

“They Contributed Nothing to Me”  
(Galatians 2:6-10)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. This morning, we considered Paul’s further arguments for the authority and authenticity of his Gospel and why we should listen to it:
  - a. Not only did God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ personally commission Paul to preach,
  - b. Not only did Jesus give him this Gospel by direct revelation,
  - c. Not only did it change his life and the lives of many others,
  - d. But God Himself sent Paul to Jerusalem, with the conviction of its truth that he might stop those who were attempting to ensnare his spiritual children with a false gospel.
    - (i) God sent Paul to Jerusalem to submit the Gospel he preached to them.
    - (ii) It wasn’t that he doubted that he was preaching God’s truth.
    - (iii) But he went to find out whether the apostles (James, Peter and John) supported that Gospel or the gospel the Judaizers were proclaiming.
    - (iv) Paul was not willing to submit to the Judaizers, and as we’ll see later, he would not yield even to those of reputation if what they taught did not agree with the pure Gospel Christ had committed to him.
2. His reason is very plain:
  - a. “But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you” (v. 5).
  - b. Paul cared for God’s glory – that he not distort God’s truth.
  - c. But he also cared for the souls committed to his care – that they not be led astray with a lie.
  - d. Paul is earnestly pressing His call, the origin of his Gospel, the witness of his life, and is even willing to pursue the false teachers to their source, in order to guard the truth of the Gospel.
  - e. As Jude exhorted his readers, “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (1:3).
  - f. Paul had precisely the same heart, because he recognized the preciousness of the Gospel.

B. Preview.

1. This morning, we considered how he went to Jerusalem to make sure the other apostles had not compromised the Gospel.
2. This evening, we find additional arguments in what he discovers there: In comparing his Gospel with theirs, he finds that their Gospel is the same: they have nothing to add to or correct in his. Really we find three arguments:

- a. They were not able to add anything to what Paul had already learned of the Gospel of grace, showing that his message was from God.
- b. They themselves recognized the calling and grace of God given to Paul to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, further strengthening the authenticity of his Gospel.
- c. And they sent Paul with their blessing to do that work, showing their acceptance of him in the work of the Gospel, and again confirming the validity of his Gospel and his calling.

## II. Sermon.

- A. First, they were not able to add anything to what Paul had already learned of the Gospel of grace, showing that his message was from God (v. 6).
  - 1. Those of high reputation contributed nothing to Paul:
    - a. That is, they did nothing to correct the message he was already preaching.
      - (i) Paul already knew everything they knew.
      - (ii) Christ's revelation to him had been full and complete.
      - (iii) He didn't need to be taught by them, as he argued earlier.
    - b. Thankfully, in speaking with them he also discovered that they were not guilty of the same heresy Paul went there to combat.
      - (i) They didn't need to correct Paul, but Paul also didn't need to correct them, although we will later see Peter fall into one of their errors – considering the Gentiles to be unclean because they are uncircumcised and eat unclean food – and Paul will need to confront him.
      - (ii) The same Lord had made sure that all His servants were on the right track, especially early on at the founding of the NT church.
      - (iii) And this proved that Paul's Gospel was authentic.
  - 2. At the same time notice Paul's boldness.
    - a. Most of us wouldn't even consider confronting those so highly honored.
      - (i) So many today are willing to accept whatever the high profile personalities have to say in their field.
      - (ii) So many today in the church follow high profile Bible teachers and pastors and accept uncritically whatever they have to say.
      - (iii) Even if they do disagree with them, they aren't willing to confront them.
      - (iv) But Paul was willing.
    - b. Like his Lord, he was no respecter of persons.
      - (i) They were the reputed pillars of the church (v. 9):
        - (a) They were the support of the truth.
        - (b) They were those who had seen Christ in the flesh.
        - (c) They had had been in Christ while Paul was still killing Christians.
      - (ii) But Paul wouldn't have accepted what they had to say simply because they said it:
        - (a) What they said must agree with Scripture.

- (b) The Bereans were commended by Luke because they compared what Paul said with the Scriptures before they received it (Acts 17:11).
- (c) Paul, though he was not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles, yet considered himself a nobody (2 Cor. 12:11).
- (d) He wouldn't have us accept what he had to say unless it agreed with Scripture (Gal. 1:8: But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!).

- (iii) God is no respecter of persons, and neither should we be.
- (iv) Even those who hold office in the church should not be submitted to unless what they bring is God's Word: their authority is declarative and ministerial – they may declare what God's Word says and minister that because it has God's authority.

B. Second, instead of correcting Paul, they recognized the calling and grace of God given to Paul to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, further strengthening his claim to have the authentic Gospel.

1. They didn't have anything to add to Paul's message, but instead they recognized his calling.
  - a. They knew the Lord had appeared to Paul for a reason.
    - (i) He had been entrusted with the Gospel to preach to the Gentiles.
    - (ii) Just as Peter had been entrusted with the Gospel and sent to the Jews.
    - (iii) This didn't mean that Paul didn't preach to Jews or Peter to Gentiles.
    - (iv) But it did mean this was their primary calling, which is why we read of the missionary journeys of Paul and not Peter.
  - b. Paul also notes that Christ was working by His same Spirit in both Peter and himself, giving them success in their work.
    - (i) We need to remember that Christ desires His work to move forward, which is why He sends His Spirit.
    - (ii) Where the Lord calls, He equips, which is why if the Lord calls us to do something, we can be sure He will not leave us without divine help.
    - (iii) We only need to ask Him in prayer.
2. James, Peter and John also recognized the grace given to Paul.
  - a. What Paul means here we're not sure:
    - (i) It might be the grace of his calling: God chose him to be a light to the Gentiles (Acts 13:47).
    - (ii) It might have been his ability to work miracles: by which God bears testimony to His Word.
    - (iii) It might have been the witness of his godly life and zeal for the Gospel: which could only be there by God's Spirit and grace.
    - (iv) Or it could have been the anointing God placed on him to preach His Gospel with power.

- b. What Paul has in mind, we're not sure, but the fact that these apostles recognized Paul's calling and God's grace further strengthened his claim to have the authentic Gospel.
- C. Finally, they sent Paul with their blessing, showing their acceptance of him in the work of the Gospel, and again confirming the validity of his Gospel and his calling.
  - 1. We see that as a result of their recognizing Paul's calling and grace, they gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship:
    - a. They received them as brethren.
    - b. They recognized God had called them to have a part in the work of the Gospel.
    - c. And they encouraged them in that work to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles as they to the Jews.
    - d. In short, they approved of Paul, of his doctrine, treated him as their equal and agreed that he should continue to minister to the Gentiles as they to the Jews.
    - e. A powerful argument to the fact that Paul's Gospel is authentic.
  - 2. They only asked them to remember the poor, something that Paul was already inclined to do.
    - a. They were possibly referring to the poor in Judea, since at that time the Christians of that area were going through great difficulties.
    - b. They were asking Paul to use his interest in the Gentile churches to help them.
    - c. This would certainly be reasonable, for Paul writes to the Romans, "For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things" (Rom. 15:27).
    - d. Paul was willing to do this though at that time the Jewish brethren might have had a difficult time reciprocating.
    - e. This shows us that though we might differ in our beliefs in some areas, we should not divide or withdraw our love and compassion from others.
  - 3. But again, we have three more arguments to the authenticity and authority of Paul's Gospel.
    - a. James, Peter and John were not able to add anything to what Paul had already learned of the Gospel of grace from Christ.
    - b. Instead, they recognized the calling and grace of God given to Paul to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.
    - c. Finally, they sent Paul with their blessing, showing their acceptance of him in the work of the Gospel.
  - 4. Brethren, this is the true Gospel:
    - a. We must not add to or take away from this Gospel.
    - b. We cannot afford to ignore it.
    - c. But we must submit to it, for it is the Gospel of Christ.
    - d. May God give us the grace to do so. Amen.