

MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, September 29, 2020

What Matters to God

Overview: This letter provides a fantastic mindset for addressing some of the complex issues that face the church internally and how the church must externally interact with the world around it. Galatians dives deep into some of the historical issues of the law, sin and grace and then comes full circle to help us see: **"What matters is God's New Creation — the new, multi-ethnic family of the Messiah... full of faith in Jesus... loving God and others in the power of the Holy Spirit."**

Video: BibleProject Galatians: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmx4UjRFp0M>

Segment Questions: (References are on back)

Read Galatians 1:4

- Read that verse a second time and let it sink in. Take it apart phrase by phrase. How well do you feel this captures the heart of the Gospel? How is this different with how you have traditionally heard the Gospel explained? How is it the same.
- Paul used a model of taking a fair amount of time to establish his credibility to speak on a topic. Only then after doing this, did he confront some of the problems directly. How would this model serve us well in our day and age where people are so apt to speak their mind so boldly?

Read Galatians 2:14-16 and 6:1-3

- The book of Galatians exposes how certain groups of people in the church were placing additional requirements on believers that God never intended. In what ways does that continue today?
- Paul was willing to directly confront wrong teaching. How have you observed both good and bad examples of spiritual confrontations.
- What underlying mindset or attitudes do you see in Paul's approach?

Read Galatians 4:1

- How can or should believers address or confront the use of words in the Bible that have become toxic in our society? Do we need to advocate changing the Biblical text?

Action Questions:

Read Galatians 6:14-15

- How do these verses serve as a fantastic conclusion and "mike drop" to this book? What is different about this closing "bookend" that summarizes the Gospel? What role do you see the Holy Spirit playing in what these verses are saying?

Closing Personal Prayer:

Controversy, Challenge, Change — they have been around for a long time. But so has the cross. We are grateful for this reminder about how central the cross and Your spirit are to our faith. May we hold tight to the promise of salvation. Live in the power of the Spirit. And become the new creation God wants.

Introduction

For the past few weeks I have saturated my mind with this first known letter written by the Apostle Paul. The letter to the church at Galatia. As one of his first writings of what the Lord had placed on his heart, he opens by making some statements to establish his credibility to speak on these topics. It is also great how clearly he opens by defining the Gospel: "Jesus gave his life for our sins, just as God our Father had planned, in order to rescue us from this evil world in which we live." (1;4, NLT).

Too often we make the Gospel complex. Paul spoke to that topic back then and we are still dealing with it today. How often do we start adding things to the simplicity of what that verse says.

As the book continues into chapter one and then even into chapter two, Paul speaks a lot about both himself and his early activities in the church. He does this as a way to establish the fact that he is in a position to speak truth into matters that the church was facing. He goes so far as to confront Peter, one of the pillars of the early church. He does this though not as a way to disgrace Peter, but instead as a way to illustrate the very power of the Gospel.

Chapter four uses some terminology that is quite contentious today — the word "slave." It appears 13 times in this chapter alone. Why is this contentious? In recent months there has been increased pressure to remove the words "slave" and "master" from common language. (e.g. tech world master/slave => primary/replica; in real estate, master bedroom is becoming "primary bedroom"). The Bible is full of references to master and slave. It seems inevitable that at some point, probably soon, we will need to address this as well. This seems like one of those topics that Paul would have directly spoken to. We need to be ready to do the same. May we have God's wisdom as we wade into these stormy waters.

The letter closes with another bookend, much like he opened where he stated the simplicity of the gospel. He closes by calling us to what really matters. The call to live in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I close my introduction by returning to the challenge that my brother Aaron shared two weeks ago, "*Have you had a chance to write any letters yet?*" Let us keep at trying to encourage each other this way.

Galatians 1:4 | Jesus gave his life for our sins, just as God our Father planned, in order to rescue us from this evil world in which we live.

Galatians 2:14-16 | When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions? "You and I are Jews by birth, not 'sinners' like the Gentiles. Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.

Galatians 6:1-3 | Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer[a] is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. 2 Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. 3 If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.

Galatians 6:14-15 | As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died. It doesn't matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation.