

The One True Gospel

Galatians 1:6-10

One Way, One Truth, One Life

Galatians 1:6-7 (NASB95) – Distorting the Gospel

⁶ I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; ⁷ which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

The reality...there are people who distort the gospel of Christ. These people fall in two groups...willing wolves and unaware wolves. Meaning...some are wolves on purpose and some are wolves unknowingly. But the end result is the same...the distortion of the gospel. These two groups are described in Matthew 7.

Matthew 7:15 (NASB95): *"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.*

Matthew 7:21-23 (NASB95): *²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. ²² Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'*

We must remember that there is only One True Gospel. And as we learned from Acts 13, the gospel message is centered upon Jesus and His work: His live, death, burial and resurrection and the impact of the gospel is forgiveness of sins and justification before a Holy God.

There were two common distortions in the early church; Gnosticism and Judaism.

Gnosticism. Basically, Gnosticism taught that one needs to live in a spiritual realm and that there are different levels to spirituality. When it came to "distorting" the gospel the Gnostics would add to the gospel this idea of secret knowledge and access to more power and more spirituality. Meaning, some people were able to access the spiritual realm and receive higher gifts, higher knowledge, higher experiences. Which clearly contradicts Scripture. We are taught that we all have equal access to God through Christ. There are not different levels of access to power and spirituality in the Christian faith. Of course, this thought was quickly condemned as heresy by the early church.

Judaism. Basically, Jews would come into the church and affirm Jesus and then start the addition. They would teach that one definitely needs Jesus but they also need something else. Common additions to the gospel were circumcision, ceremonial washing, participation in Jewish festivals and dietary restrictions. Paul was one of the strongest voices against Judaism distorting the gospel. Jesus clearly taught that He alone is enough. We don't need Jesus plus something else.

Holding fast to the Word of God is so vital for the believer and the church. The enemy is constantly trying to infiltrate and distort the gospel of Christ.

Ephesians 4:4-6 (NASB95): *⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*

Galatians 3:26-29 (NASB95): ²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

Discussion Questions:

- ❖ Why is there only One True Gospel?
- ❖ Why is distorting the gospel so bad?
- ❖ What are some examples of distorting the gospel that you have noticed that has already or is trying to infiltrate the church?

Galatians 1:8-9 (NASB95)

⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! ⁹ As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

God is very clear...we don't ever change who He is or what He has said. The gospel message is center upon who Jesus is, what He accomplished in His death, burial and resurrection and what He provides in the gospel.

1. Who Jesus is.
 - a. Jesus is fully God and fully man. It is blaspheming to describe Jesus in another other way than how He described Himself. Jesus came as Immanuel, God with us. John 20:30-31.
2. What Jesus accomplished.
 - a. He lived a perfect sinless life as fully God and fully man.
 - b. He walked to the cross on our behalf.
 - c. He was buried. He rose from the dead on the third day.
3. What Jesus provides.
 - a. We were taught in Acts 13 that the gospel provides forgiveness of sins and justification before a Holy God.

The gospel gives us a relationship with our Heavenly Father. That's the whole point. A personal, intimate relationship with God. To make the focus of the gospel a place or stuff is a distortion.

Discussion Questions:

- ❖ Why is it important to use Scripture to describe and understand who Jesus is?
- ❖ What is the ultimate goal of the gospel?
- ❖ Why is our personal relationship with God (the ultimate goal of the gospel) so important?

Galatians 1:10 (NASB95)

¹⁰ For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

Verse 10 is a fairly popular passage of Scripture. It's important to remember that this proclamation is directly tied to the gospel. The One True Gospel will not be popular. When you stand up to distortions the enemy will fight back. The reason we hold fast to the gospel as given to us in Scripture is because we seek to please God not man. 2 Timothy 4:1-5.

Discussion Question:

- ❖ Is it worth dividing over the One True Gospel? Why?