

## NO HUMAN FINGERPRINTS! [ Sermon Notes contd. ]

### [5] TRIBUTE; 1:22-24.

John Newton's testimony, engraved on his tombstone, is a reflection of Paul's: "... once an infidel and libertine ... was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the fight he had long laboured to destroy."

The recounting of such a story of grace compelled the Galatians to glorify God, **1:24**. This is God's objective in every work of His grace – and should be the governing principle for our lives – to glorify Him.



### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 23 September @ 10.30am: **Morning of Prayer** for Presbytery Reformation Project in Lisburn FPC.
- 27 October @ 8.00pm: Presbytery **Reformation Rally** in Martyrs Memorial FPC.

### MEETINGS TODAY

- Sunday School & Bible Class – 10.15am
- Morning Worship – 11.30am: *Third Message in our Studies on the Book of Galatians*
- Evening Service – 7.00pm.

### INSPIRATION IN A SENTENCE

*"When I first took over the defence of the Gospel, I remember what Dr. Staupitz said to me: 'I like it well that the doctrine which you proclaim gives glory to God alone and none to man. For never can too much glory, goodness, and mercy be ascribed unto God.'"* [ Martin Luther ]



### SECOND 'OPEN DAY' FOR OUR REFORMATION ROOMS

Saturday, 16 September 2017, was the second of our 'Open Days' to showcase our 'Just By Faith Alone' Tours.

Approximately **75 people** visited Martyrs on this occasion, some as part of Church outings (from congregations in Banbridge and Moneyslane), others as private / family groups (one comprised of visitors from our church in Port Lincoln, South Australia), plus a number of other individuals. While everyone was most welcome and all appeared to enjoy the tours, it was especially gratifying to note **a good representation of people from the local area** (principal thanks to Billy and May Cummings for inviting their friends).

When the Youth Groups who visited on Friday evening (from Ballynahinch and Lisburn) are added to the number, this has been a fantastic weekend for the Reformation Room tours.



## NO HUMAN FINGERPRINTS!

Text: **Galatians 1:10-24.**

The false teachers who infected the churches of Galatia charged Paul with diluting his message in order to appeal to his audience – that he was a man-pleaser; **1:10.**

However, (i) ‘People-pleasers’ do not expose the errors of false prophets in the way in which Paul does in **1:9**; (ii) nor do they mount a defence of the Gospel message that brings them persecution, **1:10-24.** Paul **presents 5 Arguments** to prove the message he preached came from God – that not a single human fingerprint was on it.

### [1] TRUTH; 1:11-12.

In what is really a chapter from Paul’s autobiography, the apostle contends that the Gospel he preached had not been received from men, but revealed by God.

#### (a) NOT OF MAN’S INVENTION.

Man’s ‘version of the Gospel’ would either be based on (i) *Ignorance* – God exacts no penalty for sin, everyone goes to heaven (cf. **Habakkuk 1:13; Acts 17:30-31**); or based on (ii) *Industry* – everyone earns their right to go to heaven (cf. **Isaiah 64:6, Romans 3, Ephesians 2:8-9**).

Words used by Paul in **1:11** – “certify” (to make known with certainty) – and “preached” (to make known with clarity) – point to the fact that this apostle had a revelation from God to declare. We too depend on God’s Revelation – not man’s invention.

#### (b) BUT OF GOD’S REVELATION.

This revelation:

- brings us into possession of what had been out of our reach; it is “revelation” = “the unveiling of a secret”;
- focuses on one Person – Christ; **1:12** (cf. **Acts 4:12**).

Men do not appreciate this single route to God; they want a ten-lane motorway with multiple exits and options.

### [2] TRADITION; 1:13-14.

Paul had not merely been an ordinary Jew, but the ultimate Jew, fired by a burning zeal to uphold the “traditions of his fathers.” This misplaced zeal was channelled into persecuting Christ’s church. His point in relating this part of his testimony is that persecutors do not invent a Gospel in which Christ is central! Only God’s grace can change a persecutor into a preacher.

### [3] TRANSFORMATION; 1:15-16.

Paul outlines how he was:

#### (a) CHOSEN OF GOD BEFORE TIME, 1:15;

Prior even to his birth, God’s eye and choice was upon him (cf. **Romans 9:10-16, Ephesians 1:4-6** ... OT examples of David (**Psalms 139:15-16**) and Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 1:1-5**).

#### (b) CHASED BY GOD IN TIME; 1:15-16;

Called by God’s grace in order to communicate about God’s Son.

#### (c) COMMISSIONED BY GOD THROUGH TIME; 1:16.

Paul was called not merely to proclaim a plan of salvation but present the God of salvation – to introduce men to a Person.

### [4] TRANSPORTATION / TRAVELS; 1:17-21.

His post-conversion journey took him to:

- Arabia, **1:17** – but only briefly before he went to ...
  - Damascus, **1:17** – where he remained until the governor wanted to move him out (cf. **2 Corinthians 11:32-33**) to ...
  - Jerusalem, **1:18** – where he spent 15 days and ‘interviewed’ Peter, before he moved to the coastal regions of ...
  - Syria and Cilicia, **1:21** – where he spent the next 11 years – which, for Paul, was effectively coming home (Tarsus region).
- In all regions that he visited, there was one recurring constant: the Gospel upset people (**2 Corinthians 11:32, Acts 9:23**). It still does. Truth will forever be offensive, upsetting and considered dangerous by those who prefer falsehood.

*[continued on back page]*