



**Looking Inwards** (15 mins)  
*Caring For Each Other*

*Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an **opportunity to share**, not something you have to do, however: 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!')* for:

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?



**Looking Outwards** (15 mins)  
*Concern For Others*

*Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours; or church, which you would like to share (please be careful not to pass on anything that is **confidential** or which you think the person/people concerned would not wish to be shared) for:*

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?

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HG101: Pauls Letter To The Galatians  
**Only One Gospel**

Galatians 2:1-10

Home Group Study Notes

12 October 2014 - Revd Paul Gambling



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN  
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION  
**BEFORE THE MEETING!**

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group with you, along with any previous notes and other resources which might be helpful.*



**Welcome** (10 mins)  
*Ice Breaker*

Share with your group a news story or magazine article which has brought a smile to your face in recent days!



**Looking Upwards** (10 mins)  
*Worship*

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



## Looking Upwards (40 mins) Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

**1:** Paul had established the churches of Galatia, but other teachers had come to the churches preaching a different gospel, which in 1:7 Paul says is no gospel at all but a perversion of the truth. These other teachers are commonly called Judaizers because they insisted that Gentiles (anyone not Jewish) be circumcised (6:12; 5:2) and keep the Jewish feasts (4:10) if they wanted to be justified and reach completion as Christians (3:3). The Judaizers thought Paul's gospel of justification by grace alone through faith alone was inadequate. So they added their other requirements. What for you are 'added requirements' and pervert the truth of the gospel as you understand it? Why in your view do they pervert the truth of the gospel?

**2:** The Judaizers claimed to represent the apostles in Jerusalem, but their message did not square with Paul's. So even when the question of Paul's authority is settled, another serious and threatening question looms up: Is there disunity among the apostles? The way Paul deals with the question of possible disunity among the apostles is outlined in 2:1-6. How might this guide our own approach to disunity in the local church and universal Church?

**3:** In verse 5 Paul says that he did not submit to these false-brothers (Judaizers) for this reason: "*That the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.*" If Paul had given in to their demands, the gospel would have been destroyed! no gospel, no good news, if Paul gave in to the demand for circumcision. Why is this so important to Paul? Why should it be so important to you?

Any requirement that causes us to rely on our work (the flesh) and not Christ's work (the Spirit) is the end of the gospel (Good News) So what Paul has accomplished here in verses 3-5 is to show the Galatians who the Judaizers in their midst really are (the false brothers from Jerusalem), and what is at stake in their demands (the truth of the gospel). The teachers among them may come from Jerusalem, but they do *NOT* represent the Jerusalem apostles. They are false brothers, and their demands that you be circumcised and keep the feasts are a different gospel which is no gospel at all (1:7).

**The Meeting with the Apostles:** Finally, in verses 6-10 Paul describes his encounter with the apostles themselves. Verse 6 makes the crucial negative statement that Paul has been maintaining all along: "*They added nothing to me.*" Recall 1:12: "*I did not receive the gospel from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.*" Years after his conversion, Paul finally spread his gospel before the Jerusalem apostles; but they did not feel a need to add anything to it. But even more Important than this is the positive statement of verses 7-10. The second half of verse 9 says that "*James and Cephas and John . . . gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.*" There it was!: the unity Paul longed for! He had *not* run in vain! The Judaizers did *not* represent the Jerusalem apostles! The apostolic witness, the foundation of the church, was *not* split, it was firm and solid! There was a strong, united base for two great missions, one to the Jews and one to the Gentiles. That was a great day for missions, a great day for *us* Gentiles! Paul stood his ground "*that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for us.*"

**Conclusion:** But as we close, do not think that it is to a *man or woman* that you owe the gospel. It is to God. Not only did *God* conceive the gospel before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4) not only did *God* accomplish the gospel by sending his Son to die for our sins and raising him from the dead; but it was *God* who chose the apostles, set them apart, and did the preaching of the gospel through them. Verse 8 says that the reason the Jerusalem apostles could recognise Paul as an apostle was that "*he who worked through Peter . . . worked also through Paul.*" When Paul was born, it was God at work (1:15). When Paul was called to be an apostle, it was God at work (1:16). When Paul preached, it was God at work (2 Corinthians 5:20); (1 Corinthians 15:10). And when Paul refused to yield to the false brothers, it was God at work, "*that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.*"

You see, the same is true for us as heralds of the Gospel of Christ. The truth of the gospel is personal. The truth of the gospel is a changed life, and the gospel will be truth to others when it is born in us. It's not a question so much of 'what is truth' as 'who is truth. The Christian Gospel is not a set of rules and regulations and laws and observances as some kind of end in themselves. The Christian Gospel is a person. It is Christ crucified and risen!

And you can't preach Christ until you have been crucified with Christ. We die to self so that Christ may live in us and through us, for the glory of God. So, I close with these questions. If God worked before the foundation of the world, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, at the Jerusalem Council, over the past 2,000 years, and in anything I have said today, "*that the truth of the gospel be preserved for you,*" then does he not love you and me and merit our faith and obedience? If God has worked in this way to preserve the truth of the gospel for people who need it, is this not still an incomparable challenge to give your life and mine to the spreading of the gospel and making disciples (not converts; Matt 28)? And unless God has changed, can we not say that if you and I undertake to preserve and herald the good news of Jesus Christ for others, almighty God will work in us and for us? And beneath us will not be a cracked foundation of truth, but a unified, divinely inspired apostolic witness to the greatest events in history: the Son of God died for our sins, was buried, and rose on the third day to save forever those who trust him.

Now from these two verses alone let me draw out two implications for us. First, the fact that Paul went up to Jerusalem by revelation teaches us that Christ wants us to *confront* disagreement head on. If we are going to be a biblical people, we must be a confronting people. If we think someone is wrong, or if we think the ministry of the church might be in jeopardy, we must seek God for grace to go to the person and lay before them our position. Almost none of us does that naturally. It creates tense feelings, and we would just as soon avoid it.

But the desire for personal comfort and the fear of conflict which hinder our confronting one another in love do not spring from faith in Christ. They are not the fruit of the Spirit. They are products of the flesh. They are the kind of thing we experience when we do not look to Christ for resources of power beyond our selves. But Paul says in Galatians 5:24, *"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."*

By putting our faith in Christ and drawing on the power of his Spirit, we cease to be enslaved by the love of comfort and the fear of conflict. And we experience a freedom to do what Paul did—to confront disagreement head on. Whatever peace we maintain in our personal relationships or in the church or in the Anglican Communion by avoiding needed confrontation will be a superficial and spiritually unproductive peace, and will make us weak in the long run because it will mean that we are walking by the flesh and not by the Spirit. That's one implication of verses 1 and 2: Christ wants us to confront disagreement head on ... and Paul has demonstrated the way to do it ... privately, then publicly.

The second implication from verses 1 and 2 is that we ought to care about unity. The disunity of God's people on important matters of faith should send us to prayer and the study of Scripture ... but ... does it make us think disunity is harmless or even valuable? Can words like "richness." And "diversity", both excellent words where used appropriately actually end up becoming euphemisms of contradiction? How many today stand up and praise the unity and coherence of truth. We must be very careful as the way this can trickle to ordinary people like us, is that we simply take disunity and disagreement for granted ... relativism is equated with humility ... indifference to error is equated with respect for other persons ... and we are hard put to imagine any doctrine being clear and certain enough to die for. It seems to me that Paul's example here teaches us that it matters a lot whether Christians agree on crucial doctrines of our faith.

**The False Brethren:** Now in verses 3–5 Paul describes his encounter with the false brothers in Jerusalem. *"But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. But because of false brethren secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage—to them we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you."*

Why did Paul include this incident in his letter if his main point was to show that he and the apostles were unified? He could have gone straight from verse 2 to verse 6 and made that point very powerfully. I don't think the only reason is to show that Titus did not have to be circumcised. He could have said that in a sentence. The real reason for verses 3–5 is to show the Galatian Christians that there are false brothers, they come from Jerusalem, they insist on circumcision for salvation (acts 15:1) and, most importantly, they do *not* represent the position of Peter, James, and John. In verse 5 Paul says that he did not submit to these false-brothers for this reason: *"That the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you."* If Paul had given in to the demand of the false brothers, the gospel would have been destroyed! That is astonishing. There would be no gospel, no good news, if Paul gave in to the demand for circumcision. The good news to the world is that right standing before God was totally paid for by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and can be enjoyed only through faith in him.

**4:** What situations and people – both modern day ‘Judaisers’ and those who are working so *"That the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you."* Can we be praying for today?

**5:** The desire for personal comfort and the fear of conflict do not spring from faith in Christ. They are not the fruit of the Spirit, they are products of the flesh. They are the kind of thing we experience when we do not look to Christ for resources beyond our selves. But Paul says in Galatians 5:24, *"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."* By putting our faith in Christ and drawing on the power of his Spirit, we cease to be enslaved by the love of comfort and the fear of conflict. What are your areas of personal comfort and fear of conflict?

**6:** If God has worked before the foundation of the world, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, at the Jerusalem Council, over the past 2,000 years, to preserve the truth of the gospel for people who need it, how might you undertake to preserve and herald the good news of Jesus Christ for others?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



## HG101: Paul's Letter To The Galatians *Only One Gospel*

Galatians 2:1-10

Home Group Sermon Notes

12 October 2014 - Revd Paul Gambling

**Introduction:** Sometime after Paul had established the churches of Galatia, other teachers had come to the churches preaching a different gospel, which in 1:7 Paul says is no gospel at all but a perversion of the truth. These other teachers are commonly called Judaizers because they insisted that Gentiles (anyone not Jewish) be circumcised (6:12; 5:2) and keep the Jewish feasts (4:10) if they wanted to be justified and reach completion as Christians (3:3).

The Judaizers thought Paul's gospel of justification by grace alone through faith alone was inadequate. So they added their other requirements. But to make their version of the gospel stick, they had to discredit Paul's; and to do that, they had to discredit his authority as an apostle. They had done this in Paul's absence by saying Paul was a second-hander at best. He was not one of the original twelve apostles who were with Jesus during his life. Therefore, he had learned his gospel second-hand at best from the Jerusalem apostles and had adapted it in illegitimate ways. His authority was not binding because it only came from man not God. The first two chapters of Galatians give Paul's defence against these charges. Galatians 1:1 asserts that his authority as Christ's apostle was "not from man or through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father." Galatians 1:2 asserts that he did not receive his *gospel* message from man, nor was he taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. The point of Galatians 1:11-24, the passage that Pauline preached brilliantly from on 28/9, is to argue that Paul was not a second-hander. He was not a Johnny-come-lately to the apostolic band. He argues that there is enough public information about his life before and after his encounter with the living Christ that no one can reasonably assert that he is a second-hander. He makes a powerful and persuasive case that his apostleship and his gospel came to him independently from the Jerusalem apostles, and that he stands on an equal footing before Christ with Peter, James, and John.

**A Contradiction in the Apostolic Witness?** But now, put yourself in the place of the Galatian believers. Paul has made a powerful case and has re-established his credibility in their minds as they read this letter. But the question inevitably arises: Is there, then, a contradiction among the apostles themselves? Do we have men of equal authority preaching two different gospels? The Judaizers claimed to represent the apostles in Jerusalem, but their message did not square with Paul's. So even when the question of Paul's authority is settled, another serious and threatening question looms up: Is there disunity among the apostles? If one apostle preaches one gospel and another apostle preaches another gospel, the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20) is cracked, and the whole edifice will eventually collapse.

So in the passage before us today (Galatians 2:1-10) Paul deals with this serious question. But he must do it very carefully and with complete integrity. On the one hand, he must maintain his independence from the Jerusalem apostles to protect himself from the charge of being a second-hander; but on the other hand, he must show that the gospel he preaches and the gospel the Jerusalem apostles preach are the same gospel.

And what's more, everything he says in this section is open to public verification or falsification. The way Paul deals with the question of possible disunity among the apostles can be outlined like this:

1. In 2:1–2 he tells when, with whom, and why he went up to Jerusalem.
2. In 2:3–5 he describes his encounter with some false brothers, against whom he stands his ground (and thus emphasises his independence).
3. In 2:6–10 he describes his meeting with the apostles themselves and how they endorse his ministry entirely (so that the unity of the gospel is preserved).

There is a two-fold main point of the paragraph found in the last part of verse 6: "*Those who were of repute added nothing to me*"; ...and verse 9: "*when they perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.*" In other words, Paul's main point is: When, after 14 years, I did finally confer with the apostles, they added nothing to my gospel (and so I remain an independent authority), but instead they approved of my work and gave me their blessing (and so there are not two gospels, but one). The Galatians should conclude, then, that the Judaizers do not really represent the Jerusalem apostles. On the contrary, they belong to the false brothers of 2:4 who Paul resisted and who were not endorsed by the Jerusalem apostles. Stand firm, therefore, in the wonderful freedom of the gospel, and do not submit to the legalistic enslavement demanded by the Judaizers. That is the main purpose of 2:1–10. Now let's go through it in more detail and see how Paul accomplishes his purpose and how it applies to us.

**The Trip to Jerusalem:** First, verses 1 and 2: "*Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up by revelation; and I laid before them (but privately before those who were of repute) the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, lest somehow I should be running or had run in vain.*" I have four observations to clarify these verses. Paul did not go to Jerusalem because he had second thoughts about his gospel and wanted to make sure it was true. That would have played right into the hands of the Judaizers. It says in verse 2: "*I went up by revelation.*" Not only did Paul receive his gospel through a revelation of Jesus (1:12), but even 14 years later the living Lord in heaven is directing the steps of his apostle by revelation.

Why did Paul take Titus? Because he is not playing games. His gospel has laid hold on real people. Titus is going to be Exhibit A of Paul's gospel preaching. Titus is a Greek, and he is not circumcised according to Old Testament laws. Yet he is a brother in Christ *by faith!* This is the freedom Paul stands for. And Titus is his best case. Will he be forced to be circumcised by the apostles in Jerusalem or won't he? There was no better way of forcing the real issue than to take along a real person!

"Those who are of repute" (in v. 2) refer to the apostles, especially Peter, James (the Lord's brother), and John. You can see that in verse 9, where these three are described as "those who are reputed to be pillars." So verse 2 is saying that Paul had a private meeting with the apostles. You can tell from verses 4 and 5 why a private meeting might be necessary. The false brothers who insisted on having Titus circumcised were in no mood for a careful hearing! Sometimes the Leaders have to deliberate in private and then present their unified thoughts to the agitators. Paul's purpose in going up to Jerusalem, according to verse 2, was to confirm that he had not run in vain. Paul's ministry would have been in vain if the Judaizers were right; that is, if the apostles in Jerusalem disagreed with Paul and insisted on circumcision for Gentile believers. This would mean that the apostles of Christ had contradictory messages, and no church could be established on such a fractured foundation. Paul did not need to confirm his own gospel; he needed to confirm that the other apostles agreed, and that there was unity.