

There is Only One Gospel

Passage: Galatians 1:6-10 | Speaker: Steve Grothoff | Date: 260809

SUMMARY

Preaching from Galatians 1:6-10, Steve looks at Paul's sharp rebuke of the Galatian church for drifting toward a distorted gospel. He builds three points from it: the best way to know and hold onto the true gospel is to spend real, prayerful time in God's Word; false teaching is common and shows up in many forms, from the legalism Paul confronted to today's "TikTok theologians"; and sometimes we deceive ourselves, whether by avoiding the parts of Scripture that convict us or by quietly adding our own requirements onto a gospel that only ever asked for repentance and faith. He closes with a call to boldness -- there is only one gospel, and Christians shouldn't be ashamed to say so.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The best way to know and understand God's Word is to spend real, prayerful time in it -- not just consume it passively.
- False teaching is common and comes in many forms, old and new. Test everything against Scripture itself, no matter how credible or confident the source sounds.
- We can deceive ourselves too -- avoiding conviction, or quietly adding our own steps to a gospel that only requires repentance and faith.

Scripture Reading & Opening Prayer

All right, if you guys, we're going to get your steps in, your exercise in today. If you guys will stand with me, we will read the passage. We're in Galatians 1, 6 through 10, and then you can have a seat again.

Paul tells the Galatian church, I marvel that you are turning away so soon from him who called you to the grace of Christ to a different gospel, which is not another, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel of heaven preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say

again, if anyone preaches another gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I was still pleasing men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

Father, we thank you for today. We thank you for your word. Father, we thank you for the truth that we know that your word is the only word, that your gospel is the only gospel, that we don't have to think about it. We don't have to wonder if it is true. Father, we know it is true.

Father, just give us all the discernment to be able to distinguish your gospel and your word from everything else that the world tries to offer us these days.

Father, be with us as we go through this message.

Let the Holy Spirit speak through me. Let it be your words, not mine, that are spoken today. We ask all these things in your son's name. Amen.

Thank you, guys. All right. So as we go through these few verses, I want us to focus on three takeaways from this.

Introduction: Three Takeaways

First one is the best way to know and understand what the word of God is, is to spend time in it. Self-explanatory.

Number two, false teaching is common and it comes in many forms. And the third thing I want us to cover is that sometimes we can be the ones that are just deceiving ourselves. We can focus on things that aren't what are of the gospel and add our own things to it. Like what Paul is preaching to these guys about, what Paul is writing to them about here is they were, like we mentioned last week, there were Jews in the area that were telling these Gentile people that were becoming Christians that like, well, in order for you to become a Christian, first you need to become a Jew. You need to follow what Jewish law is. You need to do all of the things that Jewish law requires. And then you can become a Christian. Adding steps to what the gospel is. That is the, that's why he's saying, if anybody tells you anything other than what I've come to you and told you, if I told you that all it takes is for you to put your faith in Jesus and then you, you were saved, that makes you a Christian. Your obedience to that is you acknowledging. So he, he's telling them like, guys, I, I, I'm trying to tell you what I've told you is what matters. So our first point, the best way for us to know and understand what the word of God says

Point 1: Spend Time in the Word

is to spend time in it. The gospel is simple. Like I just said, it requires two steps from us. One, all it requires from us. The only thing that is required from us to receive the gospel is repentance and faith. When you repent, you turn away from your sinful ways. You turn away from who you were, your worldly lifestyle. You turn away and you put your faith in the truth that Jesus is the son of God. You put your faith in the fact that he came down from heaven. He lived a perfect life. He died as atonement and propitiation. Big words for you guys. For our sins. Jesus, he was resurrected and now sits at the right hand of God.

A pastor I like to listen to a lot is a man named Joby Martin. And the way he puts it, he says, if you believe that when Jesus was hanging on the cross and he pushed up on his nail pierced feet and he yelled out, it is finished, that that meant it was for you. It wasn't just for me. It was for you. And if you believe personally that Jesus did that with you in mind and believe that because he did that and believe the words that he said when he said it is finished, that's what it takes. That's the faith. Putting your faith in that. Repentance, turning away from what you used to live like.

The product of that is obedience. You look at the, you look at your repentance, you look back on how you used to live and you decide this is not what I want to do with my life anymore. I have Jesus. Jesus has saved me from what I used to be. I don't want to look back at that anymore.

That's as easy as it is. That's, he's, he's giving that the gospel is simple, guys. Quit adding steps to it.

Now we have the benefit of the New Testament. We have the benefit of each and every one of us owning a Bible in some way, shape or form. If you don't own one, it's easy to download an app that can give you one and it's free. We have the greatest accessibility to the word of God ever. Yet we are one of the least biblically literate times in humanity since the Bible has existed. Why is that? What happened? The problem is, is we have unlimited information at our fingertips and we find other things more important. We find social media. We find texting with our friends. We find calling. We find TV shows. We find so many other things more important than the gospel. People, we have too many things to focus on.

Focusing on.

So how do we ensure that we learn the truth? How do we ensure that we can know what the truth is? How do we make the truth what is central to our life?

I say this to you guys all the time. Prayer and spending time in God's word.

Praying and spending time in God's word. The same way that you make a friendship blossom is the same way that you build a relationship with Jesus and with God. You spend time with him. You spend time talking to him through prayer. You spend time listening to what he has to say to you. The important advice that he has to give you by reading his word. Those are what, that's what matters. Those are the things that we need to be doing.

I'm going to spend a little bit of time in 2 Timothy with this, these points today. And Paul writes to Timothy, who's a young deacon. He's a man that is looking to pastor a church. He wants to be a pastor. And he's looking to, he's a young guy that Paul has been discipling. And Paul tells him, all scripture is given by the inspiration of God.

It's profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

Timothy, what I, what you have, the word of God that you have is all you need. To guide you through everything that you have in life. And he follows that up. He tells him that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. If you don't feel like you're equipped, we just sang a song about confidence. And if, if, if you don't have the confidence, guess what? God gives you the confidence. If you don't have, if you don't feel like you're equipped, pray for it. Guess what? God's either going to equip you for what it is that you think you need to do, or he's going to point you in a different direction. How freeing is it to know that we aren't in control? We, we don't, we aren't in control. God is in control. And all we have to do is follow his will, pray for what his will is and follow it. So we read scripture to learn about God. We read scripture to discipline ourselves. We read scripture to exhort others. And we learn how to rightly live according to God's design and God's will. We do this prayerfully. We spend time in prayer when we spend time in God's word. That's how you communicate with somebody. That's how you have a conversation. It's not just a one-sided somebody coming and talking to you and you listening. And it's not just you talking all the time and them listening. No, it's a, it's an exchange. Prayerfully spending time in God's word is how we learn what that truth is. Second point, false teaching is common and it comes in many forms.

Point 2: False Teaching Is Common

Paul just told him, hey guys, that what, what they're trying to tell you, not correct. They're trying to tell you that you need to do this in order for, in order for you to become a Christian. That's not correct. Again, right before Paul gives Timothy this, this word of spend time in scripture, just a few verses early, he says, evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them.

And that from childhood you have known the scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. It, spend time in scripture. Paul tells them right there in, in, in chapter eight or in verse eight, he says, but even if we are an angel of heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

Paul says, it doesn't matter how credible or how, how authoritative this source may be. If it doesn't match up to what scripture says, they're wrong. If it doesn't match up to what is going on in scripture, they are incorrect. You don't need to listen to that. They are not right. And he says that they will be accursed. The word, the Greek word for that is anathema. Catholics use that a lot.

It means to be cast out, to be avoided, to be excluded. Paul tells them, these false teachers, these people that are telling you these things, these people that are trying to teach you a gospel that is not the gospel, they need to be called out, they need to be condemned, and then they need to be cast out and avoided. Don't listen to the people that are telling you incorrectly. Now, we live in a time where anyone can have a platform. We live in a time where if you've got a smartphone, it doesn't matter how smart or how stupid you are, you can tell people what you think.

Ignorant and intelligent people can both be heard just as loudly as the other. If you have a smartphone and a Bible, or some of these guys, not even a Bible, unfortunately, you can broadcast your thoughts and your beliefs on whoever will listen. There are too many people out there that are what I like to dub TikTok theologians, the people that are like, guess what, I've got this secret thing about the Bible that I want to tell you about. I've got this thing that you've never known about the Bible, I'm going to tell you about it. And it hooks people and drags people in. But here we are in 2 Timothy again, and he says, For there will come a time when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers. And they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables. But you, be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. Keep preaching what the truth is, Timothy, because the truth is what matters. How easy is it for us to hear something that sounds good and think, yep, I think I believe that.

But if you're rooted in the Word, if you spend time reading the Bible, it is those kinds of things, when those people pop up, when you hear something from somebody that's like, so what you've never heard about the Bible is this, or what you didn't know is this, or when they start telling you something that sounds weird, you have the discernment because you have the wisdom of the truth to be able to hear something, have your ears perk up and be like, I don't know that I believe that. That doesn't sound quite right. Paul's confident in his message that he tells them to the Galatians, so much so that he tells them the exact same thing twice. Verses 8 and 9 are essentially just him. He says, I'm going to repeat this because it's important.

Don't listen to these people.

Paul was confident in his message. He knew that the message that he shared with them was true. He knew that the message that these other people were sharing was not true. It was false. It was not what they needed to be hearing. But then we see not only that, but we see that Paul had the boldness to do so. He doesn't write to them.

These are not light words that Paul uses. It's easy to read that and assume that it's just a formality the way that he says it. But when he says, I marvel that you are turning away so soon, he's like, in the original, the way that those words are written, it is like, how can you be so dumb to let this happen like this? Why is this? What is wrong with you guys? He's, there's passion in his words that he's sharing here.

Our third point, sometimes we can be the ones deceiving ourselves.

Point 3: We Can Deceive Ourselves

Sometimes we can read the Bible and if we're not doing it prayerfully or if we're doing it and quickly or in a certain flippant way, we can hear what we want to hear and not what we need to hear. We can read through something or you might even be reading through and you read something and it strikes you a certain way and you're like, ooh, I don't like that. And you, let's move on. Let's find something else to read. Flip a couple pages, read something else because you're convicted by what's said. And it's easy for us to do that sometimes.

But then sometimes we're just like these people, these false teachers that Paul's talking about, we start adding to what the gospel is. It's easy for us to, well, before I can become a Christian, I need to stop doing this or I need to start doing this better or, sorry guys, but you don't get clean to take a shower. You come to Christ and he helps clean you up. That is what the gospel is, is God will meet you where you are. It does not matter. It's the beauty of the gospel. Jesus will meet you where you are and he will guide you where you need to be led. It's easy, but it's hard. I get it. I, it was, I didn't want to hear it. Before I came to Christ, I've found every way that I could to go my own way. I found every way that I could to, to try and go it alone or do it on my own or figure out how to make things happen for myself. And guess what? I failed every step of the way. I would succeed just long enough for me to feel comfortable with what I was doing just to crash and burn.

How often is that the case with people? This can also come after you become a Christian. You can start adding steps to things and start adding, well, you know, I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm a Christian now and I'm still struggling with these things. And, and I'm, I'm still working through, well, guess what? But there's nothing in the Bible that says that you're going to accept Christ. You're going to receive Christ. You're

going to, to put your faith in him and everything's going to be great. And you're never going to do anything wrong again. And everything's going to be easy and you're never going to struggle. And the Bible tells us quite opposite. The Bible tells us quite opposite. And the thing is, is it never once tells us that that's going to be a painless process. Read through when he talks about, I mean, look at the, when, when the pruning process, guess what you have to do to prune something? You cut out what's dying. You cut out what's not providing fruit. That's not painless. You're taking out things that are not necessary in your life. And sometimes those things are not easy to give up.

It's not easy. You're going to fail.

But where are your eyes? Where are you set? What are you focused on? Yes, we all fail. But guess what? At the end of the day, if you're a Christian, God's going to help you. Jesus is going to help you through that. And you're going to come out the other side better off. Now, here's some application.

Application

I want us to think about this this week as we go through the week. And as we get ready to jump into this next section, Paul's verse here, verse 10. For now, do I persuade men or God? Whom do I seek to please? Do I seek to please those around me or do I seek to please God? Are you doing what God's called you to do? Are you focused on his will for you? Are you doing actively and intentionally doing exactly what it is that you feel God is doing in your life? Are there things in your life that you're holding on to that you need to let go of because you are trying to please others or even yourself? The things that you're holding on to that you don't want to let go of, but you know you need to. Or maybe it's the favor of people you work with or people you surround yourself with that you are quiet when somebody says something that you know you should be speaking up and saying something. When you know that the right thing to do is defend God and not turn away and just be like, well, I'm not going to talk to that person today. No, those are the people that we need to approach. Those are the people that you need to walk up to and boldly say, listen, I don't really like the way that you said that. I don't really like what it is that you said, because at the end of the day, you're not doing it. You're not living life for yourself. You're not living life for anyone around you. You are living your life for the glory of God. And Jesus said, whoever is ashamed of me on earth, I will be ashamed of in heaven. Is that what we want? Do we want to look back on times in our life where we should have said something, where we felt ashamed of what, of the way that we lived, that we lived because of our Christianity, because of our faith. And just been like, you know what, I really just don't want to have this conversation with this person right now. Or I don't know that this is the person that I want to be talking to.

We need to be bold. We need to be very bold anymore. Because there are too many people out there spreading different Gospels. There's only one Gospel. There's only one truth. And the thing is, we're a minority at this point. We are a vast, vast minority of people. There are more people in this world that would rather live the way that they want to live. There are more people in this world than ever that feel like Christianity is not the answer.

That feel like God is an unnecessary part of their life. Don't let that be you.

And don't let that be the thing that keeps you from sharing God with them. From sharing the Gospel. From sharing Jesus with them. We, as Christians, are in the business of souls. We can't take anything with us when we go. Except for the people that we share the Gospel with. And help bring to Christ.

And at the end of the day, I really hope that that is your goal for everybody that you come in contact with. I don't care how much you don't think you like somebody. Or how much you think this person is beyond saving.

There will not be one person in heaven that when we get there, we're going to look at and say, I don't know why you're here. Why are you here? I wish you hadn't been, I wish you hadn't made it here. No, we're going to look around and we're going to say, man, there were so many people that I knew. So many people that I loved. That I just condemned because I didn't want to open my mouth.

That I didn't want to be bold. I didn't want to be ashamed of the way that I spoke to them. Because I thought, well, they're going to think I'm weird. Oh, well, at the end of the day, guys, being bold is what's going to matter. And there are too many people out there being bold in the wrong ways, being bold about the wrong things. We need to be just as bold, if not bolder, than they are. I make the joke all the time that if CrossFitters and vegans were Christians, boy, everybody would be a Christian. Because that's all everybody, anybody that does CrossFit or anybody that's a vegan is like, man, this is the best thing I've ever done with my life. And that's all they want to talk about. Why isn't that us? As Christians, this is the best thing that has ever happened in our life. We have Jesus in our life and it's not the best thing that we talk about. It's not the thing that we want to talk about with people all the time. Why? Why is that?

So just long application, but be mindful of that as you go through your week.

Who are you seeking to persuade? Who are you seeking to please? As you go through life, which side are you on with the things that you say to people?

In conclusion, our three points.

Conclusion

The best way to know and understand the Word is to spend time in it. Prayerfully spending time in the Word and always trusting the Bible over anything else. Don't listen to other people if what they're saying is contradictory to what's in this book. Number two, false teaching is common and it comes in many forms.

The best sold lie is one that carries just enough truth to make you believe it. But we need to be able to root out and pick out the things that are incorrect. And the only way to do that is to have discernment. The only way to have discernment is to spend time getting to know what the truth is. Being rooted in Scripture will help you discern the truth from lies.

Number three, we can be the ones that are deceiving ourselves.

We can sometimes be the one person that is keeping us from the truth. Sometimes we can be the person. We get in the way of ourselves too often. We think, I'm not good enough. We think, I just, I'm not, I'm not doing my part. Or, I did this so God, Jesus is not happy with me. No.

The truth of the matter is, is if you are in His hand, nothing can snatch you out of His hand. The Bible tells us that. And then our application for the week. If you guys are in contact with anybody, anybody that you come in contact with, as you are having a conversation with them, as you are dealing with them, even if it's somebody at the grocery store, who are you seeking to please with the way that you live?

Thank you, guys. Let's pray.

Closing Prayer

Father, we thank you for today. Father, we thank you again for your word. We thank you for your truth.

Because, Father, we live in a world that is full of lies. We live in a world that is full of deceit and deception.

And, Father, we need to just keep our eyes focused on the truth. We need to keep our eyes focused on you.

So, be with us as we go out this week. Help us to stay bold for you. Help us to stay unashamed of the gospel. And, Father, just help us, each and every one, to grow closer and deeper in our relationship with you.

We ask all these things in your name. Amen.