

Galatians week 4 'Another Kind'

Good morning everybody, well we are going to continue our series looking at the book of Galatians

For those who have Bibles I am reading from Galatians 1 verses 9 -10 - Then moving onto verse 15.

Verse 9 *“As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God’s curse! Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ”*.

Verse 15 *“But when God, **who set me apart** from my mother’s womb and called me by his grace... “(Leave it there)*

In previous weeks we have looked at *‘what an apostle is’* and in our last study we heard *‘what is the gospel?’* (And what it isn’t!) If you remember we said the gospel is **fundamentally Good news and a gospel of grace and not works**.

We also said there are certain ‘red lines’ we dare not cross in regard to the doctrines, the essential truths of our faith and if we do so it ceases to be the Christian gospel at all, and as consequence, those that teach it could come under ‘God’s curse’.

I said if you sit under this false gospel for long – it will be like a slow acting poison - it will squeeze the life out of you in the end!!

(By the way - If you want these important previos sermon notes see Jill).

I would just like to add this, to what I said last time in regard to what the apostle Paul says in this verse (Verse 6) *‘If anybody is preaching to you a gospel **OTHER** than what you accepted’* this phrase **‘other’** means in the original language **‘another KIND’**

This word ‘kind’ used here it is the same term used when Noah was building the ark and the animals went into the ark two by two, you may remember, it says they went in pairs - but by **‘their kind’** (Genesis 6 & 8) What does it mean ‘their kind’?

Well a good rule of thumb is that, **if two things can breed together they are of the same created kind.**

There can be a tremendous amount of variation within a created kind. For example, various types of dogs, such as wolves, coyotes, jackals, and domestic dogs, can often breed with one another.

When dogs breed together, you get dogs; so there is a dog kind. But you cannot breed a dog with a cat and get a 'semi cat' **it's not possible**, they're just not compatible, **they're not of the same kind.**

Now using that meaning in the church context and what I believe Paul is saying here, you may get variations in practises among Christian churches, for example, some may emphasise spiritual gifts and others do not, some may preach a pre tribulation rapture some a post trib, some love modern worship, some prefer traditional.

The key thing is; with all these variations you can still have unity because they are within 'their kind' – 'their kind' being the church that operates and believes and practises the gospel of grace and hold to the fundamentals of our faith...

What Paul is saying here is this 'other gospel' is of **another kind**, it is totally incompatible with the gospel he is preaching - a gospel of grace. A gospel of works cannot mate with a gospel of grace, they are completely irreconcilable. **By their very nature they are opposites** - if you take out the fundamentals of our faith that is true also.

I think I said last week if you come across this 'other gospel' run away quickly because it will lead you astray and it's quite probably under God curse. I'll leave that there, but it's an important distinction if you are determining between the true and false gospel. Especially today.

But let's move onto verse 10 and this is quite a dramatic statement made by the apostle Paul *"if Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ"*.

These statements about 'trying to please people rather than please God' are a common warning throughout the scriptures - and I think they are vital in being a Christian a disciple - here's a couple of verses - **John 5:44** *"How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God"*

Or James 4:4

“You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God”

I think this area is a struggle for many; of being ‘men pleasers’, it’s probably something to do with how we are brought up - but at the root of it (as the scriptures tell us) there is usually a **fear of man**.

Proverbs 29:25 *“The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe”*

Let’s put this into context however, there is always a balance in scripture; the history of the church is about going too far - to extremes – often ending in heresy. It starts when you take a biblical truth, a doctrine and take it too far.

Here’s the balance regarding being men pleasers; It’s not wrong or sinful to want to please other people, to meet their needs. It’s part of being human, it is true and right is it not? That we want to please our parents? To please our spouses?

Romans 15:2 says *“Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to build him up”*.

But here’s the key thing: it should not be the main purpose of your life - being a ‘man pleaser’ that is, it should not be what motivates you and drives you.

It’s a bit like when in 1 John 3:6 talking about sin - it says *“No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him”*.” **Yet in 1 john 1:8** *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us!?! One says ‘no one who lives in him keeps sinning’ and the other says ‘if we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves’ is there a contradiction?*

I don’t believe so! - What it means is; you are going to occasionally fall into sin. You don’t set your heart on doing so, you don’t practise it as a daily routine, but it happens from time to time, it’s human nature, you’re not intending to sin, but we all fall now and then.

But **we don’t purposefully continue to sin**, we don’t walk in it as a daily practise. If we do there is something seriously wrong - **the Christian doesn’t continue to sin**.

However for some people being 'men pleasers' is intentional - it is a daily practise they are sadly controlled by it. The truth is; As Christian's if we put the approval of man above (or on the same level) as God - **it is idolatry**
And if you're a Christian you don't do so for this reason; *"No man can serve (be a slave to) two masters," Matthew 6:24.*

The 'slave' not only does the will of his master, he belongs to his master.

There is a basic principle in the Christian life; a starting point - 'you can't serve God and mammon' (Matt 6:24) the 2 are incompatible and you cannot grow, you cannot really serve God until **you have made 'the cut' with this world.**

As Christians we should be seeking Gods glory not our own - that should be our goal, our daily ambition – **And God will test you on it!**

1 Thessalonians 2:4 *"But just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts"*

It happened to me preparing a message a few months back. I thought to myself what am I doing this for? There will be hardly anyone here! And who is here, will they listen anyway!!

God reminded me; very clearly, **I'm doing it for Him**, as an act of worship. Praise God we need not be bound up in trying to please man. It is much more rewarding pleasing God.

That's the first thing I wanted to say and if you are a 'man pleaser' God can get you out of it - ask for prayer this morning.

Let's move onto verse 15 *"But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace"*

'Set me apart from my mother's womb' now the meaning of the word 'womb' here really means 'belly or the inner parts' this again shows the Bibles clear teaching, that we are human beings, with hopes and aspirations, and a God given plan for our lives - **while we are being formed in the womb - life begins at conception not birth.**

In God's eyes Paul (**and that goes for all of us**) has an identity, a purpose, **before we were even born.**

They would like to say today, that life only begins at birth. **They call the baby in the womb** a foetus or an embryo - really just a mass of cells. But what they're doing is depersonalising a living created being and then they use that to justify ending a baby's life.

Look at this scripture from Luke 1:41

*“When Elizabeth **heard Mary's greeting**, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit”*

Elizabeth's baby (who turned out to be John the Baptist) was just 24 weeks in the womb! It says after 6 months Mary went to visit Elizabeth her pregnant cousin.

(24 weeks the time period enshrined into British law when you can terminate a life) He 'leaped' when the news that Mary was to be the mother of Jesus. It says later '**he leapt for joy**', **the baby could hear**, outside noises, he was emotionally and spiritually and physical receptive.

Just out of interest – checked yesterday – when do you think 21st century science says a baby can hear a voice outside the womb– 6 months! - Just another truth of the bible written 2000 years ago is validated by modern science today.

I'll leave it there on this subject, you know my views on abortion and there is more and more science proving what the Bible has always said - that life begins at conception not birth. **We need to continue to pray in this area.**

But let's go on – and I want to focus on this the morning on verse 15

*“But when God, **who set me apart** from my mother's womb and called me by his grace... “*

But it goes far further back than that that! As we see this incredible truth, one of the most glorious doctrines of our faith - **that Gods purpose for us goes back even further than our conception!**

Listen to these words to the prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 1:5 *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations”*

Let's try to get our head around this for a minute! Was he just talking to Jeremiah? NO! **Because it applies to you and to me - to all those who are in Christ - we were planned before the creation of the world. We are set apart.**

Eph 1:3-5 *“Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.” That’s so glorious say it again!

You may be thinking; ‘little me! Can God have a plan and purpose for my life - what could I have been **set apart** for?’

I think it quite amazing when we look at the Apostle Paul’s life - he said in **1 Tim 1.13** about himself *“Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man”* it was him who persecuted the church and zealously went from town to town to put Christians into prison and send them to their death.

Who would have thought the apostle Paul with his back story could be used in this way! But God used it all for good – He **set him apart** knowing all he would do & experience. – Nothing is wasted in our lives with God.

Do you know what you have been **set apart for**? A calling; a ministry, only you can fulfil. You may say do me ‘I don’t feel I’ve been set apart for anything’!

It’s not true, before the creation of the world He set his mark upon you – you have a purpose for being here right now at this time and in this place. Don’t let the devil snatch that away from you.

Your unique – and have a gifting to be used in a way only you can use it. But you won’t know what it is unless you’re walking by faith and testing the waters - have you asked other people what your gifting may be? Have you given it a go? For sure you have one!

Romans 12:6-8

*“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is **prophesying**, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is **servicing**, then serve; if it is **teaching**, then teach; if it is to **encourage**, then give encouragement;*

if it is **giving**, then give generously; if it is to **lead**, do it diligently; if it is to show **mercy**, do it cheerfully.”

We need to find our gifting and then focus on it – be faithful in it, **it’s what we will be held to account for**. It may only be just one talent ‘a Jack of all trades and a master of none’ maybe a worldly proverb but it’s not a spiritual one; we usually have one or maybe 2 primary gifts. That we are specially called to use.

Maybe your gift hasn’t been allowed to blossom yet? - It can here, we are in deep opposition to ‘one man ministry’ at CBC, it’s not scriptural - **we will only grow when each one is playing their part**.

But can I lay a little disclaimer in here! - Let’s not get too high and mighty! God may have set you apart, **to come to faith and just be part of the congregation**.

Can I say how helpful that is to me, there is nothing worse than standing here preaching and you have very few out there. Thank you for your regular attendance week after week?? - **You may have been set apart just for that - regular and faithful attendance at church**.

Have you noticed we find our purpose as Christians always in a church context; if you’re missing from church - then **we are** not firing on all cylinders. You will never be effective as a Christian. You will never be able to truly express your faith. So; “*don’t give up the habit of meeting together*” (Heb 10:25)

I think I’ll leave it there for this week I’ve packed a lot in.

Next time we will have a look at the Apostle Pauls conversion. The circumstances are so dramatic, that I don’t know of a more incredible conversion in the history of the church.

But until next time - May God bless His word to us. Amen

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