

Called by Grace; Galatians 1:11-17

I. Not Man's Gospel

A. Former life

1. To better understand the mindset of Paul (Saul of Tarsus) lets go back to our introduction to him
 - a) Acts 7:51–58; ⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, ⁵³ you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.” ⁵⁴ Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” ⁵⁷ But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. ⁵⁸ Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul
 - b) Acts 8:1–3; ¹ And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ² Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. ³ But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.
 - c) Acts 9:1–2; ¹ But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.
2. After reading all those verses about Saul of Tarsus, it is easy to see Paul's description of himself; persecutor, violent destructive
3. Zealous for the traditions of his fathers

B. Traditions

1. Man's gospel - “Not according to Man”
2. “A handing down”
3. Of man
 - a) Jeremiah 9:12–14; ¹² Who is the man so wise that he can understand this? To whom has the mouth of the Lord spoken, that he may declare it? Why is the land ruined and laid waste like a wilderness, so that no one passes through? ¹³ And the Lord says: “Because they have forsaken my law that I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice or walked in accord with it, ¹⁴ but have stubbornly followed their own hearts and have gone after the Baals, as their fathers taught them.
 - b) Matthew 15:1–6; ¹ Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, ² “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” ³ He answered them, “**And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?** ⁴ **For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’** ⁵ **But you say, ‘If anyone tells his father or his mother,**

“What you would have gained from me is given to God,” ⁶ he need not honor his father.’ So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God.

- c) Mark 7:8; You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”
- 4. Of God
 - a) 1 Corinthians 11:1–2; ¹ Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. ² Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you.
 - b) 2 Thessalonians 2:13–15; ¹³ But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. ¹⁴ To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.
 - c) 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.
- C. Paul gave them traditions to be handed down from generation to generation, God’s traditions
- D. God’s traditions are what set us apart from the rest of humanity
- II. Set Apart
 - A. Before birth
 - 1. I can’t emphasize enough the fact the God created us as we are, He created us who we are, and He knew it before he ever formed us in our mothers’ wombs
 - 2. Our task is to complete the things He desires for us
 - 3. God knew Peter would deny Jesus, it was Peter’s task to overcome it
 - a) He had to realize why he was created and put his hands to the tasks God gave him
 - b) And he overcame it, he “wept bitterly”; and was instrumental, as Acts tells us, in starting the Church and evangelizing Judah
 - c) He made mistakes, as we will
 - d) Galatians 2:11–14; ¹¹ But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴ But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”
 - 4. God knew, before Saul of Tarsus was ever born, exactly how he would ravage and kill Christians
 - a) God created Saul of Tarsus knowing how zealous he would be
 - b) Acts 9:13–16; ¹³ But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”
 - 5. Paul’s ministry was full of the very same persecution on him that he visited on Christians before his conversion

- B. But he was called by grace Just as we are
 - 1. Grace is unmerited favor
 - 2. We don't deserve the salvation given to us
 - 3. After Peter's denial and Paul's persecution, do you think they deserved to play such pivotal roles in the Church?
 - 4. Yet God's grace (His undeserved favor) calls us into the Kingdom to set our hands to the work
 - a) Building up the saints
 - b) Evangelizing the community
 - c) Loving God and our neighbor

C. Revealed for a purpose

- 1. Isaiah 49:1–5; ¹ Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. ² He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away. ³ And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." ⁴ But I said, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the Lord, and my recompense with my God." ⁵ And now the Lord says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him— for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has become my strength—
- 2. Isaiah's purpose was to call Israel from their idolatry back to God
- 3. Paul's purpose was to "preach Him among the gentiles"

D. Have you figured out your purpose?

- 1. It is not just to participate in worship on Sundays and Wednesdays
- 2. It is not just to partake of the Lord's Supper
- 3. It is not just to participate in giving for the work of God
- 4. It is to complete the Work of God here on this earth, the calling of all men to Him through His Son, Jesus
- 5. It is to Love God and your Neighbor (we discussed what that meant a few weeks back)
- 6. It is to be like Jesus
 - a) A servant who washed the feet of His betrayer
 - b) A servant who sacrificed Himself for us

III. All are Called

- A. No matter who you used to be, you can be like Jesus
- B. No matter what you did in your past, you can be like Jesus
- C. God has called you, from before your birth, to be a servant in His Kingdom