

## VOTC Sept 1 - Galatians 1:1-5 “The Gospel of Grace and Peace”

Hello listener and welcome to another episode here at Voice of the Church. Today we begin a new series on the topic of “*Gospel Freedom*” from the Book of Galatians. If you are new to Christianity or are just listening in for the first time, welcome . . . , and I hope this will help you understand what the Christian faith is all about, & what it means to live in light of what Jesus has done for this world.

### Introduction

The **gospel** is such a *familiar* word to us in the church. We hear this word used often in church settings, and we read this word on the cover of Christian books & on Christians websites. Sometimes when we think of the gospel, we think of it as a message just for people *out there* in the world. Or we think the gospel is what we need to believe to become Christians, but then we move on to other deeper things, right?

1. In this letter of Paul to the Galatians, we learn about our need to constantly come back to a *right understanding* of the gospel, b/c we can easily drift away from it. Paul here shows us that the gospel does not just concern the ABCs of the Christian faith, but it is the **A to Z** of the Christian life. It not only concerns how we enter the kingdom of God, but it also informs how we live in God’s kingdom rightly as followers of Jesus Christ.
2. The Galatians were Gentile converts to the faith, just like us, but they had quickly and subtly turned away from the true gospel by introducing practices & requirements next to Jesus for acceptance with God. And so, in this letter Paul is coming to them with great concern. He defends the gospel, he explains the gospel, and he applies the gospel to their lives and show them what it means to *truly* live in the freedom God has won for us in Christ. These are the kinds of things we want to think about in our series on Gospel Freedom. \*Paul here begins his letter with a gracious gospel greeting.

### A Gospel Greeting (v.1-5)

1. Again, this was a group of believers that were drifting away from Jesus, but like many of his other letters, Paul opens with a word of grace and peace from God.
  - a. **Grace** has to do with God’s *de merited* favor. Grace assumes that we have not only fail to earn God’s good gifts, but we’ve done everything to show ourselves unworthy of them! Nevertheless, God shows to his people grace in the gospel.
  - b. **Peace** has to do with our reconciled relationship w/ God and the blessings that flow to us as a result of being at peace with God. We are born into this world at **war** with God because of our sins, but Paul here speaks a word of peace that informs our relationship to God, our relationship to one another, and even our relationship to ourselves in finding again a sense of wholeness in our body and soul.
2. How can Paul speak words of such comfort to people like you and me? Paul’s gracious greeting is **rooted** in what Christ has done for us. The gospel is not good advice for us to

follow, but it is a message of good news that God has accomplished something on our behalf in his Son Jesus Christ. Here in Paul's greeting we see the nuts and bolts of the gospel. Notice first the person of the gospel.

- a. **Person - *he gave himself* - the subject of the gospel is Jesus.** Here he willingly took our place. In the gospel God did not simply provide an angel for a Savior, or a mere man, but he provided himself in Jesus Christ. Jesus "*gave himself for us.*" No one took Christ's life away from Him; He freely gave it away. Jesus said in **Jn.10:17-18**, "*I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord.*" The gospel is not what God does in us, but message of what God has done **for us** in Jesus.
  - b. **Purpose – *for our sins*.** Children's catechism, "what is sin? It is any transgression of or lack of conformity to the law of God." All of us have done what God's law forbids (lying, stealing, hating), and all of us have failed to live up to what God's law requires of us (love God and our neighbor). In the words of Paul in the book of Romans, "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" But Paul tells us, Jesus gave himself for our sins.
  - c. **Result - *to deliver or rescue us from this present evil age*.** This present evil age speaks of the world under the curse of sin, death and Satan. We live a world affected by sin, and we ourselves are broken people. We are all born into this situation. One wonderful result of the cross is that God's rescue of us from this present world to bring us into a new home, into Christ's kingdom.
  - d. **Origin - *according to the will of our God and Father*.** The gospel finds its origins in the all wise and sovereign will of God. It pleased God to save us.
  - e. **Goal – the glory of God. *to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.***
3. There is good news for the world today b/c it brings glory to God to save for himself a people in and through Jesus Christ! As we begin our series in gospel freedom, we read this wonderful summary of the gospel that brings grace and peace into our lives.

## Conclusion

Dear listener, if know that you fall short of what God calls you to every day, the good news of the gospel is that Jesus died for sinners, and grace is a free gift given to the unworthy. This gift is for all of those who call out to Jesus from a believing heart, and from a heart that is sorry to God for our sins. When we draw near to God through Jesus, we can receive the very peace of God into our lives right now. Peace in our conscience that we are right with God. Peace with one another in Christ which we'll consider next time.

We hope you'll join us next time for our next meditation in the book of Galatians as we continue to think about the freedom God gives to us in the gospel and how that works itself out in our relationships with one another. Until then, may God bless you and keep you, and give you his peace.