

NIV Galatians 1:20 I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie. 22 I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. 23 They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." 24 And they praised God because of me.

Prayer: Lord God Almighty, our Creator and Savior, the truth is Gospel. We fall before you in fear because we have not lived according to the truth of the Gospel. We have taken advantage of your love. We have lived as if the Gospel is not true. Remind us and inspire us today by your Word and Spirit to live the truth of the Gospel which we believe.

Introduction: "Living on purpose" is a repeating phrase I have heard used years ago and it stuck with me. Write down the top 5 most valuable things to you. Now live on purpose according to those 5 things. But herein lays the problem: Are those 5 things really valuable- the most valuable? Who says? Are you right? Will they bring you joy, peace and happiness? Who knows? What is the truth? The world claims rational purposes set values. "A rational purpose is a purpose that promotes one's life—such as getting an education, developing a career, engaging in a hobby, building a romantic relationship, or raising one's children. These are the kinds of goals that make life meaningful. For example, consider a college student who chooses his major carefully, goes to class regularly, and takes his studies seriously. He is selfishly after something; he is acting purposefully toward a life-promoting end. In so doing, he adds meaning to his life in the form of value-achievements—such as increased knowledge, improved judgment, and an earned diploma." He's living on purpose. So the theory is that he will be happy satisfied and well a healthy individual because he went after what he wanted and thought was valuable. What is the truth? What is valuable?

As Christians we have values as well. Our values are not set by our wants, likes or dislikes, the world, or other people. Our values are based on the truth. Not opinions. Not feelings. Not consensus. This makes us a threat to the world, aloof to the world, strange and disconnected from the world. Our values are based on the truth of the Gospel.

Disconnect from the Present Evil Age:

Live the Gospel

God's Gospel is the truth

God's Gospel is powerful.

God's Gospel is the truth

The first verse of our text reminded me of the first sentence of the letter to the Galatians:

NIV Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle-- sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—

We know the problem the Galatians congregation was having with false teachers bring another gospel which is really no gospel at all but instead a new law. We talked last week about these people “perverting the gospel” and causing the Galatians to be confused. The Apostle Paul still calls them brothers in the family of God but he warns them that they are “in the process of deserting” the God who saved them from their sins by sacrificing His One and Only Son for them, Jesus Christ.

The false teachers were attacking Paul’s message and then attacking his calling as an apostle. The phrase we might use to describe the false teachers strategy was mud slinging. Discredit the man and you discredit the message. It seems they accused Paul’s message as being a figment of his own imagination, His own opinion. So the Apostle Paul takes the Gallatin back to the source. Where did the Gospel come from?

11 I want you to know, brothers that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. 12 I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

You and I know from Luke’s account in the book of Acts how Jesus Christ revealed the gospel to Paul. Through direct revelation Paul heard the Gospel.

The false teachers did not only attack the source of Paul’s teachings concerning the free and full Gospel, but they also attacked his apostleship –his authority to preach the gospel. In others words the false teachers were questioning, ‘Who is Paul that we should believe him?’ He learned from the Apostles and now he is confused. He is teaching differently than the real Apostle’s.” So Paul then defends his apostolic authority by relating the events that took place after his conversion on the road to Damascus and direct revelation from Jesus Christ. We read in Acts that Jesus himself gave Paul the job of missionary and apostle:

NIV Acts 26:16 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. 17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

Paul tells the Galatians that before he ever met Peter and James, the Lord’s brother, he was already preaching the Gospel. When he did go to Jerusalem it was only to meet the other apostle’s, not to learn the gospel from them. Paul’s message, the gospel, was given to him without the interference of human reasoning or choosing. Paul did not change the Gospel he preached to make it more pleasing to the world. The Gospel is simply – it is what it is – the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Not of Paul or Peter.

Today we live in a world that doesn’t care much for what lies behind their value judgments. The truth is not all that important to our world. The other day I read the back of a candy bar wrapper. Among all the list of ingredients it then read – May contain almonds. I checked another kind and it said May contain peanuts. May? They don’t even know what’s in their candy bar? It may or it may not? Do you care? No, it

tastes good right? Now that is just a candy bar and unless you are allergic to almonds, or

peanuts it is not that big of an issue. But what about bigger value based decisions and judgments? What is the truth behind the world's values?

The truth the world operates on is that you live 70-80 years, if you are lucky. So eat drink and be merry for tomorrow you die. Since you could die at any times shouldn't your values reflect that?

Christians know the truth is not an opinion. This truth has its source in eternal facts. This truth that has its source as the eternal God is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The truth is that God created each and every one of us to have eternal joy in paradise forever.

The truth is that our own selfish sinfulness has ruined life. The truth is that the punishment and judgment for sin is death now and forever in hell. The truth is that God's heart went out to each of us and he devised a plan to save every sinner. The truth is that God sent His one and only Son to live in our place and die in our place to meet the entrance requirements for the new home of paradise – heaven. The truth is that every sinner who has faith in God's Son, Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, will not die

or be punished. The truth is that believers in Jesus Christ will not be judged for their sins but only the last day will enter their new bodies and new homes in paradise. The truth is that all who do not believe in Jesus Christ are still under the penalty of sin and will be punished now and forever in hell.

Those truths are what we base our values on. We live on purpose for that truth. God's Gospel is the truth. Live the Gospel.

God's Gospel is powerful.

Paul does not stop with defending the Gospel by citing its source and the source of His apostleship: God himself. He now shows us exhibit B – his own life change as proof of the truth of the Gospel: its power.

13 For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. 14 I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers

In the past, Paul had been on fire for Judaism, the Jewish faith. When Jesus Christ came on the scene, fulfilling the OT laws from the 10 commandments all the way to the temple sacrifices, all the Jewish leaders along with Paul were threatened. They understood that Jesus Christ was making all their hard work insignificant, unnecessary and well frankly garbage. Everything that he had as Jew prided himself on was now obsolete and outdated. So the Pharisees along with Paul repeatedly persistently and continually persecuted the WAY as they called it, the family of believers in Jesus Christ.

Then Paul changed. What was it, who was it that changed Paul? Was it his thinking or choosing? Was it the opinions and smooth talking of some other teachers? No Paul tells the Galatians and us today that the change in him can be attributed to only one person and one thing: God's Gospel.

15 But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased 16 to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man,

Paul was an expert in the Law –the Jewish faith, now he was a believer in Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the Law and savior from sin for all who believe. Paul was changed by God, by God’s truth of the gospel. God opened his eyes to see the truth of Jesus his Savior. God opened his mind to understand forgiveness through Christ. God saved him by giving him faith. It is truly a story of amazing grace. The Gospel is powerful. The gospel changes sinners and their life. Paul now could and did make life decisions based on the values of the Gospel truth. What he used to think was important now were garbage – let me allow him to tell you himself:

NIV Philippians 3:8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them **rubbish** that I may gain Christ

Paul didn’t just speak a new way he lived a new way based on the gospel that changed his life. The believers in Judea witnessed the change. They didn’t know him personally but they did know his reputation:

23 They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." 24 And they praised God because of me.

The world around is today is continually searching for the truth that will make them happy, satisfied and successful. The next new diet, the next new self-help book. The next new teacher of positive thinking. Some even get close and they search the scriptures for joy, peace and happiness, looking in all the passages that command us what to eat, what to drink what to do. But they are all wasting their time, energy and resources –jogging, cleansing their bodies, giving up alcohol, praying facing the right direction, lighting candles, counting beads – When the one thing that has the power to change their life and give peace, joy and satisfaction now and into eternity is right under their nose: the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

Trust the Gospel to change your loved ones. Trust the Gospel it is powerful. Trust the Word of God to work. I over heard a conversation that went something like this, one woman said “I’m just .just it’s too much.” The other woman responded,”Oh I wish I could help you. When I feel overwhelmed, I open my bible and read Romans 8. There I hear God’s plan for me – his loving plan to save me. Then I write a prayer journal and list all the things that our bothering me. It helps me get it off my chest.” Then the other woman said “Well Ill try the prayer list and get it off my chest, but as for reading the Bible that won’t change anything.” Trust the Gospel. God’s Word will not return to him empty but will accomplish the purpose for which he sent it. We are in a battle today. We are under siege by the way the world thinks and feels and operates. We need to disconnect from the world’s opinions and Live the Gospel. God’s Gospel is the truth. He loves us –died for us and saved us. He has prepared a place in paradise for us. Trust the Gospel truth. It is powerful. It changes hearts to love him and others. It changes minds to accept his forgiveness in Jesus Christ and to forgive others by Jesus Christ’s power. The Gospel is powerful.