

~ ABOVE MANY MY EQUALS....

GALATIANS 1:11 – 24

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~ Our Spiritual Safari is intentionally sailing directly into a category-five hurricane of religious discourse in this report from our expedition through the entire Word of God. All I can tell you readers is: hang on to every word as tightly as you can. This will be a rough ride, with a high likelihood of slipping overboard. We'll survive this storm if we are careful, but it will literally beat and batter each of us; beginning in this rocky report, and through the remainder of this epistle.

In our previous report, Paul established a principle for us that there is only *ONE* Gospel – the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Any attempt to add to that is preaching a false gospel; and Paul used some overtly harsh language towards those people, friends. There is literally no compromise in our profession that we are saved by faith plus nothing. That's what salvation is – period. If you disagree, then you are calling God a liar and, candidly, I doubt you are even still reading.

Faith has no merit; but is merely the means by which we are held fast by Christ Who Personally redeems, saves, and sustains us. The true Gospel, as we define it, shuts out all works, unequivocally; it is for him that worketh not, but believeth on Him Who justify the ungodly, and whose faith is counted for righteousness. We learned that way back in Romans chapter four verse five. See, the difficulty is that people today erroneously believe they are good enough to be saved. If we want to be a Christian, we'll never become one by attempting to improve ourselves and be better people. You may kid yourself, but you won't fool those around you; in fact, you'll be seen as a fool by them.

No one seems to recognize their need to be saved by grace anymore. That is the number two problem amongst church members; with the number one problem being a total and complete ignorance of the Word of God. Those people are difficult to reach with sound doctrine, because they

honestly feel they already know everything, and that they are good enough to be accepted by God. If we could see ourselves in a correct presentation, we would be utterly ashamed, my beloved. You can just write all that down. This isn't just a message for the drunk and thief; in fact, if you don't think this is a message for *you*, then you just happen to reject the entire Word of God altogether.

Most people seem to just kinda' hope they'll be good enough to be saved. Well, God is only saving ungodly people. Jesus said, "*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners...*" The reason Jesus said that is because there were *none* righteous; no, not one! Until the law renders you speechless, grace has not manifested itself in your life, my friends. This is some potent, potent medicine we're prescribing and dispensing.

**Romans 3: 19** ....now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God ~

The law will stop the mouth of the truly born-again Christian, but it will constrain the phony theologian to constantly defend how good they are and boast of how they keep the law! It's all garbage. We just learned that lesson, ad infinitum, in the book of Job. Law and grace co-mingled has no power, no growth, and no victory. The Judaeizers in the day in which we are studying did *NOT* deny the death or the resurrection – not even for sinners. What they denied was the adequacy of Christ Jesus *ALONE*.

Legalizers demand you keep the law in addition to trusting Christ. Paul says those who mingle law and grace are damned, friends. If that isn't clear to you, I don't know what would be. Mixing law and grace perverts the Gospel and denies the facts thereof. Mankind responds to legalism by nature; let's make no mistake about that. There are no exceptions to that statement. Preachers can be popular with this pseudo-scriptural cocktail of law and grace that ultimately declares that man doesn't need a Savior – only a helper. They never seem to get around to the fact that people are sinners for whom Christ died so they could be saved. They also *NEVER* talk about trusting Christ; in fact, most of them cannot even call Him Jesus. It's usually

a quasi-Hebrew name they have assigned Him; but they generally have no idea what it means; and always disagree with others on pronunciation and spelling.

Legalizers like to talk about “*commitment*.” It sounds good to want to commit our lives to Christ. Unfortunately, God doesn’t want yours or my old life. We have *NOTHING* of value to commit or contribute to God. God wants to do something for *US*, my friends. Christ never asks us to live a Christian life; He only asks that He can live His life through us. If we could only learn and accept these deep, deep truths, we would realize that, not only are we not living a Christian life – we are not capable of living it. That’s when we can begin to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior and Lord.

The first step in that process is coming to Christ as a sinner. Most sin in the lives of believers stem from *PRIDE*; just as Job’s did. I’m sorry to have to be so ugly here – but – our churches are filled to the brim with people who are not saved. They have no idea what it means to come to Christ as their Savior. They feel like they possess something or some virtue that will commend them to Him. We have *NOTHING* useful to God. Even our righteousness is filthy rags to Him. Christ has something for *YOU* – He died for you. God is *ALWAYS* on the giving end – He is *NEVER* on the receiving side of anything; except our worship, praise and adoration! The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus. It’s just as simple as that; have you accepted it, and have you received it? We all need Christ to save us.

Our conscience witnesses to the law. Any legal conviction will lead to work. The Holy Spirit, however, only witnesses to grace in this aspect. That brings Gospel conviction, which leads to genuine faith! Attempting to keep the law denies the fall of man; which was the problem of Cain. Grace acknowledges the fall of man – that was Abel; evident in his offering to God.

Alright, as the hurricane intensifies, Paul is going to become extremely personal. He asserts and establishes authority for proclaiming the glory of the Gospel. Paul talks about his experience in Arabia, and on the Damascus

Road, and we have the origin of the Gospel; then the conversion of the man. Paul is repeating what he has already said in the first verse of chapter one. Paul got his information straightly and directly from the revelation of Christ from Heaven. Of course, the Judaeizers questioned and criticized, and tried to cast a shadow on the message and authority of apostleship....

***11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not according to man.***

***12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.***

~ We aren't going to learn the direct will of God and receive revelation by getting educated in worldly things, friends – you can just forget that. Ordination is meaningless, too, quite frankly. Paul received revelation and the Gospel *IS* a revelation; just as the Book of Revelation is a Revelation! The unseen things of this world have been unveiled to the apostle Paul – by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Paul was not saved in Judaism, not by Judaism – but *FROM* Judaism. Modernism is simple old heresy. We are now reading from one of the greatest minds that ever lived – Paul the apostle. Paul was a brilliant student of Greek philosophy, of the Mosaic System and a model Pharisee in the Sanhedrin. Some people think Paul combined all of that and arrived at Christianity. Well, it didn't happen quite that way, as we read here; it happened another way. That “*other way*” was by direct revelation from the Spirit of God....

***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.***

***18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.***

~ That means the three years Paul spent in the desert of Arabia with Christ Jesus. Remember. Moses and Abraham both received the desert spa treatment without the spa. God's only training method is out on the desert; you can just write that down, too. Elijah and David had a whole lot of experience in the wilderness with the Lord. Some people think of Christianity as a sort of homogenized stew of Greek philosophy and the Mosaic System. Well, that's all a lie. Anytime you see those types of arguments, you can confidently know those people aren't worthy of thoughtful consideration....

***19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.***

***20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.***

***21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;***

***22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:***

***23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.***

***24 And they glorified God in me.***

~ The church in Jerusalem was reluctant to accept Paul. Frankly, without Barnabus, Paul would likely not have been accepted. Paul had severely persecuted the church, and they highly questioned Paul's conversion,

motive and authority; and rightfully so. It seemed improbable because it seemed as impossible as anything ever could possibly seem. These are not the happiest years of Paul's life, either. He tells us of his own personal failures during this same time period in Romans chapter seven. Well, our next report will see the church at Jerusalem approve Paul's Gospel.

There was a time in Paul's life when he was a proud young Pharisee, with a marvelous mind. He had been an expert in the Mosaic System of Levitical Law. Paul, Saul, knew it all, literally! He hated Jesus, and he hated the church, and his mission of merciless and malicious malaise and manslaughter had but one main goal: to eliminate the church from the face of the earth. That's when Paul was knocked down in the dust on the road to Damascus; where he could finally meet the Lord Jesus Christ – Whom to know, is life!

There are a lot of unhappy Christians running around today. Honestly, most people seem to have just enough religion to make them absolutely miserable. They're saved – I think. But, there's something radically wrong when two Christians cannot agree, friends. There are many people teaching many different things today. The only way to know the real Truth is to know the Lord Jesus Christ Who said, *"I am the way, the truth and the light."* If our eternity is contingent upon faith in the proper, correct and complete Gospel, then we better pray about Paul's teaching to the Galatians. We better pray about our Spiritual Safari through Galatians, too ~

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