

“The Gospel Is Not According to Man”
Galatians 1:11-12

Introduction: I don't think that it will come as a revelation to you that we all live in a world that is driven by the need to follow. What I mean is that everyone has someone that they respect and admire. They look up to them. And depending upon how strong of an influence they have, many people may follow them. Italy followed Mussolini in the second World War, just as Germany followed Adolph Hitler. The Mormons follow the teaching of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, even as the Jehovah's Witnesses follow the teachings of Charles Taze Russell and Judge Rutherford. For every interest group that exists, whether it is a philosophical, political, social or religious school of thought, there is usually one man whose teachings form its foundations. There is one person who has all the answers, or at least has the start of an answer to the concerns of those who follow, whether it be world peace, social equality or the most important thing, the salvation of an eternal soul.

This practice can even be seen in the realm of Christianity. There is the need to follow someone. And for that reason, God would give His people teachers and leaders that they might follow them. God gave them His prophets to speak His Words. The prophets came in the name of the Lord to relay that message to them. And, as is true outside of the church, this tended to create a party spirit. After Jesus had healed a man who had been born blind, the man was brought before the Pharisees. When they questioned him closely for the second time, the man replied, “**I told you already, and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become *His disciples too*, do you?**” **And they reviled him, and said, ‘You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses; but as for this man, we do not know where He is from’**” (John 9:27-29). The Pharisees wanted to follow Moses, and rightly so. Although they didn't understand what Moses had written. The man who was formerly blind wanted to follow Jesus. Both Moses and Christ were from God. Both spoke the Words of God. And if the Pharisees had understood Moses, and had had their hearts purified by faith, they too would have followed Christ. We also see this party spirit developing in Corinth. Paul writes concerning their quarrels, “**Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, ‘I am of Paul,’ and ‘I of Apollos,’ and ‘I of Cephas,’ and ‘I of Christ’**” (1 Cor. 1:11-12). He rebukes them for this. Christ is not divided, and since we are the members of His body, neither should we. It is man's nature, whether he is redeemed or not, to follow those whom he believes holds the truth, who really knows what is going on, who correctly interprets reality; it is his nature to follow those whom he believes are able to lead him into the truth.

Think of your own examples. Most of you have favorite teachers. For some of you it might be the pastor of a church. For some of you it might be a favorite author or speaker. He might be someone from the present, or from the past. The reasons why you are attracted to him might be many. It might be because he reflects the same concerns in the Christian life that you do. It might be because he has penetrating insights into the Scriptures which, when you test his conclusions, you always find to be true. It might even be for the wrong reasons, such as the way he looks, or speaks, or the affect that he has on you emotionally. Whatever the reason, you can at least see that all of you tend to follow those whom you believe are going to profit you in the long run. That is inevitable. The thing I want to point out to you this morning is that you

must be careful whom you follow, who it is that you will listen to.

Paul had earlier warned the Galatians that if anyone came to them with a different Gospel than the one he had brought, even if it was he himself, or an angel from heaven, they must not listen. The reason he gives, and the theme of the sermon this morning is that,

The Gospel is not a human invention; it is the truth of God. You therefore will have no regrets witnessing of it and following it with all your heart.

I. Paul Says that the Gospel Which He Preached Is Not From Man, But from God.

A. Remember that the Galatians Were Being Tempted to Abandon the Truth for that which Was a Lie.

1. Paul said to them, **“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different Gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ”** (1:6-7).
2. This different Gospel was that of the Judiazers, and it was not the same as that which Paul preached.
 - a. It was different because they had added something more to it.
 - b. They could not accept the fact that salvation could be by grace through faith alone.
 - c. They also added the keeping of the moral law as a Covenant of Works, and the keeping of the ceremonial law.
3. Some of you might be tempted to think that this was the way a person was saved in the OT. Many dispensationalists believed that in the past, and some still do today. But no one was ever saved by the keeping of the Law.
 - a. Paul argues later in his letter, **“Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe”** (3:21-22).
 - b. He says that if righteousness could have been gained by the keeping of the law, then it would have been!
 - c. But this wasn't possible. It never has been. And it never will be. Therefore, salvation has always been based on the grace of God and received through faith. Even in the OT economy.
 - d. The Judiazers were not simply returning to, or trying to hold on to, the teachings of God in the Old Testament, they were actually abandoning the only Gospel which God has ever given, that Gospel which He originally preached to Adam and Eve in the garden.
 - e. And to abandon this Gospel is to abandon the only way of access to God which He has ever given. It is to abandon God Himself. And to abandon God is to abandon eternal life and to be sentenced to a fiery hell!

B. But Paul Points Out that His Gospel Is Not a Soul Damning Human Invention, Like that of the Judiazers, It Is the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

1. His Gospel is not according to man.

- a. It is not the invention of man. It did not come from Paul, or any other human being.
 - b. Man would not create such a Gospel.
 - (i) He is too proud. He thinks too highly of himself, so highly that he must include something that he can do to add to his salvation.
 - (ii) It cannot all be done for him. He must do something for himself. He must merit something through his own good works.
 - (iii) And so it is with all man-made religions. They all in great or small measure include the works of man, so that he might have something of which to boast.
 - (iv) He would not create a gospel like that of God's.
 - c. But this Gospel of Paul is also beyond the ability of man to invent.
 - (i) He is too wicked. He does not possess the moral purity to devise such a scheme of salvation.
 - (ii) Besides, he would not do so if he could, for he does not even desire the holiness which the Gospel holds forth to us. In his natural state true holiness is not attractive to him in the slightest.
 - d. Paul's Gospel is not according man; it is not according to the standards which men have (Vincent 669). It is "not from man, not by man," nor is it "suited to the taste of man" (Wesley 607).
 - e. And when you consider that Paul's Gospel also speaks of the God who sovereignly bestows it on whom He wills, you must ask yourself the question, what man who sets out to write a Gospel would purposely write himself out of the kingdom? would shut the doors upon himself, and leave himself helpless to do anything to save himself? Man would be far more likely to create a gospel which would make a door large enough for him to fit through, no matter how wicked he might live.
 - f. The Gospel is not, and cannot be, the invention of man.
2. And not only is it not of man's invention, neither did Paul receive it by the hand of man.
 - a. He "did not receive it from human lips, as something which one man hands over to another" (Beet 1001). It was not given to someone else who then brought it to him.
 - b. No one taught this Gospel to him.
 3. That which explains its character, that it is both above the nature of man and his abilities, is that Paul received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - a. A revelation is something which was unknown, which becomes known. It is something that was mysterious which is now revealed. In the Bible it refers to that knowledge which could not have been known by man, but which was revealed through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to those whom He chose.
 - b. Paul was the recipient of a heavenly communication from Christ.
 - (i) He wrote in Ephesians "**that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief**" (Eph. 3:3).
 - (ii) Because of the surpassing greatness of these revelations, God gave him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him to keep him from exalting himself

(2 Cor. 12:7).

- c. This verifies what he had already said in the opening verse, “**Paul, an apostle (not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father)**” (1:1).
- d. Paul was sent with a divine message which is directly from God. Christ Himself brought it to Him so that the Galatians might know for certain that *this is the truth of God*.

II. And Because Is the Truth of God, You Need Not Fear Trusting in Its Reliability.

A. Paul’s Gospel, the Gospel of Christ, Is Not Simply a Stab in the Dark at Truth As the Teachings of Man Are.

- 1. It is not the invention of a fallible man which cannot save.
- 2. It is not the speculation of a brilliant philosopher or scientist.
- 3. It is not the pious teaching of a religious leader, which leads all of its adherents to hell, no matter how sincerely it is taught and believed.

B. It Is the Truth of God.

- 1. His veracity is riding on the line. “Let God be true, though every man be found a liar” (Rom. 3:4).
- 2. Since it is the truth of God you must not fear that it will lead you astray.
 - a. You must not fear that it is false, as the teachings of so many cults are today.
 - (i) It will not lead you into darkness.
 - (ii) It will not rob your life in devotion and then throw you into the fiery furnace at the end.
 - (iii) It will lead you by the straight path to heavenly glory and peace which will last forever. When Prudence asked Christian at the palace called “Beautiful”, “And what is it that makes you so desirous to go to Mount Zion?” He replied, “Why, there I hope to see Him alive that did hang dead on the cross; and there I hope to be rid of all those things that to this day are in me an annoyance to me; there, they say, there is no death, Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 21:4; and there I shall dwell with such company as I like best. For, to tell you truth, I love him, because I was by him eased of my burden; and I am weary of my inward sickness. I would fain be where I shall die no more, and with the company that shall continually cry, *Holy, holy, holy*” (Bunyon *Pilgrim’s* 156-157 [Sage]).
 - (iv) It will also bring blessing to you in this life far greater than anything which the world has to offer you.
 - b. You must therefore never allow yourself to think that you are wasting your time committing your life to it. As Paul writes, “**And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary**” (Gal. 6:9).
 - c. Commit yourself fully to it.
 - (i) Believe all of God’s Words. They are far more sure than any of your own personal knowledge.
 - (ii) Obey all of Christ’s commandments. He is the King and will one day require an accounting at your hands.

- (iii) Embrace all of His promises. **“For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us”** (2 Cor. 1:20).
- (iv) Tremble at all of His threatenings. The fear of the Lord is a spring of life to whose possess it.
2. And you must not fear that by telling others that you will lead them astray either.
 - a. If hell is a reality for you, it is for others also. It is not your believing in hell that makes it real for you. It is God’s having ordained it that makes it real.
 - b. And if heaven is a reality for you, it is for others also. There is still the possibility of others entering it if they hear the good news and respond in faith and repentance. There are some who may only have you to tell them. You may be the only person that the Lord has put into their lives to be a living witness of Him.
 - c. You must therefore tell them, tell them all, as many as possible. Apart from such knowledge, they will surely be lost. ***God has said it!***
 - d. Do not be afraid that they will look down on you for holding such fantastic beliefs. There is far more iron clad evidence for the reality of God than any supposed theory of evolution. **“The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge”** (Psalm 19:1-2).
 - e. You are not bringing others into a cleverly devised plan, but into God’s truth. And since it is God’s truth, it also is backed by His power to save those whom He will.
 3. Lastly, if there are any of you here this morning that are strangers to Christ and to His Gospel, know for certain that God will call you to account one day.
 - a. If the Gospel were man’s invention, then you would have nothing to fear. It would simply be the ravings of a few deluded people.
 - b. But since it is divine truth; since it is God’s truth, you had better tremble.
 - c. You can be glad that you did not follow the teachings of Jim Jones, or of the leader of Heaven’s Gates. But you will be very sorry if you do not follow the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. You will be sorry for an eternity.
 - d. Be wise then, and turn from your skepticism, turn from your doubt and believe on Christ.
 - e. Lay hold of Him by faith. Take His yoke upon you and learn of Him. There is cleansing from sin, and a perfect righteousness to be gained, and a hell to be delivered from.
 4. People of God, the Gospel is not a human invention. It is not the teaching of man, it is the teaching of God. Everything that it promises will be received by those who meet its conditions of faith and repentance. Everything that it threatens will be heaped upon those who refuse it. May the Lord grant to each of us strength to embrace the Lord Jesus through His Gospel, and may He empower us to spread the good news as far as we can in our short lives, to save as many from hell as possible, and to give God the glory that He so richly deserves. Amen.