

Galatians 1:10-24

From Persecutor to Preacher!

Scripture: Galatians 1:10-24

Memory Verse: Galatians 1:23b *"He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy."*

Lesson Focus: As Paul gives us a little piece of his testimony we will see how only God, through the power of the gospel, could take the chief persecutor and enemy of the gospel and turn him into the chief preacher of the gospel!

Activities and Crafts: Paul Writing Letters Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring It Home Discussion Qs for 3rd - 5th.
Craft for 1st/2nd Grade: Gospel Gold Medal

Starter Activity: Who Am I?

Consider getting the lesson started with a little "Who Am I" challenge to get the kids engaged. See below with several names that most of the kids should know. Pause after each detail and give the kids a chance to guess. Be sure to finish with the last one about Paul as that will transition you well into the lesson.

- 1) I am from Arkansas. I went to the University of Oregon. I was recently drafted by the Denver Broncos to be their quarterback. **(Bo Nix)**
- 2) I am from Kansas. My real name is Jimmy Donaldson. But being a YouTube sensation most people know me as... **(MrBeast)**
- 3) I am from a small town called Nazareth. I was visited by an angel named Gabriel. My husband's name was Joseph. **(Mary, the mother of Jesus)**
- 4) I am from Egypt. I have a brother named Aaron. I was raised by Pharaoh's daughter. God used me to rescue His people who were slaves in Egypt. **(Moses)**
- 5) I am from Judah, but lived most of my life in Babylon. My name there was Belteshazzar. I got thrown into the lion's den for praying only to God. **(Daniel)**
- 6) I am from the land of Uz. I was at first very rich, but then lost everything, even my health. It was hard, but I never lost trust in God. **(Job)**
- 7) I am from Tarsus. I wrote the most books of the New Testament. In fact, I wrote the book that you are studying today! **(Paul)**

As we continue in Galatians today, we're going to get a better picture of who Paul is. Not because he is so important, but knowing his story will help the Galatians (and us) better understand God's amazing grace available through the **true** gospel!

Bible Study:

Galatians 1:9: As we began this book last week we saw how important it was (a matter of life and death, heaven and hell even!) that we know the **true** gospel of God's grace. Paul had shared the **true** gospel with them, but then others snuck in afterwards and brought a counterfeit version which was no gospel at all!

Galatians 1:10-11: This is such an important statement! Paul says that this gospel is not something that was made up by man.

Q: What do Little Red Riding Hood, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and Cinderella all have in common? A: They are fairy tales made up by man! They are nice stories that might teach good lessons, but they are not about real people or real places. *

These people who secretly brought in their counterfeit gospel appear to be saying that the true gospel was like a fairy tale made up by Paul!

Galatians 1:12: And Paul says "NO WAY JOSE!". Not only did he not make the gospel up, but he also didn't receive it from other people.

Q: Then where did it come from? A: Directly from the risen Jesus!

We studied the book of Acts last year and looked at how Jesus Himself met Paul (then called Saul) on a road while he was hunting for Christians to put them in jail.

Q: What happened while he was on this road? (**Teachers:** Consider reading **Acts 9:1-9** to tell the story of his amazing conversion)

Galatians 1:13: For even they knew who Paul was before he was a Christian. Not only was he not a Christian, but he was the chief villain against the Christians!

Q: Who do you think is the worst movie villain? A: Darth Vader? Bowser? Paul was the chief villain of the Christians bent on destroying them at all costs! Only God could have changed such a person! * That's the power of the true gospel! *

Galatians 1:14: Paul also tells us that before he was a Christian he was very, very religious. In fact, if there was an Olympic event for being the best religious rule-keeper, Paul might have gotten the gold medal! * (**Teachers:** We will leave a little toy gold medal in your class. Consider pulling it out to reinforce these truths!)

Q: But was a gold medal in religious rule-keeping enough to save Paul from his sins? A: NO! * I suspect when he met Jesus on that road he learned that not only was he wrong about Jesus (being dead), but also that his gold medals in rule-keeping and good works would never be good enough! Only through faith/trust in the death and resurrection of Jesus could he be saved and rescued from the sin and punishment he deserved! * This is the grace offered by God only thru the **true** gospel!

Galatians 1:15-16a: God didn't just save this chief villain against the Christians, but He also had a plan to use Him in a mighty way: to bring the **true** gospel to the Gentiles.

Q: What are Gentiles? A: Anyone who is not Jewish! (Probably most of us)

As we saw in the book of Acts last year the early church was mostly made up of Jewish people huddled around the land of Israel. Non-Jewish Gentiles were still seen as outcasts. But God's plan was for the gospel to go to the whole world, even to Gentiles! Paul was who God would use to accomplish this. *

Galatians 1:16b-17: Paul shares about a period where he went away likely to prepare for this ministry. You may remember the many missionary adventures that we covered in Acts * and this time away may have gotten him ready for that!

Galatians 1:18-19: After that time away, he shares how he connected with the apostles or leaders at church HQ in Jerusalem. Peter and James were like the team captains of the early church and it was important that they and Paul were all on the same team.

Galatians 1:20: The bad guys were not only bringing in a counterfeit gospel, but they were also smearing Paul which is why he shares so much detail of his story.

Galatians 1:21-23: Imagine the shock and joy of these early Christians who were once running from Paul because he was on the hunt for them to now hear about how he is a champion of the faith!

Q: How do you think Luke Skywalker and Han Solo would have felt if Darth Vader suddenly showed up saying that he was now on their team? *

Galatians 1:24: Indeed, God was glorified and magnified through Paul's conversion. Only God could have turned the chief villain against the church into the chief champion of the church!

And stories like this have continued even into today where people that seemed beyond any hope receive the **true** gospel of grace and have their lives completely changed! God be glorified! *

Key Point: This is the power of the **true** gospel. When you realize that Jesus won the gold medal by His perfect life, death, and resurrection AND that He offers this medal freely to us, it changes you!

Paul was changed. Have you been changed? This week let's celebrate the good news of the gospel by walking with Jesus and following hard after Him in all that we do! *

Bring It Home

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

*Greetings! Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

First

Read Galatians 1:11. What makes the gospel different from stories like "Little Red Riding Hood"?

Second

Read Galatians 1:14. Paul got gold medals in religious rule-keeping. Was that enough to earn him salvation? Why not?

Parent Challenge

Read Galatians 1:23. If God can save Paul, he can save anyone! Who can you pray for that seems beyond God's reach?

By His Grace,

P
aul