

St Mary's 10am Thursday 16th June 2016

Galatians 1 v1-10; **Galatians 1 v11-24**

GALATIANS SS2

Today we continue our Sermon Series on St Paul's Letter to the Galatians.

Last week we heard how Paul stated the authenticity of his calling to be an Apostle. That he was not an Imposter but had been personally called by Christ to be an Apostle sent to the Gentiles.

Today, we seen how Paul authenticates his message.

Remember, that after Paul's first Missionary Journey, others came to Galatia, conservative Jewish Christians, sometimes called "Judaizers" and they did two things: **They belittled Paul's person and they belittled his message.**

It is common to find people TODAY who believe that Paul twisted or complicated the original message of Jesus. They don't like his teaching on the wrath of God, on church discipline, on gender and sexuality. They think Paul is far too rigid.

In contrast, his opponents in Galatia thought Paul far too lax, far too open, far too inclusive, disrespectful of longstanding traditions and far too keen on 'freedom'!

So, what does Paul do?

He responds by teaching, first, about the DIVINE NATURE of his message and then, second, about the DIVINE NATURE of his commission.

This is what he says about his message, Verse 11 & 12: "*I want you all to know that the gospel I preach IS NOT OF HUMAN ORIGIN. I did NOT receive it from any man, NOR was I taught it, **RATHER I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.***"

Paul **cannot make it any clearer** that he does not speak on his own authority. "***I received it by REVELATION.***" At the very heart of the Christian faith is the belief that we cannot know God UNLESS he, God, first, takes the initiative and reveals himself. This is why Christmas is so important. God revealed himself among us as Emmanuel, God with Us in the form of his Son.

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The gospel is not a human invention, not the clever words of clever men, **but a divinely revealed and divinely given message.** We do not listen to Paul because he is a great man. **We listen to Paul because he is passing on a great message from God.**

The source of the gospel is GOD, not Paul. *"The gospel I preach is NOT of human origin"* v11. Not a second-hand tale but direct from God.

The magnitude of his claim is remarkable: His message is not *his* message but *God's* message; His words are not *his* words but *God's* words; His gospel is not *his* gospel but *God's* gospel; (John Stott)

And the logical conclusion of all this is that if you reject Paul's message, Paul's gospel, **you are actually rejecting Jesus Christ** because Jesus Christ is the source of this message, this gospel.

Paul's clearly establishes that his authority is not from men BUT FROM GOD and so **he has a right to speak.** All he wants to be is a servant of the gospel.

Second, from Ch1 v13 to Ch2 v10, Paul talks about **his own commission** and the point he makes is that he has been called by GOD and NOT by the Church, nor even by the other Apostles.

When GOD was pleased to reveal his Son to me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was NOT to consult any human being and I did NOT go up to Jerusalem to see the Apostles, but I went away to Arabia" V15-17

"Then three years, later I went to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him 15 days and saw NONE of the other Apostles, except James. I do not lie" V18-20

V22 *"I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea"*

Paul establishes that his calling is a DIVINE one and not a human one. SO AGAIN **the logical conclusion of all this** is that if you reject Paul **you are actually rejecting God** because God has commissioned Paul.

And all this affects us today:

If Paul's message is from God and if his commission is from God, **THEN WE** CANNOT BE CHOOSY and say we do not like his message, or say his message is wrong, because it is a message of revelation from God, not from Paul.

-We need to be careful -We need to understand what we are dealing with.

Please read Galatians Chapter 2. More next week!