

THE HEART OF A GOD'S TRUE SERVANT

GALATIANS 1:1-5

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^{1:1} Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

² And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

³ Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,

⁴ Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

⁵ To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

What does a true servant of God look like? What does a true servant of God teach? How are other true believers to respond to God's true servant? What is on the heart of the true servant of God? The reality of the day of Paul was a day of preachers and teachers leading "true believers" away from the truth. The very purpose of the letter to the Galatians is to confront false teaching and false teaching that is confusing the very saints of God. The day we live in is no different. We will continually be under attack from false teachers... "wolves appearing in sheep's clothing". Why? Because it is the very purpose of Satan to confuse those who have truly placed their faith in Christ, and to lead them into a life of bondage after salvation. Sadly, that is exactly what has happened to so many believers. Though they are saved by the "grace of God", they live as though they are kept by "works", "performance" before the Lord God, and such does nothing but lead to bondage in the Christian life.

1. THE SERVANT OF GOD...IS GOD'S MAN AND IS RECOGNIZED BY FELLOW BELIEVERS. When you read the very opening verses of Paul the apostle, one thing was clear from his hear to all the saints, namely, that he was "the servant of the Most High God". His aim, ambition, goals in life were not to have a following, to please people, but rather to be the servant of God before the Living God, doing what He said and going where He sent. Paul was not addressing these saints for the purpose of "passing time". Paul was writing them, because their very faith was being attacked, and what they believed was under attack. False teachers had wormed their way into the very hearts of these men and women, and therefore, Paul needed to speak to them lovingly but plainly.

Since Paul desired to teach and preach to them the truth...the true believers were as concerned as Paul over the false teachers and preachers that had made their way in unto the people. Paul called them "brothers", not simply friends, for the very purpose that they had been bound together by "the blood of Christ".

True brothers and sisters in Christ have a deeper friendship that simply friends. Because of Christ, they are bound together by "one faith", "one Spirit", and "one Lord". Paul was recognized by other genuine believers...and this point is most crucial. For God has designed it that "a true believer" does recognize another "true believer". Since Paul was facing attacks upon his ministry...it was these brethren that validated the very call of God upon His life. In the very kingdom of God, being a brother one toward another is one of the highest honors that can be declared to another...for it means that: 1) a person is in the family of God, 2) a person has been redeemed by the blood of Christ, 3) a person will have special responsibilities once the new kingdom of Christ is fully and finally ushered in. Jesus very closely identifies with all who are called "brethren". ***"And the King shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Mt. 25:40)***

Since the true preacher of God, is God's servant and God's man, when he is under attack from critics for preaching the true Word of God, other "true brothers and sisters" are to show their support and stand behind him as he is the servant of the Most High God among the people of God. ***"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)*** Scripture reveals all the way through its pages, the support of God's servant. ***"But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side and the other on the other side; and his hands were stayed until the going down of the sun." (Ex. 17:12)***

Jesus makes it clear that when we are willing to bear up under the load of those that God has placed in positions of servant leadership as pastors, that we are honoring Him.

2. THE SERVANT OF GOD...YEARNS FOR THE VERY BEST FOR OTHER BELIEVERS. It is vital to remember the audience to whom Paul was preaching. He was speaking to Jews who had come to understand that a right relationship with God was through a personal relationship with Christ, and not through keeping the laws.

First, he yearns for them grace. Paul had come to know the grace of God in his own life, and he yearned for these men to know the grace of God in their own life. While we use the word "grace" often we fail to stop and really consider what the word really actually means. The very word grace means "undeserved favor and blessings of God". The

word “undeserved” is key to understanding the meaning of “grace”. Paul realized that God saved by His grace, though Paul was “undeserving” of God’s grace. As a matter of fact, Paul was persecuting the very ones that God had redeemed. Paul realized that Almighty God loves to show “undeserved favor and kindness” to mankind, and that was his yearning in his life...to be a reflection of Jesus Christ to others. When Paul considered how God had shown him grace, mercy, favor, and kindness, how could he do anything less to others whom God had redeemed! The servant of God that is honoring the Father, is not one that “creates yokes” for the saints of God, but rather firmly and lovingly declares, and demonstrates the “grace of God”. While others hurt the apostle Paul...he graced them. When others persecuted Paul...he graced them. When others rejected Paul...he graced them. Why? Because nothing less is pleasing to the Father. Since He shows us grace, He calls us to show grace to ALL we see in the avenue of life.

The sobering truth is, we deserve nothing but eternal judgment from Holy God, yet out of the overflow of His grace, He saves us. When He saves us, He empowers us to “grace” others. It brings honor to the Father the more we demonstrate grace to others. One of the realities of the Christian life is that God will bring others across our lives for the very purpose of “showing them grace”, to honor Him and His name. ***“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.” (Eph. 1:7)***

Second, he yearns for them peace. It was the heart’s desire of Paul that the people be bound together under the Lord Jesus Christ by a spirit of love in unity, security, confidence in the Lord. Paul yearned for them to know that God was their Father and as Father, He would: guide, provide, deliver, strengthen, sustain, give new life, give abundant life, as they walked in obedience with the Lord. It is always heavy on the heart of the true servant of God, that the people of God live and walk under a spirit of peace. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE WILL THE SERVANT OF GOD BYPASS PEACE.** The call of God for the servant of God and His people is to, ***“endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:3)***

In this early fellowship some had fallen away from the truth of “salvation by grace” and thus they had lost the peace of God in their hearts. It is vital to continually live in the truth of the grace of God in order that our peace not be stolen or taken away by the evil one.

3. THE SERVANT OF GOD....PROCLAIMS THE WONDERFUL WORK OF CHRIST. What is the primary responsibility of the servant of God? It is to proclaim the very work of God through Christ Jesus. In the very opening verses Paul makes clear the very purpose of his preaching. It was not to: gain a following, be popular, be successful. He lived and breathed for the very purpose of declaring the very work of Christ. Paul makes clear four very sobering truths.

First...Christ gave Himself for our sins. Christ took the very place of each and every sinner on the face of the earth before holy God. The very word “for” literally means “instead of”, “in the place of”. The phrase “gave Himself”, means He sacrificed Himself for us. He offered Himself unto God as our complete sin debt. He accepted the judgment and of our sin in our place. He bore the complete punishment of God’s justice against the complete sin of our lives. Notice that all He did was “for our sins”. His substitution was completely voluntary and completely out of love. No wonder Paul was grieved when he saw the people walking back into the bondage of legalism, and “keep the laws”

Second...Christ death was to deliver us from this present evil world. This world causes men to forget, and ignore the Living God. It also promotes and endorses all manner of evil. The world keeps people involved in “stuff” and “things” and away from a living, vibrant relationship with God the Father. To live focused “on this world” will result in standing before Almighty God and completely missing heaven. But Jesus has come to save us from ‘the world’. Jesus died to “rescue” us from the evil world in which we live. To all who believe in Him, they are rescued from both the power of the world, and the fate that will be upon this world.

Third...Christ death was completely according to the will of God the Father. Some have a distorted view of God the Father, and Jesus Christ. Some would declare a love for Jesus, but a fear of God Almighty. Yet, in truth it was “God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself”. It was God’s will that we be delivered. It was God’s will that we be released from a yoke of sin and slavery. God yearns that no man die lost but that all should come to repentance. However, the sad reality is that many will choose to reject the very person of Christ, and the only recourse in eternal banishment in hell.

Fourth...Christ death is to the wonderful glory of God. At the moment of Jesus death, it was a most hideous and horrible event, yet God brought to Himself “one” new people under the blood of Christ. God has created for Himself “one new race” made of all tribes, nations, languages, and brought them together as the “family of God”, under the mighty hand of Holy God. What appears to look bad and terrible from God’s vantage point was a wonderful thing.

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” (Rev. 5:9)