

Directional Church
The Letter to the Galatians
Galatians 1:10-18
2/28/16

v.10 *For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.*

The word persuade means to “make a friend of” or to “seek the favor of”.

1 Thess. 2:4 *But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.*

1 Thess 4:1 *Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God;*

Pleasing God is the top priority in our lives.

Pleasing Him comes before pleasing others and myself.

We come to grips with the fact that the preaching of the gospel is not pleasing to lost man.

Bondservant

He goes on to say that if he still pleased men he *would not be a bondservant of Christ.*

The implication is that at one time in his life he did live to please men, but now he lives to please Christ as a bondservant.

Now, a bond-servant was no ordinary servant.

The Old Testament Law stated that all Hebrew slaves were to be set free after six years of service.

However, there were times when the slave decided to stay with his master for one reason or another.

Cf. Ex. 21:2, 5-6

Thus the slave/servant would become a bondslave/servant.

Romans 6:22 *But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.*

Paul realized that the “freedom” that he had in the world was nothing to be compared with the “slavery” he had in Christ.

From God Not Man

vv.11-12 *But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. (12) For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Paul is reminding them that the gospel message he preached, unlike the false one others were teaching, did not come from men, but God.

John MacArthur points out that if it had originated from man, it would be like all other human religions in that it would have been permeated with works of righteousness born of man's pride and Satan's deception.

Notice that Paul says that unlike other men who had received the gospel from other men, he had received the gospel *through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

This apparently happened at his conversion on the Damascus road in Acts 9.

Paul BC

vv.13-14 *For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. (14) And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*

Now Paul begins to share his testimony.

He was the crème de la crème of his class.

He said in Philippians 3:5-6 that he was *circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; (6) concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

He was also extremely zealous as he shared in Acts 22:3 *"I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.*

It is estimated that Paul had a consenting hand in the killing of at least 10,000 Christians before his conversion; one of which was Stephan.

Cf. Acts 7:54-60

Cf. Acts 8:1-3

Conversion Experience

v.15 *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,*

That calling came on the Damascus Road in Acts 9:1-6.

Have you ever felt that God couldn't love you because of the person you've been?

Saul did far more evil than most and yet God still loved him.

The only sin that can separate any of us from God is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, and even then, I don't think that it causes him to stop loving those who commit it.

Apostle to the Gentiles

v.16a *to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles,*

Jesus called Saul to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

Something very interesting is that Saul and Paul are the same.

One is Hebrew while the other is Gentile.

It would be the equivalent of John and Juan today.

The Lord simply wanted him to identify with his mission field.

Conferring with Flesh and Blood

vv.16b-18 *I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, (17) nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.*

Notice that God called Paul and not man.

We are not sure precisely how long Paul was in the Arabian Desert, but we do know that it took three years from his conversion experience to make his way to Jerusalem to visit with the other apostles.

I can't help but notice that the other apostles had spent three years with the Lord before the Lord was taken from them.

The Desert Place

God has led many a man into the desert to receive their advanced degrees from Desert Theological Seminary.

Cf. Moses in Ex 3:1-6 to lead the people out of Egypt (vv.7-10).

Cf. Elijah in 1 Kings 17:1-7 to show a widow how to trust the Lord (vv.8-16).

Cf. Jesus in Matt.4:1-11 to prepare him for the cross (Matt.26:36-46).

Are you in the desert? What is God preparing you for?

We must learn to look at desert places as preparation places.