

**Title: Will They Glorify God In You?**  
Galatians 1:10-24

This Week's Prayer  
Requests:

**Memory Verse:** Galatians 2:21, "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

**Text:** Galatians 1:10-24, <sup>10</sup> For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. <sup>11</sup> But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. <sup>12</sup> For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it*, but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>13</sup> For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to* destroy it. <sup>14</sup> And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. <sup>15</sup> But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* through His grace, <sup>16</sup> to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, <sup>17</sup> nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. <sup>18</sup> Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. <sup>19</sup> But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. <sup>20</sup> (Now *concerning* the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.) <sup>21</sup> Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. <sup>22</sup> And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which *were* in Christ. <sup>23</sup> But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once *tried to* destroy." <sup>24</sup> And they glorified God in me.

**Monday**

Describe a time when you struggled to find the truth.

When I was working as a prosecutor and then as a defense counsel every day was a struggle to find the truth. Every day I would talk to witnesses, defendants, police and others. Every day in an effort to get at the truth, I would have to sort through statements, reports, and other evidence, and oftentimes these things were radically different in their version of events. And yet the struggle was very important, because if I didn't somehow in the grace of God land on the truth, then the result could be a great injustice and ruined lives.

In chapter one of Galatians, we find the Galatian churches in a struggle

What were the stakes for the Galatian churches in their struggle to know the truth?

to come to the truth. It is a critical struggle for them, not because a failure to discover the truth will result in injustice and ruined lives, but because a failure here will result in the loss of their eternal souls. The stakes are much higher. Moreover, this is the same struggle that all of us face, Beloved, that you and I face even today. If we somehow fail to come to grips with the true Gospel of Jesus Christ and fail to believe, then it will cost us everything.

But praise be to God, we are not left to our own devices. We have witnesses. Not just any witnesses, but witnesses whose testimony has withstood the most hateful, heated and vicious cross-examination this world has to offer for over 2000 years. And every time their testimony has come through shining and spotless. One of these witnesses is the Apostle Paul.

How did the Judaizers attack Paul's Gospel message?

You will remember that the churches of Galatia had been infiltrated with false teachers called Judaizers, and they attacked the teaching of Paul, who founded the churches, on three grounds. First, they attacked Paul's authority, his ability to speak as an Apostle on behalf of God. Secondly they denied the Gospel of grace. Paul had taught that salvation is by grace plus nothing and they denied that. They taught that you had to have the law added to grace. In order to be saved one had to believe in Christ plus be circumcised and keep the Old Testament laws and rituals. So they added to the Gospel human works saying they were necessary for salvation. Third, they demanded that Christians live by these works to maintain their saving relationship with God. So they substituted human effort and work for the sanctifying, keeping and preserving ministry of the Holy Spirit. They denied Paul's authority, they denied the Gospel message that he taught and they denied his pattern for the Christian life, and folks that was everything. They perverted it all.

Now pause a moment and let what's happening here sink in. Authority and truth are the central issues. Two messages are vying for our allegiance: Paul's and the Judaizer's. According to verses 8 and 9, heaven and hell are at stake. Only one of these gospels is true. Believing the true one is the most important thing in the world for every one of us. Paul is forcing upon us the issue of truth as I said. Now how does Paul argue for the truth of his message in this text. He gives four arguments. The first one is this:

**1. The truth of Paul's Gospel is attested by his motive (v. 10).**

In verse 10, he says, "For do I now seek the favor of men, or God? Or

How can we tell what Paul's motive is?

do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”

Now it's plain to see that Paul is not seeking the favor of men. After all, Paul was a minister of God's judgment against everyone. He taught that people are sinners, unrighteous, wicked, objects of wrath by nature, slaves of the devil and headed for hell. He taught that they are not made righteous by anything they do, by circumcision or anything else, but only by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. He took a radical stance against pluralism in his day. Moreover, he taught that there was absolutely nothing that a person could do to better his or her position before God. That we are completely dependent, helpless, can do no good and must rely solely on God's mercy. This Gospel of Paul completely decimates any personal pride we might have. Any ground for boasting is completely and utterly excluded as Ephesians 2:9 and other Scriptures make clear.

What were the typical reactions people had towards Paul's Gospel? Consider 1 Cor. 1:22-23.

Therefore Paul's Gospel provoked people's deadly hate, for they can abide nothing less than to hear that they are like this, completely helpless wicked sinners. They would rather be praised as wise, righteous, holy, basically good, and able to help themselves, able to pull themselves up by their own boot straps, and act in concert with God rather than being guilty and wholly and desperately dependent on His mercy and grace alone. So its clear that he didn't teach some man-centered human doctrine, but one that was radically God centered, saying the same things as Christ in John 7:7; 3:19 and elsewhere, and the same things as the other writers of Scripture.

What is the significance of Gal. 6:12 in exposing the Judaizer's motives?

Moreover, to be a Christian in that day meant potential imprisonment, persecution and death. Judaism was a tolerated religion in the Roman empire until the Jewish wars of the late 60's and 70's. If you were a Jew, you had special legal dispensations protecting your worship and assembly and giving you certain freedoms from required sacrifices to emperors, Greek and Romans gods and taxes. Judaism was tolerated. Christianity was not.

So think about what Paul is saying here. If I were going to simply invent a religion, would I invent one like this. One that makes absolutely no appeal to man whatsoever, that has such a stark view of man, that runs counter to the basic tenets of every other religion ever come up with by man, which all cater to and find hope in human effort and human working and notions of man's basic goodness and ability.

What kind of religions do men invent? They invent religions like the International Church of the Jedi, which is not some joke, but it is a serious new faith sweeping across Europe now. It is simply repackaged, dressed up Hinduism, with its pluralistic man-centered tenets. It appeals greatly to men and not only that, no one's going to die for claiming it as their faith. But the true Gospel is not like that. God's motive is never to pander to pleasures of sinful men, and neither is that the motive of His witnesses. The second argument Paul makes is this:

## Tuesday

How would you respond if a preacher stood up in your church and claimed to have a direct personal revelation from God? How is that situation different from Paul?

We saw yesterday in verse 10 that the truth of Paul's Gospel is attested by his motive. There is a second attestation given in the next two verses:

### **2. The truth of Paul's Gospel is attested by its origin (v. 11-12).**

Paul's message was received directly from Christ as verses 11-12 make clear. He says, "But it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ." Therefore he can speak as a true apostle. Now that is truly an incredible thing to say. Any preacher might be able to stand up on any given Sunday and claim that he is not trying to please men and that he is preaching a Gospel that is not according to man; but, no preacher can stand up today and claim the kind of personal direct revelation that Paul as an Apostle received.

How do you identify a false teacher?

My job, Beloved, is simply to communicate to you what this book says, to do it through diligent study of the languages and the grammar and history, to be sure, to do it prayerfully under the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit that indwells and gives gifts to believers, but simply to teach the revelation God has already given in His word. But, you should know that if I go beyond this word, then I have no authority and no true voice with which to speak. Or if I contradict this word, then I have no authority whatsoever in my message. And If I come into the pulpit and say, "Oh church, a hundred foot Jesus appeared to me in a dream," and I then proceed to give all manner of false prophecies and statements that contradict His word; if I did that, then you would have every right to throw me out on my ear for I would have added to and contradicted the words of this book.

But Paul says, I am an Apostle in verse one, according to the Biblical definition we discussed last week, and I therefore can speak authoritatively on behalf of Christ and declare to you the word of God.

How do you prevent false teachers from coming into your church?

Paul's writings, Peter says in his epistle, are Scripture (2 Peter 3:16). They are on the same level as Moses and the prophets of old. They are the very word of God. That's quite a claim, and so someone in one of the church's of Galatia may ask, "OK Paul, I understand what you're saying here in verses 1-12. How do I know it is true?" That question will bring us to Paul's third argument, which we will begin to cover tomorrow.

### Wednesday

#### **3. The truth of Paul's Gospel is attested by his miraculous conversion (vv. 13-14).**

What's the most amazing conversion story you've heard?

Paul begins to demonstrate the truth of this claim, by telling about his conversion, "For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers."

Paul was a masterful man. It would take hours for us to tell all that the Bible shares with us about Paul. He was energetic, commanding, zealous. Surely he was one of the greatest men in history. Professor Archibald McBride of the University of Aberdeen in reflecting on his life writes of Paul, "Beside his achievements...the achievements of Alexander [the great] and Napoleon pale into insignificance."

What do you remember about the Apostle Paul, prior to his conversion?

Paul began life with the name of Saul. Born in the city of Tarsus, a Jew from the soles of his feet to the very crown of his head, a Hebrew of Hebrews and yet a freeborn Roman citizen as well. He was a Pharisee by belief and practice, adhering to the strictest of Jewish religious training and practices. As a boy he was circumcised on the eighth day and brought up in the traditions of his fathers. He was trained and educated at the feet of Gamaliel, whom secular historians note was the greatest of all Jewish Philosophers and thinkers of that time; and, as Paul quotes from the Greek poets and philosophers simply at will in the New Testament, we know he was well educated and trained in all Greek philosophy and literature. Tarsus was praised as a center of education and culture in Greece, and Paul was taught by the best of the best. He was educated at the Harvard of Harvards of his day.

He was a super intelligent man. Very gifted and possessing all the

advantages that a man in his day and age could have hoped for. He was valued, respected, popular and honored by the society around him. He was the kind of man that people would rally around and lay their garments at his feet in honor, as they did at the stoning of Stephen, the kind of man that could motivate others and could even command the attention of the rulers of his people, the high priest and the Sanhedrin, and prevail upon them to become one of their trusted agents.

What does the name Saul mean?

He was an energetic man with a solid work ethic, who learned a very valuable trade as a tent maker in addition to his other accomplishments. In short, Saul was everything that **the world and the worldly people of his day** could have **asked for or demanded** in a man. Which is interesting because the very name “Saul” means “asked for” or “demanded.” That was Saul. He was a man on the rise in his generation; he was the kind of man that the world wanted.

How would you describe Paul’s zeal prior to his salvation?

And as I said, Saul was a very zealous man. In Acts 26 notice how Paul, then Saul, was bent on the destruction of the new movement of Christianity. Verses 9-11, “Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.”

In chapter 8 verse 3, it says, “As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.” Now chapter 9 verse 1 says, “then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, [which is what they called Christianity at that point in time] whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”

Saul in his zeal became the self-appointed enforcer of the Jewish religious and political leaders of the day. And folks, he didn’t delegate it. He personally went into homes. He personally, physically, brutally, bodily drug people out of their houses and bound them. He cast his judgment on them and had them murdered under the guise of legitimate authority. He persecuted them, physically tortured them to get them to blaspheme, men and women, he did everything in his power to obliterate this new movement of Christianity.

He was popular, brilliant, worldly wise, up and coming, a powerful leader among the Jewish people. He was asked for and demanded by the world of his time, and he was zealous in his service to it.

How would you described Paul's zeal after his conversion?

Then something happened. On the road to Damascus, while Saul was right in the middle of the hot pursuit, God stopped him dead in his tracks, spun him around, threw him to the ground, lit up the sky, spoke to him and said according to Acts 9, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" Saul said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." So Saul trembling and astonished said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." Acts 26:16 tells us that the Lord also said to Saul, "I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you."

What is the significance of the name change that God gave to Paul?

There in one swoop of the mighty hand of God, this man, who was so bent on the destruction of God's people was all of the sudden cataclysmically, miraculously, instantly changed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Saul, the one asked for and demanded by the world became by the power of God and in His sight, Paul. God changed his name. Do you know what Paul means? It means "little." He became the little one, the one utterly dependent upon the grace and power of God alone. So Paul says in verse 13 to the Galatians, "You have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it."

This conversion, Beloved, was not done in a closet; and this conversion, Beloved, didn't happen to just any joe bag of donuts on the street like me. It was famous; it was startling; it was an utter shock. In giving his defense before King Agrippa, Paul acknowledges that all of the Jews of his own nation had known of this, and that King Agrippa knew of these things, since none of these things escaped his attention.

Beloved, you show me a man like this going that fast and that furiously in one direction and then you show me a man going just as fast and furiously in the opposite direction, and you will have to explain something to me. It doesn't come about by some simple conversation around the dinner table. A man in that mood and emotional state doesn't have his mind simply changed, not when he has gone as far as Paul had gone. The only person that could ever reach a man like this was Jesus Christ, Himself, who met him and slammed him into the dirt.

The point of these verses, is that Paul's pre-conversion experience shows that he never got his message from man. Only God could bring this man around. His conversion experience proves that he never got his message from man.

### Thursday

What makes Paul's conversion so radical?

We were talking yesterday about Paul's conversion to Christ. It's important to meditated on this a little longer. Why? Because, Beloved, Paul's conversion was as radical as if Hitler, himself, after running death camps for years, suddenly decided that he loved the Jews, set them all free, put them in positions of power, spent the wealth of Germany to repay for past wrongs, and then personally died a martyrs death at the hand of his former co-nazi's because he was now preaching love for them. You think, "Well that's crazy, that madman, Hitler, that never would have happened." You're right, and it never would have happened with Paul either but for the power of God. It radically transformed every area of his life.

How was Paul's life changed by his conversion?

1. First, Paul's character was drastically transformed. The Encyclopedia Britannica describes him before his conversion as "an intolerant, bitter, persecuting, religious bigot - proud and temperamental. After his conversion he was patient, kind, enduring and self-sacrificing."
2. Second, Paul's relationship with Jesus and His followers was transformed. He went from hating Christ to worshiping, loving and preaching Christ. He went from murdering believers to spending all of his very life on their behalf.
3. Third, Paul's message was transformed. Though he still loved his Jewish heritage, he had changed from a bitter antagonist to a determined protagonist of the Christian faith. His new concept of the Messiah required a total revolution of all his thought.

Prior to his conversion, Paul's commitment to Judaism would have put the Judaizers to utter shame, that's what verse 14 means. As far as embracing the traditions of the fathers and advancing in the Jewish faith, he was head and shoulders above all his contemporaries and far more zealous. Paul was the king of legalism, totally bent on works righteousness, on righteousness, before God through human effort. The Gospel he preached to the Galatians would have been nonsense to him before. But now looking back on his life, Paul could in effect say to the Philippian church, "All of my self-righteousness, all of my works and

human efforts at righteousness, all of my Jewish ritualistic practices and external law keeping, it is all skubala. That's the Greek word for excrement; it's usually translated "rubbish" to avoid giving offence to English ears. But that is Paul's personal, blatant, unequivocal, raw assessment of his life and accomplishments before he came to know Christ, excrement.

Considering his former life, what might have made Paul's conversion especially hard?

4. Paul's mission in life was transformed. We see this in verses 15 and 16. He was changed from a Gentile hater to a missionary to the Gentiles. He was changed from a Jewish zealot to a Gentile evangelist. Paul saw in Christ a Savior for **all nations**. He went from being an orthodox Pharisee whose mission was to preserve strict Judaism to being a propagator of the new radical sect called Christianity, which he had so violently opposed. There was such a change in him that Acts 9:21 says, "all those hearing him were amazed, and said, 'Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name...'"

This transformation was not an easy one for Paul. He went from being respected and honored to being despised and hated. He went from safety to being hunted and in danger in every city. Judaism was a tolerated religion at this time in the Roman empire. You could live as a Jew in peace until the Jewish wars of the late 60's and 70's after Paul was martyred. But at this time, the Jews were not being persecuted. This is why Paul says in Gal. 6:12 about the Judaizers, "these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ." When Paul went from his Jewish faith to follow Christ, he went from safety, well-being, honor and respect to being considered a fool, being beaten with a whip often, five times with forty lashes minus one, being in prisons frequently, being beaten with rods three times, being stoned once and left for dead, being in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from his own countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness.

He said of his mission as an Apostle, "To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things until now" (1 Cor. 4:11-13). He could have walked away from it at any time, but he persevered through it all. And then after all of this, he was martyred.

Psychologists will tell you that people will die for a lie, but they will

Who else have you known that experienced a great transformation when he or she came to Christ? What happened?

not die for a lie that they know beyond any doubt to be a lie. Paul was transformed and died a martyr's death because he witnessed the Risen Lord.

From persecutor to preacher. From one ready to kill Christians to one ready to be killed as a Christian. From one who heard in the Christian message a threat to everything he had ever stood for, to one who now had a vision of the gospel that blew his Pharisaism to smithereens. So Paul says in effect to the Galatians in verses 11-14, do you want proof of my apostleship, do you want proof of my message? Just look at me. Look at my life. Look at what's happened. Look at the transformation. God did it.

Every effect in the world must have an adequate cause, Beloved. And Paul argues that to try to explain the change from his pre-conversion persecution to his post-conversion passion for the gospel merely by the work of men is to grasp at a straw. He knew that he had seen the risen Christ and had been commissioned to preach; and one way he could verify that experience for others was to point to its effects. They are remarkable, indeed. In fact, all things considered, this argument alone should persuade the Galatians and us that Paul's gospel *did* come by revelation and is not "according to man" (v. 11).

Elias Andrews writes, "Many have found in the radical transformation of this 'Pharisee of the Pharisees' the most convincing evidence of the truth and the power of the religion to which he was converted, as well as the ultimate worth and place of the person of Christ. Two professors at Oxford, Gilbert Wess and Lord Lyttleton, were determined to destroy the basis of the Christian faith through their historical investigation. West was going to demonstrate the fallacy of the resurrection and Lyttleton was going to prove that Saul of Tarsus had never converted to Christianity. After years of research, both men, like so many who have walked this same path, came to the opposite conclusions after their research and became ardent followers of Christ.

In the book based on his historical research, *The Conversion of Saint Paul*, Lord Lyttleton the man who had so hated Christ and the true faith wrote this, "The conversion and apostleship of Saint Paul alone, duly considered, was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove [his message] to be a divine revelation." He said that Paul's twenty-five years of suffering and service were a reality. Thus his conversion was true, for everything he did began with that sudden change. And if his radical conversion from a persecutor of the church to a follower of

Christ was true, then Jesus Christ must have risen from the dead, for everything Paul was and did he attributed to the sight of the risen Lord.

### Friday

We see today a fourth and final argument which our text gives revealing truth of the Gospel message.”

#### **4. The truth of Paul’s Gospel is attested by his independent witness (vv. 15-24).**

Here in these verses is the proof of his apostleship and message from his post-conversion activities. Verses 16-23 tell us that Paul did not immediately confer with flesh and blood but went from Damascus to Arabia and then back to Damascus. After that he saw the apostle Peter for only fifteen days and briefly met with James then he left again. At that time Paul was preaching the same message as the other apostles.

Where did he learn it? Where was he instructed in the deep things of God? He didn’t learn it from men, as he says in verses 11 and 12. Fifteen days with Peter simply wouldn’t cut it. The only way he could have gotten the Revelation of the Gospel was from Jesus Christ, Himself. Paul's point in these verses is that *three years* of meditation and ministry on his own immediately after his revelation from Christ, followed by a mere fifteen *day* visit to Peter cannot possibly support the Judaizers' apparent contention that he was a secondhand disciple of the Jerusalem apostles. The point here is that he was **an independent witness**.

Corinthians 12:2-3 tells us that during this time, Paul was caught up whether in the body or out of the body, he didn’t know, but he was caught up into heaven and given revelation upon revelation. Now you talk about a seminary education, that would be a great seminary education. Then, so that Paul would not be puffed up with pride because of the revelations, God allowed Satan to buffet him with a thorn in the flesh for the rest of his life. We’ll talk about that more later as we progress through this letter.

Thus, Paul demonstrates to the Galatians in these verses from both his radical cataclysmic conversion and his post conversion activities that his message could not have come through man or the influence even of the other apostles, but could only have come from the direct personal revelation of Jesus Christ.

Why did the people  
“glorify God in  
Paul?”

The final verse, speaking of the Judean church’s reaction to the conversion of Paul was “they glorified God in me.” Why did they glorify God rather than Paul? Because it was God that did it, just as he said in verse 15 and 16. God is the one who gave him the gift of faith. God is the one who gave him the gift of repentance. These things are gifts according to the Bible. God is the one that breathed new life into his dead legalistic soul, who gave him new birth and made him a new creation. The transformation of Paul was a wonderful outstanding miracle of God’s grace, that this man might be saved and not only saved but called by Christ to be an apostle to the Gentiles. No one could look at his life and ministry and fail to give glory to God.

Do you long for God  
to be glorified in  
you?

O that God might be glorified in every life of every person reading this. That others could look at you and see the difference, the transformation, the mighty power of God’s Spirit working in you. What would they see, if they looked at the story of your life?

You should note that Paul is not unique in being called not only to salvation but to a specific ministry as well, which he mentions in verse 16. For the Bible says that all the saved are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10). Why? That He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. That He might be glorified in us.

O beloved cry out for His sovereign grace and mercy today, that He might be wonderfully glorified in your life. And pray that others might also see the Lord Jesus at work in you as they did in Paul and glorify Him.