

PAUL'S GOSPEL

Today's lesson comes from a phrase used by Paul in our lesson text, "**according to my gospel.**"

I think Paul gave up an idea about his gospel in Romans 15:14-21. I believe he gave insight into Paul's Gospel in Rom.15:16 – "to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God that my offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit."

<p>This lesson will study five aspects of Paul's Gospel.</p>

1. Paul's gospel offered to ALL members of the human race on the basis of God's grace was challenged in the first church conference (Acts 15).

"And some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, '**Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.**' And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue." (Acts 15:1-2)

"But certain ones of **the sect of the Pharisses** who had believed, stood up, saying, 'It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.'" (Acts 15:5)

Peter spoke (Acts 15:6-11) – "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are." (Acts 15:11)

Paul and Barnabas spoke (Acts 15:12) – "They were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles." (Acts 15:12)

James spoke (Acts 15:13-21) – "Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles." (Acts 15:19)

Apostles and elders established a church dogma (Acts 15:22-29) – "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials." (Acts 15:28)

After the Jerusalem church conference, the Christian church was divided into two theological schools. One theological school embraced a works gospel and spirituality (legalism). "For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing **the party of the circumcision.**" (Gal.2:14)

The other theological school embraced a grace gospel and indwelling Holy Spirit spirituality. "Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be **justified by faith in Christ**, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified." (Gal.2:16)

"I do not nullify **the grace of God**; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly." (Gal.2:21)

2. The party of circumcision (legalism) had a religious view of the world and a distorted view of Christianity.

The party of circumcision viewed the world as religious Jews and pagan Gentiles. When a Gentile believed the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Cor.15:3-4; Rom.1:16), he had to be circumcised in order to be saved (Acts 15:1-2).

Their distorted view of Christianity was that after circumcision salvation the Gentiles became a religious Jews like Christ. They would say that it was essential to follow Jesus in Jewish rite of circumcision.

“But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that **the truth of the gospel** might remain with you.” (Gal.2:4-5) (**Rom.2:28-29; 2 Cor.11:4**)

3. **The party of grace had a different view of the world and Christianity.**

They saw the world as Jew and Gentile and Christian. “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. **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**. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” (Gal.3:26-29) (**Eph.2:13-16**)

They saw Christianity as one church because the baptism of the Holy Spirit places every CAB into Christ and the Church. “**For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks**, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one spirit.” (1 Cor.12:13)

4. **Paul also had to deal with a distortion of the truth of the message of the gospel.**

There was an absence of the resurrection from the message of the gospel of grace salvation. “Remember (mnemoneuo) (p.a.impv.2ps) Jesus Christ, **risen from the dead**, descendant of David, according to my gospel.” (2 Tim.2:8) (**Rom.1:3-4, 16**)

“And that he was buried, and that **He was raised** on the third day according to the Scriptures.”(1 Cor.15:4)

“And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.” (1 Cor.15:14)

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.” (1 Cor.15:17)

5. **Paul declared that he suffered great persecution for preaching a gospel of God’s grace and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Eph.2:8-9).**

“Brethren I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!” (Acts 23:6)

“And when it was day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul.” (Acts 23:12; 24:21; 25:19-21)

Paul’s defense before King Agrippa involved a testimony of his salvation experience with the resurrected Lord (Acts 26:1, 12-21).

“‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ And I said, ‘Who art Thou, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.’” (Acts 26:14-15)