Gentiles and the Lord said, "I separate you to go to the Gentiles." That's so beautiful. That's how the Lord works. The Almighty God. Nothing is impossible for him. People separate themselves to serve the world or religion and the Lord says, "And I separate you for my service."

Unlikely convert. It pleased God. Not the Lord didn't only will it and want it, it was his delight. The word "pleasing" is the word meaning "delight." So it delighted God. It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace." So the Lord had in mind to convert him, to call him already a long long time ago, way before the people of Israel existed. From eternity. Before he was born, before he existed.

This is about eternity. It is about election. God has chosen him before the world began to be saved, and the Lord had in mind to call him to be an apostle not as an afterthought. Not as an afterthought. No, the Lord did not say, "Well, we need someone else. It's not working. We need someone to push it further." No, the Lord had in mind this already before the world began.

"It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace." And called me. Oh, that hand of God, that irresistible power of God. He called him not only outwardly, the outward call, the inward call of the gospel. He called him by his grace. So the Apostle Paul is praising God for this. He's saying, "It's not me. Do you know that gospel? It's not after man. I haven't received of man. I have not been taught it by man but God taught me. The Lord Jesus taught me. It's from his side. It was not my choice, it was his choice." Why is he saying all this? Why is he bragging? He's not bragging. Why is he telling so much about himself? Well, he wanted people to see his authority, that he is not mistaken.

"To reveal his Son to me." No, it doesn't say that. "To reveal his Son in me." That's what it says. It pleased God to reveal his Son in me. That's so precious because I can preach the word of Christ to you, to your ears, to your brain, but I cannot bring it in you. To reveal his Son in me, that's beyond the preaching, that's the secret hidden work of the Holy Spirit to make room in the heart of a sinner for Christ, to reveal him in you.

You know, is it sufficient for you to have him revealed to you? Is it enough for you to have the Lord Jesus Christ revealed in the Bible to you? You say, "Yes, I see him." The Holy Spirit makes room in the heart, makes Christ such a treasure, so precious, so beautiful, that the Lord Jesus reveals himself in you, and do you know what happens then? You see him, that he is the beloved one for you, then you treasure him, then you believe in him, then you want to believe in him, then you can believe in him. It is given.

He revealed himself in you. Have you seen him? You have heard hundreds of sermons about Christ, he was preached to you and you could talk about it and you could write a paper about it and memorize the doctrine about him, but he was not revealed in you. You had sometimes a good feeling about God, it's still possible to be saved, that's nice to hear but he was not revealed in you.

"To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen." To preach him among the heathen. He was separating himself from the heathen. He said, "I don't want to have anything to do with the heathen. I'm a Hebrew of the Hebrews, circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews as touching the law of the Pharisees." You know that piece from Philippians 3. But God interfered.

So don't rest until Christ has revealed himself in you and you believe in him personally through the scriptures and then what? So Christ revealed himself in the Apostle Paul and he was converted. What do you think? If you would not have known what's written in the Acts of the Apostles and the other epistles, what do you expect? Where is the Apostle

Paul going after this? When the Lord stopped him, he would say with a beeline into Jerusalem. "I want to talk to Peter and James and all the apostles and I would like to talk and sit at the table and just hear them out and just hear more and more about Jesus." No. No. He did not even want to go there. "Immediately," the end of verse 16, "I conferred not with flesh and blood." Do you know what that means? He said, "I don't want to talk to anyone."

Let's first sing. 420, stanza 2.

So why did the Apostle Paul not go straight to Jerusalem talking to the apostles? If you would have asked me a few weeks ago, I would say, "Well, he was afraid. He was so afraid that they wouldn't trust him so he had to just go underground for a while and people had to get used to him slowly, people would be able to accept him. Too afraid." That was my answer. Maybe that is true but I don't read it in the Bible. I don't think that was the real reason. It was more to show his independence, his independence, and he wanted to explain to the people that he received the message straight from God. So not from the apostles, not from the congregation in Jerusalem, not from anyone, not from any flesh and any blood. So that's why he hammers on that.

"Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me," I didn't go there, "but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years," after three years, "I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him," just, "fifteen days." Two weeks, that's all. And I didn't talk to any of the apostles, "save James the Lord's brother." So why? He is telling the Galatians, "The gospel I preach unto you I have not received of man. I have not received through man. It is not after man. I have not received it of man. I have not been taught by man but God revealed him to myself. He revealed him." And those three years, what has gone through his mind? He started to connect all those Bible verses from the Old Testament and the new gospel as you can read it in Galatians, Romans, Ephesians. He is connecting. It was revealed unto him from the Lord.

And in verse 20, he would say, verse 20, what is the sense of that verse? "Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not." He makes an oath. He says, "Before God, God is my witness. I lie not." Lie not about what? "That I didn't talk to those apostles but only 14 days with Peter and I met James and that's all, and for three years I didn't go back and I went to Syria and Cilicia and that's all. I was not taught by man."

So why is he emphasizing this? Because those Galatians thought that he was dependent upon Jerusalem and he wants to make it very clear and transparent that the Lord has taught him. About what? About Christ only. About by grace only. About by faith only. He was not afraid but he wanted to show the objective truth and show them through the Bible, through the Old Testament as well, it becomes clear, it's clear enough. You don't need anything on top of that. You don't need any traditions of men. It's sufficient.

"And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ." So there were churches in Judea and they had never seen his face. They heard about him. They had never met. So he is making clear, "I am not a Judaizer. I am not from Jerusalem. I have not even been taught by the apostles themselves but by God himself."

"Unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ." Just before the service, I looked over again and thought, "Oh, that's so beautiful 'which were in Christ.'" There's a whole sermon in that "which were in Christ," because the church is planted in Christ. He is the vine and the church are the branches, ingrafted in the vine."

But those people didn't know me, "But they had heard only," they had heard about me, "That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed." He destroyed it first. He was an enemy of it and then he preached it. Faith here is not the act of faith but the doctrine of faith. "Now preacheth the faith," the faith of the gospel. He preaches it. It's such a change in his heart, a change in his life. He was an enemy, now he's a friend. He was a lion, now he's a lamb. There was darkness, now there is light.

"And they glorified God in me." They glorified God in me. You know, people were in awe. They were amazed. They were perplexed that this man, Paul, Saul of Tarsus, made such a change. He was changed so dramatically. They glorified God in me. They gave God glory. They praised the Lord with real joy in their hearts, giving honor and glory to God.

You know, is that not a mark of grace? What is? "And they glorified God in me." If you are a true child of God, it comes back all the time. The Lord makes himself great and that you glorify him with humility and with joy, treasuring God, giving glory to the Triune God. He did it. I persecuted. I was so zealous.

I remember one of my first sermons as a student in the theological school. I don't know the text anymore but I remember the comment of one of the teachers. He said, "You spoke to the unconverted ones, to the worldly ones, to the worldly ones, to the indifferent ones, but you know, this is not a danger in church. The religious ones." I was shocked. Yes, you're right. In our churches, Pharisees? It's in the heart. It's in my heart too. It's like all of us, we like to perform well and to show off and to be someone, have a spiritual reputation and love the rules and love the traditions of the fathers, and be so unconverted and enemies of Christ.

So we need to be stripped from all that self-righteousness like the Apostle Paul who exceedingly persecuted, more than anyone else he loved the traditions of his fathers, exceedingly zealous of the tradition of my fathers. So we need that change of heart. We need to lose, not to build ourselves up but to lose. The mark of grace is to glorify God in me because of him and that is heaven, that's eternity, and God's children glorify God because he began and he continued and he was faithful. It pleased God to let you hear this word this morning. I don't know your heart but you've heard the gospel, the good tidings. I gospelled the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ so that you can be saved without the works

of the law, by grace only. And there is something that irritates there. May the Lord take that irritation away and may he make it precious, that salvation is unconditional. By grace only.

You know, at the graduation, I said there is no fence around Christ. Maybe there is. I think there is. Yes, there is a fence and that's the fence you have built yourself, and that's the fence only the Lord can take away. But he did not put that fence up. That's what we do and the Apostle Paul, he had all those fences around him and what broke them down and revealed his Son in him, that was God's work only to the glory of the Triune God. Amen.