



Galatians 1.11-end

- GAL is a very personal and fiery letter by Paul to some of the churches he had planted in the region of Galatia
- He's vigorously defending his ministry and his message against 'judaizers' who were discrediting him, perverting the gospel and undoing his good work.
- Paul's gospel is of **grace and freedom through faith** – theirs is a legalistic, works religion which, for Paul is the antithesis of the gospel
- Paul writes a lot about Christian behaviour/works – but these must be a *consequence* of salvation and a *product* or fruit of submission to the Holy Spirit – anything else is worthless
- In this section of ch1, the main points are (a) the **source** of P's gospel and his apostleship, (b) the nature of his special **mission** and (c) the **recognition** of Paul by the church

The Source

- The source of something is important e.g. bottled water... real or artificial fruit juice...financial advice or a news report
- It seems Paul's critics taught that he was **inferior** to the original apostles because his **authority** was only **delegated from them** and it was from them that he must have **learnt the gospel** – before watering it down to suit his Gentile friends
- Their opposition was almost certainly rooted in a desire for power and control
- Paul insists in the strongest terms that the gospel was **revealed directly** to him by Jesus – not learnt from any human being (v11-12). This fits with the record in Acts
- Equally his appointment as an apostle came directly from God (v15-16). In fact Paul admits to being such a vicious opponent of Christianity that **only** the direct intervention of God could have changed him (v13-14)
- Paul says that he had already been engaged in his apostolic ministry for three years before going to Jerusalem to meet Peter
- The TRUE SOURCE of any teaching which claims to come from God is vital. Time proved Paul and not his critics correct.
- **We** need to check the source of all that **we** are taught – I certainly invite you to do that with everything I teach you. Check it against scripture, church tradition and what the Holy Spirit is saying to you. If I'm giving you a message from God – do it! If not, challenge me (nicely!)
- Going back to a controlling, works religion has happened again and again through history. We need to hear Paul and get back to the gospel of grace and freedom – not impose new forms of slavery on people

The Mission (v16)

- Mission is not an optional extra, it is our reason for existing
- (Paul's mission is "simply" this – to proclaim Jesus amongst the Gentiles)
- (Paul believes God set him apart for this mission before he was born and then called him by grace, i.e. in a way that was totally undeserved)
- (Paul wholeheartedly worked at this mission for the rest of his life)
- We – individually and as a church also need to be absolutely clear about our special calling and wholeheartedly pursue it



- Paul could sum his up in just a few words of St G Purpose statement. Is this complete and adequate? What about each of us individually?
- What kind of an example do you give? Are you unclear or shy about your faith?
- SHAPE as a way we can help you discover your unique calling

Recognition (v22-24)

- We all crave recognition sometimes – a weakness, pride?? (*give a personal example*)
- Sometimes there is a general recognition that someone is inspired as an agent of change at a key moment in history, e.g. Mandela? Gandhi?
- It was like this with Paul. The dramatic change in him from foe to friend was a powerful testimony **e.g. if Richard Dawkins converted?!?** What a great story that would be, but some Christians would be suspicious or jealous...
- Paul seeks recognition, **not** for pride but so that God's work through him will not be undone. Paul sees clearly that God intends to save everyone and he is angry that others are slamming shut the door he has opened.