

## The Gospel Greeting

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AM Service

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### Text:

Galatians 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.

### Introduction

The apostle Paul had a **two-fold object** in writing to the churches in Galatia. The false teachers known as **the Judaizers had dismissed his authority**, and **the believers in Galatia are tempted to fall back** from the pure Gospel to a distorted Gospel. And at the very beginning of his Epistle, in the salutation itself, **Paul addresses these two points**. On the one hand, he strongly and confidently declares that his **apostleship and authority** is not of human origin but **of divine origin**; and on the other, **he takes the occasion to remind the Galatians of the pure Gospel of grace** that they are tempted to abandon.

Unlike letters today, letters in the apostle Paul's time begin with the name of **sender**, then the name of **recipient**, and then the **main theme of the letter**. This morning I want to look closely the portion of this greeting where Paul states his main theme, namely verses three to five.

Galatians 1:3 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.

In verses three to five, we see Paul's **Desire**, Paul's **Declaration**, and Paul's **Doxology**.

### I - Paul's Desire

I said last time that Paul was angry when he wrote this letter. He was on fire because the very churches that he planted are now turning away from the true Gospel. **His anger is out of his love and concern for the believers in Galatia**.

If you compare Paul's greeting in this letter with his other letters, you will notice that there is **no expression of commendation or thanks for them**, instead he went right into his theme.

1 Corinthians 1:4 **I thank my God always on your behalf**, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;

Philippians 1:3 **I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,**

Colossians 1:3 **We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,**

1 Thessalonians 1:2 **We give thanks to God always for you** all, making mention of you in our prayers;

2 Thessalonians 1:3 **We are bound to thank God** always for you, brethren ...

Though no explicit expression of love for them, we know that the apostle **Paul loved and cared** for the churches in Galatia because **he took time to write this letter and to pray for them**. What is his prayer? What is his desire for them?

**Paul's desire and prayer** for his readers is **for them to experience grace and peace**.

Galatians 1:3 **Grace** be to you and **peace** from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,

Paul in most of his letter linked grace with peace. In Paul's mind, **grace and peace are closely connected**.

1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, 2: Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: 3: **Grace** be unto you, and **peace**, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: 2: **Grace** be to you and **peace** from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2: **Grace** be to you, and **peace**, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2: **Grace** be unto you, and **peace**, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, 2: To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: **Grace** be unto you, and **peace**, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: **Grace** be unto you, and **peace**, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2: **Grace** unto you, and **peace**, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philemon 1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer, 2: And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house: 3: **Grace** to you, and **peace**, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **1. The Order (Sequence) of Grace and Peace**

Paul also understands that **grace go before peace**. There can be **no peace without grace**. To experience peace with God, **we must first accept the free gift of the grace of God** in Christ Jesus. The **grace** of God is the **source of salvation** and **peace** with God is **the result of salvation**. Peace comes from having been delivered and redeemed by the grace of God.

As someone has said, *“The measure of peace enjoyed is in proportion to the grace accepted.”* As we understand and appreciate the grace of God in our lives, the more we enjoy and experience peace in our lives.

### **2. The Origin (Source) of Grace and Peace**

Galatians 1:3 Grace be to you and peace **from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,**

The source of grace and peace is **both the Father and the Son**. Grace comes **from** God the Father, is **mediated through** His Son Jesus Christ and **made effective through** the work of His Spirit. So, this passage shows us the co-equality of the Godhead.

Even this opening greeting **directly confronts** the false gospel that the Judaizers were promoting. The false teachers were emphasizing works and not faith, law and not grace. They are seeking to bring the Christians in Galatia back under the burdensome yoke of the Law. **But to be under the Law will not bring peace** because peace flows from God’s grace! If you want peace with God, you first must accept the grace of God in Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace.

Paul’s prayer and desire for the believers in Galatia is for them to experience grace and peace.

## **II - Paul’s Declaration**

After praying for the readers, Paul set out **the Gospel in a nutshell**. He makes a statement concerning the redemptive work of Christ.

Galatians 1:4 **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:**

In this statement, Paul emphasizes at least three things concerning the redemption that Christ accomplished for sinners.

## 1. The Willingness of Christ

Galatians 1:4 **Who gave himself** for our sins ...

Jesus Christ gave Himself. The words “gave himself” speak of the **voluntary** nature of Christ’s death. He gave Himself **willingly**.

John 10:14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15: As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16: And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. 17: Therefore doth my Father love me, because **I lay down my life**, that I might take it again. 18: No man taketh it from me, but **I lay it down of myself**. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

He laid down His life for us. And He did this freely and willingly. No one took His life from Him, He laid it down of **His own freewill and accord**.

Galatians 1:4 **Who gave himself for our sins** ...

The reason Christ gave Himself away was “for our sins.”

1 Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins** according to the scriptures;

The Reformer Martin Luther wrote, “*Christ never gave Himself for our righteousness; but He gave Himself for our sins, because there was no other way of saving us except by a sacrifice for sin.*”

This is the heart of the Gospel; it is Jesus Christ taking our place as our substitute.

Phillip Ryken writes, “*We were the ones who deserved to die because we owe God an infinite debt for our sin. But Christ took our place on the Cross. He became our substitute, our sin-offering. He gathered up all our sins, put them on His own shoulders, and paid for them with His death. Thus, the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ was not merely an example of supreme sacrifice, but an actual atonement for sin. It enabled God to forgive us by satisfying His pure justice.*”

## 2. The Purpose of Christ

Galatians 1:4 **Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world** ...

Not only do we see in Paul’s declaration of **the nature** of the Gospel, **the willingness** of Christ but also **the purpose** of Christ. Why did Christ give Himself for our sins? He gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from this present evil world. The verb “**deliver**” means to “**rescue from danger**”, or “**to set us free from bondage**.” Jesus Christ died for our sins to rescue us from danger and to deliver us from bondage.

**The Gospel does not promise deliverance from all of our present earthly problems.** At least not yet; that will be in the life to come when we get to Heaven. Christ gave Himself for our

sins **not to improve us, not to reform us, but but to rescue us!** He came to rescue and free us from this evil age.

Guzik wrote *“The idea behind the word deliver is **not** deliverance from the presence of something, **but** deliverance **from the power of something.**”*

Jesus Christ has died to deliver us from this present evil world, not to remove His people out of it, but **to rescue them from the power of it.** Isn't that what our Lord says to His disciples and to us as well, that for the present, **we are in the world, but we are no longer of the world.**

**The Gospel not only saves but it also transforms.** It transforms one's life.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12: Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, **in this present world**; 13: Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14: Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

The purpose of Christ's sacrificial and substitutionary death was not only to bring us forgiveness, but that, **having been forgiven, we should live a new life.**

The Judaizers wanted to lead the Christians out of the liberty of grace into the bondage of Law. Paul knew that bondage was not a part of the message of the Gospel, for Christ had died to set men free.

### **3. The Obedience of Christ**

Galatians 1:4 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:**

Not only do we see in Paul's declaration of the **nature** of the Gospel, the **willingness** of Christ, the **purpose** of Christ but also the **obedience** of Christ. Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins according to the will of our God and Father. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was **not an unforeseen tragedy, a mere accident of history**; it was part of God's plan for the salvation of sinners. The death of Christ on the cross is **not an unfortunate accident or unavoidable event**, but it is **a demonstration of Jesus Christ's submission** to the will of God and our Father.

John 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Jesus Christ, therefore, did not die in order to gain Father's love for us but because the Father already loved us and willed to save us. Oh, how He loves you and me!

### **III - Paul's Doxology**

After expressing his **desires** for his readers and after **declaring** the nature of the Gospel, **Paul burst into a doxology.**

Galatians 1:5 To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Paul followed up his declaration of the nature of the Gospel with **an expression of praise to God.**

Vaughan writes, *“Some commentaries call attention to the fact that it was a custom of the rabbis to add a doxology wherever the name of God was mentioned. With Paul, however, the use of the doxology was an expression of real feeling, not mere obedience to a custom [tradition].”*

Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world. That’s how much He loves us! When we understand and experience the love of God and the grace of God in Christ, **how can we not burst into praise and give God the glory?**

Psalm 115:1 Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

Paul lived to glorify God and he calls us to do the same.

1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Revelation 5:12 Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

### **Closing Thoughts**

Let me close with these words from Jon Daniels, *“This pure Gospel is the beautiful work of God that we celebrate every time we gather as a Church! This pure Gospel is the Word of God that changes lives for all eternity! This pure Gospel is the wonder of God that stirs our hearts in worship of Him! It’s the pure Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ!”*

Let us believe this gospel. Let us love this gospel. Let us proclaim this gospel. Let us defend the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ!

*Oh, how He loves you and me,  
Oh how He loves you and me.  
He gave his life,  
What more could he give?  
Oh, how He loves you;  
Oh, how he loves me;  
Oh, how he loves you and me.*

**AMEN!**