The Truth of the Gospel

THE GOSPEL REVEALED · PART 12

Galatians 2:1-5 | Arvin Assembly of God | Pastor Brian Overturf | November 15, 2026
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MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Where we left off. Last week we asked, how does God get glory from your life? And we finished chapter 1 with these words.

> **Galatians 1:24**
> **[24]And they glorified God in me.**

The churches in Judea wouldn't have known Paul if he walked in. All they had was his story… and when they heard it, they glorified God in him.

Fourteen years later. On that first trip to Jerusalem, Paul spent fifteen days with Peter and saw James while he was there. Nothing formal… nothing official. Now Paul jumps ahead fourteen years to a different visit. This time John's there too. Paul sits down with James, Peter, and John, lays his gospel out on the table, and brings a Gentile with him.

The handshake. In Paul's day, when two men gave each other their right hand, that was the contract… the signature on the page. It meant the fighting's over. We're on the same side now. And if you went back on your word, you were labeled a traitor.

WHY PAUL TELLS THIS STORY

The false teachers in Galatia were saying:

- Paul's gospel isn't the real gospel.
- Back at headquarters in Jerusalem they teach something different.
- We're here on their behalf to make some corrections.

So Paul takes the Galatians into the room, behind the curtain, and shows them the truth.

How do we know there's only one gospel?

Back in chapter 1 Paul said there isn't another gospel. Over the next two weeks, he shows us that the apostles in Jerusalem agreed with him.

1. The Apostles Preached It Too (Do you know it well enough to lay it out?)

Fourteen years. Look at verse 1.

> **Galatians 2:1**
> **[1]Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.**

Fourteen years from his conversion. That means Paul's been preaching Jesus for fourteen years… Arabia, Damascus, Syria, Cilicia and Antioch.

Those who were scattered. Near the end of those quiet years, something starts happening in a city called Antioch, and Luke tells us about it.

Acts 11:19-21
[19]Now <u>those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen</u> traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. [20]But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. [21]And the hand of the Lord was with them, and <u>a great number believed and turned to the Lord.</u>

When Stephen was killed, persecution broke out in Jerusalem and the believers scattered everywhere… and they took the gospel with them. Some made it all the way up north to Antioch.

A great number believed.

Scattered abroad. If you were with us in James, that word ought to sound familiar. Look at how James opens his letter.

James 1:1
[1]James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, <u>To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:</u> Greetings.

These scattered believers are the very people James was writing to. Persecuted, in the middle of their trials and tribulations, and still preaching Jesus… and people were getting saved.

Barnabas. Word about Antioch gets back to Jerusalem, and they send the son of encouragement.

Acts 11:22-24
[22]Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and <u>they sent out Barnabas</u> to go as far as Antioch. [23]<u>When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad,</u> and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. [24]For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

When Barnabas sees all these Gentiles getting saved, he sees the grace of God… and he's glad. The church is growing so fast that he needs help, and he knows just the man.

Acts 11:25-26
[25]<u>Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul.</u> [26]And when he had found him, <u>he brought him to Antioch.</u> So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

ANTIOCH
- A church full of Jews and Gentiles worshiping Jesus together.
- Where the disciples were first called Christians.
- Very possibly where Titus was saved under Paul's ministry.

In that world a Jew would never sit down to eat with a Gentile. The gospel of Jesus breaks all those traditions… we are one family.

Up again. Back to Galatians 2.

Galatians 2:1
[1]Then after fourteen years <u>I went up again to Jerusalem</u> with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.

They always said up to Jerusalem, because it sits up on a hill. And notice the word again. This is only the second time he's been back, around 11 years after his first trip.

With Barnabas… and Titus. All these years later, Barnabas is still right there next to him. And notice the word took. Paul brought Titus on purpose. Hold on to Titus.

> **Galatians 2:1**
> **[1]Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.**

By revelation. Look at verse 2.

> **Galatians 2:2**
> **[2]And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.**

This trip was God's idea. Nobody in Jerusalem sent for him. God told him to go, so he went. And Luke tells us the reason for the trip.

> **Acts 11:27-30**
> **[27]And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. [28]Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. [29]Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. [30]This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.**

One church caring for another. This isn't the big offering Paul collects years later. This is one local church in Antioch taking care of their brothers and sisters in Jerusalem… believers who were often cut off from their family and friends for following Jesus.

Laid it out. Paul carried something else up to Jerusalem too.

> **Galatians 2:2**
> **[2]And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.**

That word communicated means he laid it out in front of them. The Spanish says it well… expuse. He exposed it. He put the whole thing out on the table where they could look at it.

THE INSPECTOR

- The house is already up.
- The contractor rolls the blueprints out on the tailgate of his truck.
- Not to find out if it works… so nobody can come back later and say it wasn't built to code.

Paul's been preaching this gospel for fourteen years. Now he lays it out so nobody can ever question it.

Which I preach. That's present tense. Fourteen years later, he's still preaching the very same gospel. And when the leaders in Jerusalem heard it, they recognized it. It was the same gospel they'd been preaching all along. Paul says it like this to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 15:11
[11]Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Paul, Peter, James… it didn't matter who was preaching. It was one gospel. Jew or Gentile, the way you come in is by faith.

Of reputation. Notice who he laid it out for.

Galatians 2:2
[2]And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.

This wasn't a public trial in front of the whole church. It was a sit-down with James, Peter, and John. Keep an eye on that phrase. Paul keeps coming back to it.

In vain. Now the part that throws people.

Galatians 2:2
[2]And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.

In vain means for nothing. Wasted. Is Paul worried his gospel might be wrong? No way. This is the same man who wrote this back in chapter 1.

Galatians 1:8
[8]But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

Here's what Paul was worried about. If Jerusalem had said those Gentiles have to become Jews first, you'd end up with two churches preaching two different messages. Fourteen years of running, and all of it for nothing.

If Jerusalem and Antioch don't preach the same gospel, you don't have one Church anymore.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?
Christ died for our sins, He was buried, He rose again the third day, and we're saved by grace through faith in Him. If somebody at work asked you this week:

- What does your church believe?
- What is the gospel?
- Could you lay it out on the table?

Know the gospel well enough to say it. And know it well enough to catch it when somebody's changed it.

Wednesday night. We're going to lay the gospel out on the table, piece by piece. So the next time somebody asks you what you believe, you'll be ready to answer.

The apostles preached it too.

2. Titus Didn't Need Anything Else (Neither do you… Jesus plus nothing.)

Not even. Now let's get to Titus. Look at verse 3.

Galatians 2:3
[3]Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

You don't say not even unless somebody tried. Somebody looked over at Titus and said, now what about him? It wasn't James, and it wasn't Peter or John. Paul tells us exactly who it was.

Galatians 2:4
[4]And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),

The apostles didn't require it. It was false brothers.

Being a Greek. Notice why they singled him out.

Galatians 2:3
[3]Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

Titus wasn't Jewish. He didn't grow up going to the synagogue, he didn't eat kosher, and he'd never offered a sacrifice at the temple. He heard the gospel, he believed it, and he got saved.

Titus was living proof.

A Gentile who loves Jesus, who's filled with the Holy Spirit, who's serving God… and he never became a Jew.

Compelled to be circumcised. Look at the end of the verse.

Galatians 2:3
[3]Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

Circumcision was the sign of God's covenant with Abraham, back in Genesis 17. It was the mark that said, you belong to God's covenant people. But God was always after more than an outward sign. Even Moses said it.

Deuteronomy 30:6
[6]And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

Then through Jeremiah, God promised a day was coming.

Jeremiah 31:31, 33
[31]"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— [33]But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

A new covenant… written on the heart. And Paul says that day is here.

Romans 2:29
[29]but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

And when does that happen? The moment you're in Christ.

Colossians 2:11
[11]In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

TWO COVENANTS

- The old covenant put a mark on the body.
- The new covenant puts a mark on the heart.

They were asking for the old mark on a man who already had the new one.

Jesus plus. Some in the church were saying, Jesus is the Messiah… but if you want to be saved, you've got to become a Jew first. Luke tells us exactly what they were preaching.

> **Acts 15:1**
> **[1]And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."**

They were telling Gentiles that faith in Jesus wasn't enough. Jesus plus circumcision.

Compelled. Back to Galatians.

> **Galatians 2:3**
> **[3]Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.**

That word compelled means forced… twisting somebody's arm until they give in. Paul uses that word again at the end of this letter.

> **Galatians 6:12**
> **[12]As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.**

The people doing the compelling were protecting themselves. They wanted to stay comfortable with the Jews.

False brethren. Back to verse 4.

> **Galatians 2:4**
> **[4]And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),**

They called themselves Christians. They came to church, sang the songs, and said amen. But they were preaching Jesus plus something… and that's a different gospel. It's the same message, and the same group, that showed up in Galatia. Paul is saying, I've dealt with these people before, and I didn't give in then either.

Secretly brought in. Notice how they got in.

> **Galatians 2:4**
> **[4]And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),**

Paul says it two different ways so you don't miss it. They pretended to be one of you, and they didn't disclose their real agenda.

To spy out. And look at why they came.

> **Galatians 2:4**
> **[4]And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),**

That's spy language… scouts sent across enemy lines to take notes. Who's eating with Gentiles? Who's skipping the rules? But notice whose freedom it is. Our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus. You don't earn that freedom. You have it, and you only have it in Him.

Bondage. Notice what they were after.

> **Galatians 2:4**
> **[4]And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, <u>that they might bring us into bondage),</u>**

Paul was a Pharisee who kept every rule there was to keep, and he looks back on all of it and calls it slavery. When you try to earn what Jesus already paid for, you never stop working. He says the same thing later in this letter.

> **Galatians 5:1**
> **[1]<u>Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free,</u> and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.**

CHECKING CARDS

At the Costco in Bakersfield:

- There's always somebody at the door checking cards.
- No card, no getting in.
- The false brothers wanted somebody posted at the door of the church checking cards.

Nobody's checking cards at the door of grace. Jesus already paid for your membership with His own blood.

Not even for an hour. Look at what Paul did about it.

> **Galatians 2:5**
> **[5]<u>to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour,</u> that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.**

Paul could be gentle about a lot of things, but when somebody tried to add to the gospel, he stood his ground. And look at who he was fighting for.

> **Galatians 2:5**
> **[5]to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, <u>that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.</u>**

When this meeting happened, Paul hadn't even been to Galatia yet. He was standing firm for people he'd never met… and for us too. Every one of us got saved without having to become a Jew.

What we believe about the gospel affects generations.

Maybe you're the first in your family to be a Christian. Be firm on the gospel, not only for your sake, but for your children and your children's children… so the truth of the gospel might continue.

JESUS PLUS…

- Jesus plus a ritual.
- Jesus plus a tradition of man.
- Jesus plus getting your life all cleaned up before you're allowed to walk in the door.

The minute somebody adds a requirement Jesus never gave, it isn't the same gospel anymore.

Titus didn't need anything else.

CONCLUSION

HOW DO WE KNOW THERE'S ONLY ONE GOSPEL?

- The apostles preached it too… know it well enough to lay it out on the table.
- Titus didn't need anything else… and neither do you.

It's Jesus plus nothing.

Next week. Paul gives us two more answers. We'll find out what James, Peter, and John said when they looked at Paul's gospel… and we finally get to that handshake.

Trying to earn your seat? Jesus plus being good enough. There's only one gospel, and Jesus already paid for all of it.

Stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made you free.