

September 25, 2023

Our study in Galatians is proving to be a proving ground of our faith. Paul is writing to the Galatian church who he had birthed into faith. The cause of his writing is that word got to him that the church was turning away from their confidence of faith in Christ alone will save. Outside forces, Judaizers and false teachers were introducing their own teaching that they were not really saved without carrying out religious requirements of the law, most evident the practice of circumcision.

While it is important that we heed Paul's teaching about taking on religious requirements that would preclude the truth, we do not want to sound like the gentile church replaced the state of Israel prophetically. The church did not replace Israel in God's eye and promise.

We have wrapped up the introductory chapters 1 & 2 in which Paul had to assert his apostleship, being ordained by God Himself and not by favor of man. He relates his experience at the Council of Jerusalem, his disagreement with Peter and his counsel with James. Here James gives Paul the green light to continue ministering to the gentile believers using the method he was using. Paul pleads his case for the grace of God only for salvation, not the work of the law in chapter 2 and concludes with some of the best writing in the Scriptures: 2:20-21 *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing."*

We are just entering chapter 3. The study is getting exciting as Paul turns his attention to the heart of the matter: saved by grace!

I am in awe of God's glory! I have never experienced the level of teaching that I have encountered since Jim Pell's departure. And it's all due to the workings of the Holy Spirit within me, it is God's study. He provides my words as he forms them in my heart and mind, and I record on paper and deliver to the class. I am also pleased with the interaction of the class participants, their contribution and discussion continues to be engaging. We concluded chapter 2 with a five-question essay quiz which I pray was and will be beneficial to each student as they contemplate their answers, which were not required to hand in. We did have several volunteers share a portion of their answers before class was dismissed.

We have consulted the Complete Jewish Study Bible along side the NRSV for the study. It brings a depth of understanding the scripture as written by Jewish contributors to a society that would have understood the nuances of Paul's language. I am grateful to my dear friend Jim Pells who instilled this practice.

Looking at the possibility of studying the Gospel of Mark during the winter....

Praising God, humbly submitted,

Evan Adams