

A Different Gospel

Galatians 1:1-9

Nearly 2,000 years ago, standing in the Praetorium, the roman governor Pontius Pilate looked directly into the eyes of Jesus and asked, “What is truth?”. Pilate’s famous question has echoed its’ way down through history. Man still battles to come to terms with this age-old question today.

Our post-modern world that is riddled with skepticism, subjectivism, and relativism alike has decided that truth simply does not exist at all. Or truth is just relative to the individual. Our society is widely accepting that truth is a matter of personal preference. They think there is no absolute truth about God. You have your truth, I have my truth. Each truth is equally valid as the others... In fact our world celebrates and encourages the fact that all of our individual concepts of truth can and should “harmonize” together and if you don’t agree with our worldview you are just a narrow-minded fool...

Though these challenges against truth are all self-defeating in nature, moreso they deny Jesus who said in **John 18:37, “For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.”** which prompted Pilate’s question. But there was one fatal problem with the governor’s question: he failed to recognize the fact that **many things can have truth, but only one thing can actually be The Truth.** All truth must originate from one single Truth.

What Pilate never realized was that he was looking into the eyes of the Origin of all Truth on that early morning. Just a few days earlier Jesus told His disciples simply that, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”** (John 14:6). Jesus Christ is not just A truth, but He is THE truth! The origin of all truth. He is absolute! In a relative world that denies the existence of an absolute truth, we must firmly cling onto Jesus Christ and the Bible lest we fall prey to the lies of the world.

Christian Apologist Ravi Zacharias said it well, **“The fact is, the truth matters – especially when you’re on the receiving end of a lie.”** Eternity is an awfully long time to be wrong isn’t it! Understanding what and who Truth is lays the foundation for our message this morning. Before you leave church this morning, I pray that you will have an answer to one primary question. If you are taking notes write this down:

Is my life a testament to the true gospel of Jesus Christ?

This question is vitally important to answer because we live in a world that is pouring out lies about what truth is, who Jesus is, and who we are supposed to be as Christians... These **false** gospels attempt to deceive you and pull your life away from the true gospel of Jesus Christ! So we must have a real and honest answer to the question: **Is my life a testament to the true gospel of Jesus Christ?**

The churches of Galatia were facing the same situation. These Christians were moving away from the key doctrines Paul had taught them. A false gospel was emerging. Paul heard what was happening there, and he quickly wrote this passionate letter to all of the churches in that region. Paul's letter lays out three points we must cover in order to answer our main question properly:

1. What is the true gospel?
2. How does the true gospel get perverted?
3. How is the perverted gospel presented in our modern day?

After breaking these down, we will then apply our understanding to answer our primary question...

Let's dive into our text in Galatians chapter 1, beginning in verse 1...

Galatians 1:1-5 - Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), 2 and all the brethren who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

The first thing I want you notice is the demeanor of Paul. Paul is coming out of the gate swinging! He wastes no time to throw the first blow... In nearly all of Paul's letters to the churches he usually greets them with thanks and praise in his opening words. Even in the letters where he spends most of the time correcting a church on issues they need to address, he still begins with praise and thanks! But oh not here with the churches in the Galatia region!

It is like Paul enters the room, hastily shuts the door, turns down all common pleasantries and the cup of joe' they offer him, grabs the people by the hand and says look we need to talk NOW! His urgency really clues us in on the severity of the issue at hand. Paul first claims to be an apostle, specially appointed by God Himself. The false teachers of that day were denying Paul's apostleship because he wasn't one of the original disciples and because of his past history in Judaism. But Paul exclaims that he was elected by Jesus Christ Himself on that road to Damascus.

They needed to recognize his authority to speak what he was about to say to them. Because Paul's words were directly from the Lord... Paul gives a familiar greeting of "Grace and peace" which seems anticlimactic but Paul really does mean what he is saying. These are two foundations of our Christian walk. Have you ever seen Paul write it "peace and grace"? No because grace always comes before peace. If you want to rest in the peace of God, you must first accept His grace on your behalf.

And Paul could barely write one more sentence before bursting out the message he's trying to present: Verses 4 through 5, Paul unveils the first of our 3 points we will cover:

Read it again, verses 4 and 5, “Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

POINT #1: WHAT IS THE TRUE GOSPEL?

Paul boldly declares to the Galatians that this is the true gospel: There is a **Person** that paid a **Price** for a **Purpose**!

That **Person** is Jesus Christ Himself, fully God and fully man, He came down to this earth to pay a **Price**, to give Himself for the penalty of sin which is death for all of mankind, the burden of all sin throughout history was laid upon His shoulders on the cross at Calvary, for a **Purpose**... to liberate us from the bondage of sin and death by defeating the grave and resurrecting again 3 days later as proof that He is the triumphant Savior!

Take a moment and realize the gravity of the true gospel... That out of love for you, He gave Himself for your sins so you don't have to remain on the path towards destruction... The only path that results from sin is destruction... So you know what this means right? There is not a single one of us in this room who needs to be burdened by the guilt and penalty of our sin. Jesus gave Himself for your sins!

David Guzik said this means that “sin therefore does not need to disqualify a single person from the kingdom of God.” But we've let the lies of Satan creep into our minds far too often... We allow a false burden to weigh on us: “Andrew, you are such a sinner... God doesn't want you... You aren't cut out to lead others... You are just a loser, a sinner, and a failure, why would God ever use you...”

And sometimes we dig our own hole and punish ourselves for our sin... We think that we can remove the guilt of sin so we punish ourselves... We back away from God... We turn down an opportunity from the Lord. **In denying ourselves something good then maybe we can feel better about the bad we committed...**

Do you know what that does friend? **You rob God of some of the glory that is due to Him by trying to put guilt back on your shoulders and off of His shoulders...** In verse 5 Paul tells us that not only has Jesus done all of this for our benefit, but the primary purpose was to glorify God the Father. *Don't rob Him of His glory...*

Turn with me a few pages to the left in your Bible to **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**. It reads, “**Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.**”

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

It does not get much clearer than that: Christ died, Christ was buried, and Christ rose again. This is probably the clearest proclamation of the gospel written by Paul. And I love that Paul made sure to reiterate that this all happened **according to the Scriptures**. The complete Word of God backs up the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

Before you can begin to answer our primary question: “Is my life a testament to the true gospel of Jesus Christ?”, we first must know exactly what the true gospel is...

And now as we transition to verses 6 and 7, things are going to heat up! For the remainder of our study, Paul is going to use some very strong wording to deal with the Christians there in Galatia. They were giving into the false teachers of their present evil age. And Paul needed to wake them up to the reality of their actions...

Let's read verses 6 and 7 and dive into our second point...

Galatians 1:6-7 reads, “6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.”

Paul is in wonder how the people could so quickly turn away from **HIM, Jesus Christ**. The Christians weren't in some trivial theological debate about whether adam had a belly button or how did Noah handle the waste produced the thousands of animals on board? The problem was not speculative ideas... They were turning away from Jesus Himself, TO a different gospel...

To turn away from the true gospel as a means of salvation is to turn away from God... to abandon Him... Paul says that these deceivers of this time are teaching a “different gospel, which is not another”. What does the word “gospel” mean? Good news! Can we truly have a “different” good news? NO! There is only one good news, the one true gospel we have already defined. Their message was not good news but rather it is bad news! That is why Paul says it “is not another” gospel at all and it's only purpose is to trouble you!

Point #1 was to get an understanding of what the true gospel is, and now our second point in our quest to answer our primary question is this: Point #2: we must know how the true gospel gets perverted...

POINT #2: How does the true gospel get perverted?

In order to make the one true gospel into a different gospel that is perverted, a lie must be introduced and accepted. This occurs in three 3 different ways:

- 1. The Gospel + A lie = Lie**
- 2. The Gospel - A portion of truth = Lie**
- 3. The Gospel = your version of truth = Lie**

Here are a few ways the first scenario, **The Gospel + A lie = Lie**, is displayed:

- Jesus died to save me from sin, but in order to really please God you must uphold the law and do good works... (this is the way the Judaizers were perverting the gospel in Galatia) (Legalism)
- Jesus died and was buried, but He only experienced a spiritual resurrection, not a physical one.

- Jesus is the Savior of the world, but Jesus is a created being by God who was once only mortal.

Next, **The Gospel - A portion of truth = Lie**, is displayed as so:

- Jesus died to save me, but I don't need to repent of my sins.
- Jesus died to save me, but I don't have to be in a relationship with Him as long as I accepted Him in my heart.

Or the final scenario, **The Gospel = your version of truth = Lie**, is brought to life like this:

- Jesus gave me salvation and promised me eternity in heaven, so now I have free license to do whatever I want to do.
- Jesus is just one of the many ways to get God. All religions and paths lead to the one universal God.

These are just a few examples of how the gospel is perverted! And each of these "different gospels" all include one commonality: a lie. Or a portion of the true gospel is removed. **The danger of mixing the truth and a lie together is, that sometimes it is hard to recognize the lie when the other part of the gospel contains truth.**

Understand this friend... A half truth, is still a full blown lie! Just because a different gospel contains a part of the true gospel doesn't make the rest of the lies attached to it any more true! In fact the lie is like a disease that infects any bit of truth and turns it all into one big lie!

It's like the teenage daughter who came home past curfew and her parents asked her, "Excuse me young lady, you are late! Where have you been?" "Like I told you before I left, I was just at my friend's house watching a movie, chill out MOM." When in reality that "friend's house" is actually the 19 year old boy that lives a few houses down in his parent's dark basement with no parental supervision, and instead of watching a movie they were fooling around on his fold out sofa bed... "But MOM I didn't lie I told you I went to my friend's house?" Withholding the whole truth is a form of lying!

The true gospel of Jesus infected with a lie is no longer true. A different gospel can't have the same Jesus Christ. There is only one true Savior of the World, and He is the One who is made known according to the complete and holy Word of God and none of mans conventions...

The true gospel of Jesus Christ is perverted when a lie is introduced and accepted into the gospel, and when man strays away from the Word of God and builds his own version of truth...

And Paul gives us a reality shock when he affirms that there are those who [want to pervert the gospel of Christ](#). But what do you mean that they want to Paul? Why would anyone purposefully desire to pervert the truth of God's perfect gospel? Well... the answer is that the true gospel of the Bible is extremely insulting to our human nature...

Because the gospel destroys your pride and tells you that you're a sinner that needs to be saved, but you can't do anything to save yourself, and once you have accepted salvation there is nothing you can do to take credit for it!

The gospel challenges our puny minds by saving us not with God appearing in all of His glory in the clouds slaying demons and defeating our enemy death, but God came as a Man, and died an excruciating, demeaning death for you... And if the limits of your imagination weren't already surpassed, Jesus rose **from the dead** 3 days later defying all human logic.

But I believe there is a new trending reason people are willing to distort the gospel... A reason that has become so prevalent in our current society...

As we transition to our third and final point to examine, let's recap where we're at. Our objective is that we can each individually answer this question by the time we leave: "Is my life a testament to the true gospel of Jesus Christ?" In order to do this we have investigated 2 of the 3 points:

1. We determined what the **true** gospel of Jesus Christ is.
2. We uncovered the 3 ways the true gospel is perverted into a different gospel.
3. And now our third and final: How is the perverted gospel presented in our modern day.

POINT #3: HOW IS THE PERVERTED GOSPEL PRESENTED IN OUR MODERN DAY?

I believe the answer can be summed up into one word: **Conformity.**

Conformity as defined by Psychology today is the tendency to align our attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors with those around us. At its essence conformity is the way we learn social skills at an early age by observing and copying other people's behaviors. That social pressure to be a part of the norm grows stronger as we grow older. Conformity is often motivated by our identification with a specific group. In order to be truly accepted as a member of the group, we must adopt the group norms, or the unspoken set of rules that governs their behavior.

Here is the interesting thing though... When we conform, we often outwardly agree with the group consensus, though it may differ from our own personal views. In time, our beliefs and attitudes may begin to shift as we take on the same behaviors and opinions as the rest of our group.

It is truly fascinating how quick we are to fall into herd mentality when surrounded by a group. For fear of being wrong, weird, or standing out from what seems to be socially acceptable, we fall into suit with the rest of the world around us... The problem is that the majority of the world around us is holding onto a perverted gospel, and the pressure to conform to the world's views shift away from the true gospel.

Though within the world there are countless false gospels represented across many different people groups, many different religions, there is a movement spreading more than ever today **to believe the false gospel that all roads, including Jesus, lead to God and to heaven.** It doesn't really matter which road you take, they're all about the same, and they all lead to God and eternity.

Muhammed was right. Buddha also was right. The Hindus were right. Joseph Smith was right. Jesus was right. All 4,000+ religions in existence were right. This type of false gospel feeds the very nature of our times!

In a world where people believe each person can have a different, equally valid truth about a subject,

in a world that denies the existence of truth,

in a world where everything is relative to each individual's preference so we shouldn't dare offend anyone or deny another person which includes their freedom to choose which gender they prefer to be or what their sexual preference is...

In a world that is not only accepting diversity but encouraging diversity with very little limits, THIS is the perfect false gospel to deceive others to conform too! I find it rather interesting that the world has found a way to get people to conform to the normality of diversity.

So this begs the question, what do we as Christians believe? Well let's read it, verse 8 and 9 of Galatians chapter 1,

Galatians 1:8-9 - But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

I hope this sounds like strong language to because that is exactly how Paul meant it to be! We might think man lighten up Paul, where's the love? Paul knew though that this needs to stop... Even if an angel came to your room and a gospel that is different from Jesus Christ, reject it, even if it was the angel Moroni. If anyone preaches a gospel that is contrary to the true gospel of Jesus Christ, reject it. Paul even says if he himself ever returns and brings a different gospel than Jesus then let himself be accursed!

The word accursed is the ancient Greek word, "**anathema**" meaning condemned to hell. Paul is saying "If I preach anything contrary to Christ let me be condemned to hell!" To preach **any** salvation by any other means other than belief in Jesus Christ is to lead people to eternity in hell. Forever and ever and ever in hell.

Friend, the answer is yes we do believe that Jesus is the only way! We do believe that He is truth, and that all truth originates from Him. We do believe that there is only ONE road that leads to God, and that entering into a relationship with our Savior Jesus Christ! It does need to be said also that we believe that we Christians should tolerate other religious views. We aren't here to force our views. We just want to be able to preach the true gospel. You can believe what you wish to believe, but I will still preach the Truth. The Truth will always be The Truth. He can never fail us.

Now there could be someone here this morning that is starting to get frustrated with me... Who are you Andrew to claim these things? Are you even old enough to understand this? Who are you to say if people don't follow your narrow-minded, bigoted way that they are going to hell... What gives you the right Andrew to stand and arrogantly say this?

Well first if you do feel this way towards me, you are first failing to understand **that truth, by nature, is narrow**. Is a math teacher being narrow-minded for believing $2+2$ only equals 4? Or is it arrogant for a math teacher to urge that there is only one right answer to an arithmetic problem? Also truth, by nature does excludes its' opposite. All answers besides 4 are excluded from the reality of what $2 + 2$ truly equals. Friend, Jesus is the only truth that exists!

While it is true that I do believe that all other gospels are wrong, you actually really shouldn't care about what I believe. False gospels are false because they go against the Bible, not me... And we don't proclaim these things because we are narrow minded people who love sending people to hell, rather it is to glorify the work Jesus did on the cross on our behalves.

One Bible commentator wrote, "If there are more ways to God, if different is fine, then the death of Jesus Christ was a terribly unnecessary thing. There was no reason then for Him to die." So my question still stands for you :

Is my life a testament to the true gospel of Jesus Christ?

OR

Is my life conforming to the world's perverted gospel?

Christian, is the gospel you claim to follow in your heart, the true gospel of the Bible? OR have you added your own set of rules and standards for yourself in order to attain righteousness? Has the basis for your relationship with Jesus been His grace **AND** how you refrain from accepting His blessings in order to punish yourself... Have you bought into the lie that God will be more pleased with you and you will be a better person if you do good works? SLOW DOWN brother and sister! If these statement describe the way you have shaped your relationship with Jesus to be, then you are following a perverted gospel!

You need to come back to the true gospel of Jesus, the one that was revealed to you when you first made the decision to follow Christ and accept His work on the cross on your behalf! You've seen the truth of the gospel! Now hold fast to it! So fight against the lies of the devil by placing your identity in the truth of who Jesus says you are and get to know who Jesus says that He is!

Because when we add a lie or remove truth from the gospel message here is what we are saying to God: Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection were not enough to save me... Imagine how the Father must feel when you try save yourself after He already laid down his Son Jesus to pay the price and watched Him suffer for your sake...

As I reflected back on our trip to Israel a few weeks ago, God reminded me of a sobering reality: There are still people who think that Jesus is not enough for them... It didn't make sense to me as we travelled to these places how anyone could say that Jesus is not enough for me...

- After standing in the pit where Jesus was thrown, beaten, spat upon at Caiaphas' house...
- After touching the same Praetorium floor that the blood of Jesus was spilt splattered on as He was scourged...
- After standing in the empty tomb where Jesus rose from the dead...

How can anyone say that Jesus is not enough, when He gave all of Himself for us... And the reality is that we can't even begin to comprehend the **TOTAL** suffering and pain and cost that He paid...

Maybe you've been agreeing with the world and are falling into herd mentality. Have you become lenient on what you accept as truth for the sake of diversity and for the sake of acceptance in our society? The world's perverted gospel of conformity claims that all roads lead to God. But Jesus said He is the only way. As Christians who follows the true gospel of Christ we have to be extremely careful and watchful of wolves in sheep's clothing trying to sell us a lie that is branded as truth. They claim the lie is in fact true because well everyone believes that it is! It must be true if the majority of people believe that it is...

On the contrary, the only type of conformity a Christian should be doing is in Romans 8:29, to be conformed into the image of His Son.

The bottom line guys is that you must realize what is at stake...This is matter of eternity, heaven and hell. A Different Gospel that offers salvation by any other means than belief in Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures does not lead to the kingdom of heaven.

So Christian, is your life a testament to the true gospel of Christ?

Are you going to stand up and fight for the true gospel? Are you going to attack the lies of the world and our human nature with the Truth?

My friends I urge you to hold fast to the Truth, Jesus Christ. And fight! Attack the lies with the truth you must equip every day.

There are some of you here today that have never experienced the freedom of the gospel... Now is the time, you have no time to waste, there is only one way to God and to freedom from sin and pain and death now, and you'll spend eternity in heaven... That is only achievable through the grace of God poured out on the cross through His Son Jesus Christ... If you haven't made that decision before and want to make it today, we will have prayer counselors here who are ready to pray with you, or find me afterwards and I would love to pray with you... Don't miss this opportunity and ignore what God is saying to you right now...

Let's Pray...