

Chapter Five

Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans

Separated To Preach the Gospel

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God” (Romans 1:1).

Paul was not only a man “called” of God, He was man separated from the world for a specific task. He was called to tell the whole world the good news of God’s wondrous gift of salvation and how “whosoever will” can be saved. This is the calling and mission of every person professing Jesus as Savior and Lord. There are only two categories of Christians in the world.

1. Those who are doing what they have been separated unto and
2. Those who are not.

Paul was “separated unto the gospel of God” before he was even born. This is known as the doctrine of *predestination*. We will deal with this more extensively when we get to Romans 8:28. Paul tells us in Galatians 1:15 when God separated him.

“¹⁰ For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. ¹¹ But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. ¹² For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³ For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: ¹⁴ And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵ But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, ¹⁶ To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: ¹⁷ Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus” (Galatians 1:10-17).

This all means that before we were ever born, God foreknew those who would trust in Christ and incorporated them into His plan to bring the message of redemption to a lost world. Even before we were saved, God began working in our lives to prepare us for the ministry He would call us to do. Many people think that men like Paul, John the Baptist, Jacob, Samson, Moses, Samuel and Jeremiah were unique in this way. Actually this is a common truth for all believers. We were all separated from the womb unto the gospel of God.

“²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Romans 8:29-30).

What Christ said about the Apostle Paul is true of every believer born again of the Spirit of God. All who have accepted God’s free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ also have a vocational calling to take that good news to everyone they come in contact with.

“¹³ Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: ¹⁴ And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. ¹⁵ But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: ¹⁶ For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Acts 9:13-16).

The “gospel of God” is broad in its scope.

The word translated “gospel” is from the Greek word *euaggelion* (yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on). It refers to the good news for mankind regarding the kingdom of God soon to be established on earth. The good news revolves around the finished work of Jesus the Messiah and how His life, death and resurrection opens the door to the kingdom for “whosoever will.”

The gospel message continues the good news for those who accept God’s free gift of salvation in Christ Jesus by teaching that by the resurrected Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of God in heaven from where He will return in glory and majesty with His redeemed to establish the kingdom of God on earth. Therefore, the gospel of God is much more than a message of salvation. It is a proclamation of victory and restoration of the lost dominion of mankind over this world given to mankind by God and stolen by the deception of Satan (Genesis 1:26-28; Revelation 5:1-13).

The “gospel of God” is a proclamation of a complete salvation and an already accomplished victory over sin and Satan. The battle is already won.

“⁹For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. ¹⁰And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:” (Colossians 2:9-10).

“⁵⁵O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? ⁵⁶The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. ⁵⁷But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (I Corinthians 15:55-58).

The “gospel of God” is doctrinally definitive.

The “gospel of God” is the whole book of Romans detailing every aspect of Christ’s work on mankind’s behalf. The “gospel of God” details man’s condemnation, the propitiation of God, the availability of justification by grace through faith, sanctification, consecration and the believer’s final glorification with Christ. This complete body of doctrine is what Paul calls “the gospel.” It is this complete body of doctrine we are commanded to go into all the world proclaiming (Matthew 28:19-20).

The statement of Paul in I Corinthians 15:1-4 is only an abbreviation of this whole body of doctrine. The work of salvation is just an introduction to the “gospel of God.”

“¹Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ²By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. ³For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (I Corinthians 15:1-4).

Additional aspects of the “gospel” are detailed in the balance of I Corinthians chapter 15. The whole of the “gospel of God” is the most thoroughly presented in the epistle to the Romans.

Any person adding to or subtracting from the “gospel of God” retains the curse of condemnation upon himself.

When a person strays from ANY doctrine presented in the epistle to the Romans, he preaches “another gospel which is not another” and retains the curse of condemnation upon himself. The gospel provides details about salvation that are much more than deliverance from condemnation. The gospel gives details about the new, eternal life that is ours presently and in the hereafter.

“⁶ I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: ⁷ Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6-9).

Central to the gospel message is what Christ has done to save our souls from Hell and to give us a new life. ANY admixture of religious ceremony, ritual or works of self-righteousness for salvation perverts (Galatians 1:7) the gospel of grace.

“¹⁵ We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, ¹⁶ Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Galatians 2:15-16).

“¹⁰ For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. ¹¹ But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith” (Galatians 3:10-11).

“¹ Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. ² Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. ³ For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. ⁴ Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Galatians 5:1-4).

How much “works” is too much? To what degree can a person trust in religious ritual, ceremony or self-righteousness before the “gospel of God” is perverted and he remains under the curse of condemnation?

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9).

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1. Read Galatians 1:15 and discuss when Paul was “separated unto the gospel of God,” what the doctrine is called and how it relates to the vocational calling of God to all born again people. _____

2. Read Romans 8:29-30 and expand upon what you have said above. _____

3. Discuss in what way the statement of Christ in Acts 9:15 relates to you personally even though Christ is referring to the Apostle Paul. _____

4. Discuss in detail what Paul means by the “gospel of God” in Romans 1:1. Give Scripture. _____

5. Discuss the statement, “the gospel of God is doctrinally definitive” and why it is true. _____

6. Discuss how your answers to discussion questions four and five affect your responsibilities in fulfilling the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20. _____

7. Read Galatians 1:6-9. From your understanding of questions four and five, how does deviation from any doctrine presented in the epistle to the Romans effect the true “gospel of God”? _____

8. Read Galatians 5:9 and list some religious rituals, ceremonies or anything else which might pervert the gospel of grace. _____