**Galatians 1:1-12**

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 brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: **3**  Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, **4**  who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, **5** to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. **6** I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— **7**  not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. **8** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. **9** As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. **10** For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. **11** For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel. **12**  For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

**“Marksmen of the Gospel”**

 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

 Memorial Day lets us count the cost for keeping freedom alive. “In traditional observance, the flag of the United States is raised briskly to the top of the staff and then solemnly lowered to the half-staff position, where it remains only until noon. It is then raised to full-staff for the remainder of the day. The half-staff position remembers the more than one million men and women who gave their lives in service of their country. At noon, their memory is raised by the living, who resolve not to let their sacrifice be in vain, but to rise up in their stead and continue the fight for liberty and justice for all.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

 If there is an ever-present danger toward forgetting the sacrifices made for our earthly freedom, then how much more is it to lose the freedom God won for all by the Gospel. Unlike other letters, when Paul wrote Galatians. It was a circular letter to be shared among multiple churches. He did this because they all faced the same problem. False teachers had put on a convincing show that seemed to bring an update to the Gospel. You could call it, “Jesus 2.0” or “a different gospel.” Whatever the case, like raising the flag to full-staff. Paul lifts up Christ and His sacrifice so liberty and justice reigns at last in Him.

**There is plenty of foolishness in the world, but only one true Gospel saves sinners.**

1. **Sometimes foolishness at first appears not so foolish.**
* “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.”
1. **A Christianity based on privilege.** (God not for all people)
* This is what Paul was dealing with concerning Judaizing Christians. (Gentiles had to become Jews)
* The equivalent today could be prejudice toward others or imposing civil & ceremonial law of the OT.
1. **A Christianity based on worthiness.** (works earn favor with God)

- This is what the elders of the Jews said to Jesus about the Centurion, “He is worthy to have you do this for him, for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue.”

- The equivalent today is for us to think upholding the moral law or good behavior satisfies the Law.

1. **A Christianity based on lawlessness.** (choice equals truth?)
* This is what takes the Gospel and sells it as a license to live to self and not God.
* The equivalent today are those that deny the authority of scripture, want it “updated” for our modern age, or live by what they feel is good.
1. **Thankfully, God is no fool and neither is the only one true Gospel.**
* “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.”
1. **God sent His Son to save ALL in a sinful world.** (unbroken hope)
* This promise Solomon recalled even after building temple saying, “hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you…”
* God answered the prayer of all people by making His name fully known in Jesus who is the only-begotten Son of the Father become flesh.
1. **God laid upon Christ our punishment fulling the Law’s demands.** (unearned favor)
* He is the one perfect sacrifice that made freedom a reality regardless our circumstance. “…Jesus gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father” (Galatians 1:4).
* Status and honor of works offer nothing to Christ to receive His service comes by another means. It is to say as the centurion, “I am not worthy to have you come under my roof… But say the word…”
1. **God centers forgiveness, life, and salvation now all on Jesus**. (undeserved love)
* The gates of heaven are open to Him and He has prepared a place for you.
* By Word and Sacrament God is not selfish, but turns to live with us by His grace.
1. **Foolishness eventually fails, but the Gospel is what remains to save.**
* “For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.”
1. **This plan is pleasing to God because it is good news**

 **that goes out to all.**

* The Lord needs not approval of it, but man needs persuading that God is for us not against us.
* As Luther explains, “In short, it uncovers all the works of the devil and opens to us the works of God. What madness is the world up to when it so bitterly hates this Word, this Gospel of eternal comfort, grace, salvation, and eternal life, and when it blasphemes and persecutes it with such satanic rage?” (Bul’s notes)
1. **The purpose is faithfulness to the Gospel so forget popularity.**
* Different gospel if it is all about health, wealth, and happiness.
* Different gospel if now I have to finish what Jesus started with my salvation.
* Different gospel if God’s love now means to tolerate all forms of lawlessness.
1. **Here is the path marked out by Paul to be a servant of Jesus Christ.**
* Baptized into His kingdom and living before Him.
* Our introit began and ended today, “Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name” (Psalm 86:11).

 Often we become distracted no less than the Galatians. It can make sense, but does it align with the truth of Scripture? It can feel right, but does it take away how Christ loves sinners? It can be convenient, but does it deny the way of the cross? The Gospel needs no justification from men. God gives it on His own terms. Such a gift appears foolish to a sinful world. Where unworthiness makes us worthy before Christ. Where freedom is faith in One sacrifice given as liberty and justice for all. There is only one true Gospel and it has no need of updates. Amen. The peace of God that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. http://www.usmemorialday.org/?page\_id=35 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)