

Lesson 3 – Galatians 1:10-12

Randy Thompson
Valley Bible Church
www.valleybible.net

Review/Introduction

Salvation from sin is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Christ plus anything is a different, distorted gospel.

One of the major issues of the early church was the integration of Jew and Gentile into one body. The Jews had been taught from childhood a salvation by works because they valued human tradition over to Scripture. Scripture alone should have led them to Christ.

¹⁵and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:15)

The Jews taught a lifestyle of obligatory works which they equated with being a follower of the one true God. This thinking moved into the early church when some Jews who had believed were teaching a gospel of Christ plus works.

¹Some men came down from Judea and *began* teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” (Acts 15:1)

⁵But some of the sect of the Pharisees 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)

This controversy was addressed in Judea and Syria with the First Jerusalem Council. But north of Syria around the Mediterranean (in Galatia), the controversy lived on. So, Paul wrote a letter to address the issue following the Jerusalem Council.

The threat of legalism is as real today as it was in Paul’s day. Christ plus rules for salvation (in the fullest since which includes sanctification) is a heresy that puts people on the path to hell. It must be rejected. Salvation is by grace alone, through saving faith alone, in Christ alone. This is what Paul is writing to defend and to exhort the Galatians (and us) – to hold fast to the true gospel.

Last week, we saw that the Galatians bear the responsibility for entertaining a different gospel. But the false teachers who distort the true gospel by adding works and turn grace into non-grace and the gospel into a non-gospel, Paul condemned to eternal destruction.

Today we begin to look at Paul’s “slavery” to Christ. A slavery that is the same for us.

Paul’s defense of his slavery to Christ – Source of Paul’s message (1:10-12)

1. The character of a slave of Christ (1:10)

¹⁰For 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.

¹⁰For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. (ESV)

Paul just finished pronouncing condemnation on those that distort the gospel of grace. The gospel is salvation from sin by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (plus nothing).

“For” refers to what went before. There was no commendation of the Galatians. He did not butter them up. Paul just used strong language towards the Galatians holding them responsible for entertaining a desertion of the gospel of grace. But he “anathematized” the false teachers.

The reason for Paul’s devotion to the true gospel and the strong language just used is that he is a “bond-servant” (ESV – servant) of Christ.

Here is a controversy of bible translation. The Greek word is “doulos”. In the NASB the word is translated slave, bond-servant, bondslave, and servant. The ESV uses similar words to translate doulos. Here are the NASB numbers.

Book	Bondservant	Bondslave	Servant	Slave	Totals
Matt	0	0	0	35	35
Mark	0	0	0	5	5
Luke	1	2	0	25	28
John	0	0	0	11	11
Acts	2	3	0	0	5
Rom	1	0	0	6	7
1 Cor	0	0	0	4	4
2 Cor	1	0	0	0	1
Gal	1	0	0	3	4
Eph	0	0	0	3	3
Phil	2	0	0	0	2
Col	2	1	0	3	6
1 Tim	0	0	0	1	1
2 Tim	1	0	0	0	1
Titus	1	1	0	0	2
Philemon	0	0	0	2	2
James	1	0	0	0	1
1 Peter	0	1	0	0	1
2 Peter	1	0	0	1	2
Jude	1	0	0	0	1
Rev	10	0	4	3	17
Totals	25	8	4	102	139

By looking at these specific verses we can see that the NASB translates the word as “slave” where the context is one of cultural or economic slavery (many examples in the gospels).

²⁸There 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. (Galatians 3:28)

¹³For 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 Corinthians 12:13)

⁵**Slaves**, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; ⁶not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as **slaves** of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. (Ephesians 6:5-6)

⁵Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied Himself, taking the form of a **bond-servant**, *and* being made in the likeness of men.

⁸Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)

¹All who are under the yoke as **slaves** are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and *our* doctrine will not be spoken against. (1 Timothy 6:1)

⁹*Urge* **bondslaves** to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, (Titus 2:9)

¹⁵For perhaps he was for this reason separated *from you* for a while, that you would have him back forever, ¹⁶no longer as a **slave**, but more than a **slave**, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. (Philemon 15-16)

The NASB translates the word as “slave” “Bond-servant” or “bondslave” when referring to believers and their relationship with Christ.

The Lockman Foundation notes (similar for the ESV):

The use of the term “slave” is a complex issue, one which we continue to review given its connotations. The NASB has the terms “bond-servant” and “bondslave” in places where “slave” might sound harsh for the context, though the three words all mean the same thing since “bond” refers to “bondage”. Of course “fellow” is included for the Greek *sundoulos*. The NASB translators felt that in all of these places a softer term than “slave” was justified because the relationship is one of voluntary submission to deity, though the duties and obligations are not thereby mitigated. (Lockman Foundation email quoted at baylyblog.com)

Interestingly, the Greek word does not have different meanings in the differing contexts. The meaning of “*doulos*” is slave. It may be translated differently at different times, but it means slave. The believer is Christ’s “slave” not “servant”. Theologically, we could also debate the accuracy of the NASB’s belief in the nuance of “voluntary” submission to authority.

²²But now having been freed from sin and **enslaved to God**, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. (Romans 6:22)

²¹Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. ²²For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord’s freedman; likewise **he who was called while free, is Christ’s slave**. ²³You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. (1 Corinthians 7:21-23)

¹⁶*Act* as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but *use it* as **bondslaves of God**. (1 Peter 1:16)

A slave was the most servile person in the culture of Paul’s day. A slave wholly surrendered their will to the master’s will and was devoted to their master, even to the disregard of their own interests and/or desires.

A quote from MacArthur:

While it is true that the duties of *slave* and *servant* may overlap to some degree, there is a key distinction between the two: servants are *hired*; slaves are *owned*. Servants have an element of freedom in choosing whom they work for and what they do. The idea of servanthood maintains some level of self-autonomy and personal rights. Slaves, on the other hand, have no freedom, autonomy, or rights. In the Greco-Roman world, slaves were considered property, to the point that, in the eyes of the law they were regarded as *things* rather than *persons*. To be someone's slave was to be his possession, bound to obey his will without hesitation or argument.

This reality has major implications for our understanding of the gospel. Christ's call to follow Him is not simply an invitation to become His associate, but a mandate to become His slave. That message is especially needed in American culture, where a man-centered, feel-good, cheap-grace gospel has become so popular. But nothing could be farther from the biblical reality—a reality which is brought to the forefront by rightly translating that one word: “slave.” (www.challies.com/interviews/10-questions-with-john-macarthur)

The apostles considered themselves “slaves” of Christ.

¹**Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus**, called *as* an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, (Romans 1:1)

¹**James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ**, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings. (James 1:1)

¹**Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ**, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: (2 Peter 1:1)

¹**Jude, a bond-servant** of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: (Jude 1:1)

¹The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His **bond-servant John**, (Revelation 1:1)

The apostles viewed those who served with them in ministry as “slaves”.

¹Paul and Timothy, **bond-servants of Christ Jesus**, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: (Philippians 1:1)

¹²Epaphras, who is one of your number, **a bonds slave of Jesus Christ**, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. (Colossians 4:12)

²⁴The **Lord's bond-servant** must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, (2 Timothy 2:24)

But the Scriptures do not define a special class of Christians that are “slaves” of Christ. All believers are “slaves” of Christ.

¹⁶*Act* as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but *use it* as **bondslaves of God**. (1 Peter 2:16)

¹The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him **to show to His bond-servants**, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John, (Revelation 1:1)

❖ **Do you consider yourself a “slave” of Christ?**

Jesus Christ is the believer’s only “master and Lord” (Jude 4).

⁴For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny **our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ**. (Jude 4)

“Master” means one who possesses undisputed ownership and absolute, unrestricted, unchallenged power or authority over another. The Greeks refused the title to any but the gods. “Lord” describes the supreme one, one who is sovereign and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power. It is used of the one to whom a person or thing belongs, over which he has absolute power. Jesus was clear that He was our only master. We cannot have another master.

²⁴“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24)

❖ **Do you have any other masters?**

Because Paul was a slave of Christ, he was a pleaser of Christ and not people. If he was seeking the favor of people rather than God, he would be content with preaching a non-gospel.

“Seeking the favor” means to make friends of, to win one’s favor, gain one’s good will, seek to win one, or to strive to please one. The rhetorical question he asks is clear. He is seeking to please God.

❖ **Whom do you seek to please?**

There are only two choices. There are not percentages of each. In fact, he says, “If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a slave of Christ.” At one time, Paul was a man pleaser. When God supernaturally, powerfully intervened in his hopeless and helpless situation of sin, he was changed to become a slave of Christ.

Therefore, as a slave of Christ with a new desire to please Him, Paul must speak when the gospel is in jeopardy.

⁴but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts. (1 Thessalonians 2:4)

❖ **Do you speak with the gospel is at stake?**

Fear of (or seeking to please) people is a common issue among believers. “Phobos” is the Greek word for fear. It refers first to flight, alarm, fright, or terror. This type of fear relates to fear of the unknown, fear of the future, and fear of authorities. It speaks of the terror which seizes one when danger appears.

²⁶When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in **fear**. (Matthew 14:25-26)

²⁵“There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶men **fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world**; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. (Luke 21:25-27)

³¹It is a **terrifying thing** to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:31)

❖ **Is this kind of fear good or bad?**

“Phobos” can also carry the meaning of respect of people and their position.

⁷Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax *is due*; custom to whom custom; **fear to whom fear**; honor to whom honor. (Romans 13:7)

❖ **Whom should you respect?**

“Phobos” can also refer to reverence, respect, honor, and reverential awe. It describes the attitude we should have toward our holy God.

⁴²They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone kept feeling a sense of **awe**; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. (Acts 2:42-43)

³¹So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the **fear of the Lord** and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase. (Acts 9:31)

¹Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the **fear of God**. (2 Corinthians 7:1)

¹²So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling**; ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13)

❖ **In what ways do you demonstrate the fear of God?**

“Phobos” can also be used to describe someone who fears or pleases people instead of God.

⁴²Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing *Him*, for **fear** that they would be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³**for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God**. (John 12:42-43)

⁴“I say to you, My friends, do not **be afraid** of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. ⁵But I will warn you whom to **fear**: **fear** the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, **fear** Him! (Luke 12:4-5)

❖ **Are you a people-pleaser or God-pleaser?**

So, there is godly fear and ungodly fear. Godliness is living with pervasive thoughts of God, His will, His glory, and dependence on Him. Ungodliness is living with little or no thought of God, His will, His glory, or dependence on Him. Godly fear is a fear (reverential awe) of God and a reasonable fear of danger or difficulty. Ungodly fears are unreasonable and irrational considering our relationship with Christ and are not rooted in an abiding trust in God.

The Scriptures are clear that a person who trusts in people is cursed. They make people their strength and their heart is turned away from the Lord. Instead, blessed is the person who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord.

⁵Thus says the Lord, **“Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, And whose heart turns away from the Lord.** ⁶“For he will be like a bush in the desert And will not see when prosperity comes, But will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, A land of salt without inhabitant. ⁷**“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord And whose trust is the Lord.** ⁸“For he will be like a tree planted by the water, That extends its roots by a stream And will not fear when the heat comes; But its leaves will be green, And it will not be anxious in a year of drought Nor cease to yield fruit. (Jeremiah 17:5-8)

Interestingly, by comparing the results of the person whose trust is the Lord with Psalm 1, we find that the person who trusts in the Lord and not in people is someone who has made the word of God their delight.

¹How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! ²**But his delight is in the law of the Lord,** And in His law he meditates day and night. ³He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers. (Psalm 1:1-4)

❖ **Do you trust in the Lord or people? Is your delight in the law of the Lord or people?**

2. The message of the slave of Christ (1:11-12)

¹¹For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹²For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *I received it* through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

¹¹For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. ¹²For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. (ESV)

Paul had just reminded the Galatians that the gospel he had preached to them was the true gospel. In fact, it was an unchangeable gospel. The apostles nor angels will never change that gospel. They cannot, because the gospel is not from man.

⁸But 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! ⁹As 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! (Galatians 1:8-9)

Paul is not seeking to please people in his preaching of the gospel because he did not receive the gospel from people, he received through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

“Have you know” means to make known with certainty, to certify, to confirm or attest as being true. It was used to introduce an important and emphatic statement.

¹Now I **make known to you**, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, (1 Corinthians 15:1)

The gospel Paul preached is not “man’s gospel”. If it were “man’s gospel” it would include works. Religions are about how sinful people try to get to a holy God; the gospel is about how a holy God intervenes to save to sinful people.

Many of us might be surprised at how many people spend a lot of time around Christians or church events or even go to a church and yet do not understand what Christ did and what he offers. The world (including “religious” people) is confused about the entrance requirement into heaven.

Good works, heredity, or religious ritual do not get you into heaven. God did not send Christ into the world to meet your felt needs, give you your “best life now”, make you healthy and wealthy, fix your broken emotional state, fix your self-image/esteem, become your “friend”, or bring social justice. Man’s greatest need is freedom from the penalty and power of SIN. This is possible only through Jesus the Christ. This is why Christ came. The gospel is the good news of God’s grace to sinful mankind. It is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Therefore, we better get it right!

It is imperative to get the gospel right for ourselves and for those to whom we are preaching. Leaving out part of the gospel message can present a warped view of God’s character, man’s position before God, Christ’s character or work, and the means of salvation. This can lead to presenting an incomplete gospel or a different gospel (Galatians 1:8-9).

“...part of the biblical gospel is now preached as if it were the whole of that gospel; and a half-truth masquerading as the whole truth becomes a complete untruth.” *Introductory Essay by J. I. Packer in the Banner of Truth’s reprint of John Owen’s “Death of Death in the Death of Christ”*

❖ **Do you have the gospel right?**

The Judaizers invented a Christ plus works “gospel” to adhere to their legalistic ideas. This not-gospel of Christ plus works was an invention of man.

In contrast to that not-gospel, Paul was not given the gospel from another person (i.e., it was not invented) nor was he taught it from another person including an apostle (i.e., it was not a tradition). The gospel was not an invention or a tradition, but a divine revelation. Paul was an apostle and he received the gospel of the grace of Christ through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

We also have received the gospel by a revelation of God in His word, the Scriptures. The gospel is not an invention nor tradition. It is a written revelation of God.

❖ **The gospel is a revelation of Christ in the Scriptures. Are you careful not to make it an invention or tradition?**

Conclusion

Paul is writing to the Galatians who are in danger of abandoning justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Paul is a slave of Christ. For Paul, everything was about his master, Christ Jesus. He was bought with a price; therefore, his desire was to glorify his Master. Because he is a slave of Christ, when the gospel is threatened, he must speak. We must speak too!

Additional Study

1. Read Galatians once this week a chapter at a time (one chapter a day for six days).
2. Today's Questions
 - Are you a slave of Christ? How do you know? How does Christ know?
 - Examine your life. Rate yourself. What percentage are you a people pleaser and what percentage are you a God pleaser?
 - As a slave of Christ, do you speak when the gospel is threatened?
 - Is God's word your delight? How do you know?
 - Is your gospel "believe in God" or "surrender your entire life to Christ"?