

Galatians 1:11-2:2

A God Given Gospel

Image Church // Galatians #2

MPS: The gospel is not from man, it is from God, the validation rests in its life changing work.

Commissioning

Good morning Image Family, I have some really exciting news that I want to share with you...

I said this last week but we're about to turn 1 year old as a church at the end of the month... And one of the goals that we had from the very beginning was to launch a college ministry...

The college campus is an incredible mission field because most college students come into college trying to "find themselves," their purpose and their career path...

But the think they are missing the most and the thing that they need to be seeking after is Jesus, and it is out heart to reach them with the gospel...

Allowing the **gospel** to define them, and their purpose, and influence how they view what it looks like to peruse a career path...

We want to see college students come to Christ and be **sent** out to leverage their lives and careers strategically for the mission of the gospel...

One of the things that we say here all the time is ***do what do well for the glory of God, and do it somewhere strategic for the mission of God...***

We want to challenge college students to consider taking their careers overseas to leverage it alongside missionaries for the sake of the gospel...

We want to challenge them to consider the fact that they have to get a job somewhere why not be intentional to get it in a city alongside a church plant where they can invest and engage by being faithful leaders and members...

Billy Graham said *he believe that one of the next great moves of God is going to be through the believers in the workplace.*

College students are the **gateway** to the workplace nationally and internationally...

Our prayer is that we would see hundreds of students raised up and sent out ton infiltrate the workplace as missionaries for the kingdom of God!

Today is the start of that vision, and I am excited to announce that we are officially launching Image College!

We have prayed and God has brought our prayers to fruition... This is the start of what I believe will be an incredible movement of God in the months and years to come!

I also want to hold up the fact that we put this in front of you as part of the goal for **ALL IN** and you faithfully answer the call... If you remember we had a goal of \$350,000 and we blew past it with a total of **\$385,168!**

So, thank you for believing in this and getting behind this...

I want to ask Bryson Moon and his wife Princess and their baby-to-be Kynslee to come up here with me...

Bryson has served as our **family ministries director** and our **community engagement coordinator** from the very beginning... He's done an incredible job laying the groundwork for those ministries and investing in our kids... (*can we put our hands together and thank him for the job well done!*)

Bryson's going to be transitioning to the **Image College Director**... And I am so excited about this... Bryson has served in college ministry in the past and is gifted in this area and passionate about reaching students...

I also want to ask all of our College Students that are committing to taking next steps with Image College to come up here...

- These are the pioneers of this ministry- these students are going to help lay the ground work for the students to come...
 - *Can we celebrate them as they come up here?*

Now before we commission them and pray for them, there is another person that I want to bring up here... I know that you may be wondering who is going to take over **Image kids**...

I want to ask Acacia Kelly and her husband Frankie to come up here...

- *As they come up here*, I'll tell you that I have had the chance to know both of them for a long time, sense they were freshman in college- they weren't even dating yet...

Acacia is going to serve as our **Kids Director** for **Image Kids**... I want you to know personally that your kids are going to be in incredible hands...

- Acacia is a schoolteacher who's not only qualified but she loves kids and if you know her- kids love her too!!

What's amazing about all 4 of these people is that they choose to leverage their lives and their career for the mission of the gospel...

- They all moved here from RDU to be part of Image Church

- 3 of them were recent college graduates

Our prayer is that we would see this continue and that **sending** people out for the mission of God would be part of our DNA.

We have some exciting days ahead in the life of our church! *We want to pray and commission all of them together... **Extend hands... Pray.***

Lights drop
(not blackout- people have to get to their seat)

Bumper plays

Mike Stays on stage during Bumper

Bumper Ends- Lights back up- Sermon starts

Sermon Intro

Well if you're a **FTG** with us this morning I am so glad that you're here, and I hope you got the chance to stop by our **FTG Tent** on the way in to pick up the gift that we have for you... Please let us know how we can serve you!

Well, we're in **week 2** of a series that we are doing through the book of Galatians... and so, **if you have your Bible go ahead and take it out and turn to the book of Galatians chapter 1...**

- If you don't have a Bible, we have one as our gift to you on your way out this morning...

I don't know if this is true for you, but I'm all about **Amazon**, specifically, **Amazon Prime**... It's crazy what all you can get delivered to your house in 2 days!

- *Deer corn and sent killer*

But what's even better is the **customer review process**... You know you have the little stars and how many reviews have been giving for whatever your looking at...

- I only search by rating...
- *I am guilty of always looking at the review but never giving a review... anyone else like that?*

Not only is there a star rating, but what I love is that at the bottom, there's personal testimonies section where people write out a review, they can post pictures and videos about the product...

And here's what that does, and here's why I like it... You have no idea who the vendor is that your buying from and product isn't physically in front of you... But the way that you can know what you're buying and trust what you're buying is through the testimonies that are given on the page...

See, at the end of the day, the personal testimonies prove what you're looking at to be **real** and **reliable**...

What we're going to see today as we look at the second half of Chapter 1, is that Paul is going to defend the **validity** and **truth** of the gospel that he is preaching by holding up his personal story, his testimony...

Often times the most **persuasive evidence** of Jesus' existence comes through what He has done in your life... And that's what Paul's going to do...

Let's look at how Paul walks through this...

Galatians 1:11-2:2

11 For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel preached by me is not of human origin. **12** For I did not receive it from a human source and I was not taught it, but it came by a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Paul's picking back up on what he said at the very beginning of **Galatians 1**, where he claimed that he was *an apostle—not from men or by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead*...

Why is he going back to this?

Well, if you remember last week, we looked at how Paul's **primary concern** in his letter to the **Galatians** was that they had started to believe a **perverted gospel**...

There was a group of people who we called the **Judaizes**, people who considered themselves to be **Jewish Christians**... That had come in and began to teach a false and distorted gospel...

But in order to **change** the gospel, they had to **discredit** Paul, because it was the gospel he had preached that founded these churches in the first place...

- Discredit Paul, discredit the gospel he's preaching...

And so, these **Judaizes** were going around saying that Paul wasn't really an apostle, that what he was teaching is flawed second hand information from the **real apostles**...

And so, in **verse 12** Paul's arguing for the truth of the gospel that he's preaching... That it's not some **second-hand** thing that he picked up, he's not twisting things around, he's not being disobedient... Just the opposite, he's being obedient to what God has called him to do which we'll see in just a little bit... ¹

Paul wants to establish his **independent authority** as an apostle, to **validate** the truth and authority of the gospel he's preached...

But instead of just saying, *hey guys remember, I'm in charge, I have authority you need to listen to me*...

He's gonna prove to them that the gospel that he taught them and the gospel that he is claiming is legit, and the evidence is in his story...

Look at verse 13...

13 For you have heard about my **former** way of life in Judaism: I intensely persecuted God's church and tried to destroy it. **14** I advanced in Judaism beyond many contemporaries among my people, because I was extremely zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. **15** But when God, who from my mother's womb set me apart and called me by his grace, was pleased **16** to reveal his Son in me, so that I could preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone. **17** I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me; instead I went to Arabia and came back to Damascus.

18 Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to get to know Cephas, and I stayed with him fifteen days. **19** But I didn't see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. **20** I declare in the sight of God: I am not lying in what I write to you.

21 Afterward, I went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. **22** I remained personally unknown to the Judean churches that are in Christ.

23 They simply kept hearing: "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith he once tried to destroy." **24** And they glorified God because of me.

He's saying, *Guy's look at my life, look at where I've been, this isn't a rouge message that I picked up second hand from the other apostles, I haven't even been around them to rip off their message*...

Then look at chapter 2 verse 1...

2:1 Then [finally] after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. **2** I went up according to a revelation and presented to them the gospel I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those recognized as leaders. I wanted to be sure I was not running, and had not been running, in vain.

Real quick on this last verse here, because this is big... Paul wasn't worried about the validity of his message, but the unity surrounding his message... He wanted to know that the **apostles in Jerusalem** were synced up in agreement with his message, again not to validate it, but to be unified in the mission of it!

And in **Galatians 2:5** Paul tells us that they were... So, in the end Paul's gospel checked out with the very people that the **Judaizes** were trying to pit against Paul...

So, what can we learn for all this? **Well, I think there's 4 things that we need to take away from Paul's testimony here**...

1. The Gospel was established by God not man

Paul says in **verse 11 and 12**: that the gospel he preaches is not of human origin. And that He didn't receive it from a human source and he wasn't taught it, but that it came by a revelation of Jesus Christ...

¹ Adapted from John Piper, sermon. *This is not man's gospel*. Feb. 13, 1983.

This is Jesus gospel and it fits perfectly into God's game plan for providing salvation to the world... And Paul got it first hand from Jesus!

This is big, because Paul lays claim to the fact that Christianity isn't a man-made religion, it didn't originate with man or by man, it was all God...

But the **Judaizers** had **perverting** God's gospel, and instead of leaving it in its original form, they were adding some things to it making it "according to man" and not according to God... And Paul's pushing against this...

Remember the **Judaizers** were saying that in **addition to faith** in Jesus there were *certain laws* that needed to observe in order to be accepted by God...

And if you do that— *if you obey these laws*— then you could transform yourself into the person that God wants you to be and you can be in right standing before Him.

They were functioning with the idea of: **Jesus + works of the law= salvation**

Really what they were doing was *adjusting the gospel to make it fit better with their own proud inclinations! Their version of the gospel was very much "according to man." It catered to the self-assertive and self-defendant yearnings of their flesh.*²

When you add to the gospel, it no longer is God's gospel, it's a distorted gospel...

Example: when I cook a steak *one of God's gifts to mankind* I have a special recipe that I use every time – *one part of that is cooking it medium rare because that's how Jesus ate His...*

But let's say you add something when I am not looking... *which is grounds go have you hand removed...*

- At that point **it's not my recipe** anymore because you added something to it **rejecting** my recipe and making it your own...
- Here I am offering you a **free meal** and you're stepping in and **minimized** that by doing your own thing...

The same is true when it comes to the gospel... God's offered you the **free gift of salvation** through the finished work of Jesus...

When you attempt to **tack on** anything in *addition* to Jesus as a means for your salvation and standing before God...

- Things like your good works, or your religious activity...

You're **functionally** rejected God's established Gospel through Christ, turning to your efforts, minimizing and degrading the work of Jesus making about your merit instead of His!

The gospel that Paul preaches is **salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone** is the true gospel that's been revealed and established by God... You either believe it or you reject it, there's no in-between...

Let's look at the second thing that we need to see...

2. Only God's gospel can produce real change

13 For you have heard about my **former** way of life in Judaism: I intensely persecuted God's church and tried to destroy it. **14** I advanced in Judaism beyond many contemporaries among my people, because I was extremely zealous for the traditions of my ancestors.

Let me start with the word **former**... What we see in this word is that there was a **before** Christ and an **after** Christ... This goes completely against the idea of "*I've always been a Christian*" ... To say that you've always been a Christian is Biblically impossible!

² John Piper, sermon. *This is not man's gospel*. Feb. 13, 1983.

You say, *I don't know if I agree with that...* Remember this is God's gospel not yours, so you can make up the rules, God does, and scripture is clear that there's a time or **season** in your life (*I am not saying you have to know the day or time*) but there is a season of your life where you realize your sin and you recognize your need for a savior...

- **Give example of this:** When I was 8, when I was a freshman in College, the year after I got married... A season of life that you can point back to, even if it was when you were young that you **realize** your sin and you **recognize** your need for a savior.

Where you go from **death to life...** or to use the words of Paul through his other wittings where you go from **old person to new person**, or **old creation to new creation...**

Assumption of salvation doesn't qualify as salvation... Assumption of salvation lead you to conformity, whereas surrendering to the gospel leads to transformation...

Look, ***it's one thing to know about God, it's another thing to surrender to God!***

The demons knew who Jesus was, what He was going to do and what was going to happen in the end and yet they were not saved...

Romans 10:9 If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

- There's a time or season where that confession happens...

Listen, you got to hear me on this... You're not saved because you grew up in a Christian home, or because your parents were a Christian, ***Christianity isn't hereditary, sin is***, which is exactly why Jesus had to come and die in order to rescue you from what you inherited... sin!

By the way, **Parents**, you need to understand the importance of helping your kids see the sinful state that they're in...

- ***Some of you are like well that aint hard...***
- ***But for some of you little Jimmy and Susie can do no wrong...***

It's easy to **assume** the salvation of your kids, that they'll grow up to be a Christian because you are... that's a dangerous assumption, and it's not a Biblical one...

Your God given role as a parent is to disciple your kids... The greatest thing that you can do as a parent is to help you kids see their sin and then point them to the hope of a loving Savior that gave His life for them... And then pray your rear-end off for them!

- As a church we want to partner with you in that... We say ***we want to partner with parents to raise up the next generation for Christ...***
 - It's why we put so much effort into **Image Kids**- it's not child care, it's a time where we come alongside you to teach them the gospel!

So, Paul's defense of the true gospel is that there was a time **before** Jesus and **after** and the **catalyst** was the gospel of Jesus!

And the **irrefutable** evidence of that is proven through his life change...

In his **former way of life**, Paul was a religious dude, he grew up in a religious home... He was at the temple all the time... he followed the law to a "T" ... He followed so well he surpassed his buddies...

- ***You wanna bring up the law, we actually kept score!***

But there was something missing... The grace of Jesus! See, Paul had rejected Jesus because he was so tied to the law and religious activity...

- Which is why Paul was also a man who had intensely persecuted the church and tried to destroy it (v. 13).

In fact, when Paul encountered Jesus he was actually headed to persecute Christians...

What do we need to see in this?

Tim Keller frames it like this: The gospel calls us out of *religion* as much as it calls us out of *irreligion*. No one is so good that they don't need the gospel, nor so bad that they can't receive the grace of the gospel.³

The gospel called Paul out of both in his ***former way of life***, Paul went from an enemy to an emissary, he went from religion to a relationship...

Let me ask you has the gospel called you out of a ***former way of life?***

- Where are you today?

For some of you, you say that you're Christian, but your life doesn't validate your claim... There's really no difference between your former ways and the ways your living now... And this needs to be a gut check on where you really are!

For others of you, you're not growing spiritually- there's no real change that's happening in your life...

Maybe for you, it's a new year and you're looking for a new change, listen, you need to understand that ***Spiritual growth has to be rooted in the gospel and not just good intentions or you're not going to get anywhere.***⁴

Only the gospel can produce real change, ***taking you from your former way of living to a new way of living***... And it all starts with realize your sin, and recognizing your need for a savior and surrendering your life to the same person Paul did, JESUS!

The gospel changes you at the core of who you are, it is a ***reorienting*** of your life that's been surrendered to the Savior... Paul's an example of this... Is the same true for you?

Let's look at the 3rd thing we see from Paul's story...

3. The gospel shows us God's character

In Paul says in defense in Verse 15: But when God, who from my mother's womb set me apart and called me by his grace, was pleased **16** to reveal his Son in me, so that I could preach him among the **Gentiles**

Again, you see that God's the one at work here... that's a point Paul is trying to drive home... This is not a man thing, this is a God thing...

But here's what you have to see about God in this, and you can't miss this... Look at the patience of God!

God had a plan for Paul before Paul was even born, and God was patient enough not destroy him in the midst of his rebellion and wickedness for all those years...⁵

You have to see the grace and patience of God... God knew that Paul was going to rebel against Him, and yet God endured with patience grace upon grace...

Listen, in the same way that God knew that Paul would rebel against Him, He knew that you would rebel against him... And in the same way that God extends patient grace to Paul in spite of his sin, He extends patient grace to you in spite of your sin!!

How could this be? That's where the beauty of God's gospel shines so bright... The only way it's possible is through Jesus...

³ Time Keller, "Chapter 2 God's Amazing Grace, *Galatians for you*. Page 28

⁴ Bruce Frank, sermon. *Your God Story*. May 6, 2018

⁵ Adapted from Bruce Frank, sermon. *Your God Story*. May 6, 2018

C. S. Lewis: *Christianity must be from God, for who else could have thought it up?*

See, **God could extend grace to Paul and to you and me, because he unleashed his wrath on Jesus...**

The **wrath** that we deserved because of our sin... When we turned our back on God choosing the desires of our flesh over God...

And yet, God sent his Son, to come and live perfectly in our place, and then die willfully in our place... In His life He satisfied the demands that we could never meet, and in His death payed the penalty that we owed for our sin, and in His resurrection, He offers us new life in Him!

See when you believe God's gospel you're receiving **Jesus in your place**... His righteousness in place of your sinfulness!

You have to see the grace of God that He's extended to you through Christ!

Do you understand that in the midst of your sin, the character of God say's *I love you and I forgive you*, and that forgiveness will never change because it's **not** contingent on you, it's contingent on Jesus perfect righteousness! Do you see the patient character of God?

Do you see that when the world around you fails, and the people around you let you down, that God never will!

Do you understand that don't feel accepted, or you feel unlovable that the character of God says not by me... My love and acceptance NEVER CHANGES!

Listen some of ***you don't have a former life because you have never experienced the grace of Christ...***

When you recognize the character of God that's displayed through Christ it changes you, it changes everything about you!

For some of you, ***you need to stop trying to lean into your own character and you need to receive the character of God!***

The danger of growing up **around** Christianity is you can be inoculated to what the gospel is...

- The gospel is not about you and what you can do, it's about God and what he's done!

Do not degrade the character of God by trying to add something to His gospel! God doesn't need your help!

God took pleasure in extending his loving grace to Paul, and that same God has extended his loving grace to you...

Would you recognize the character of God and the patient grace that's been offered to you?

Let's look at the last thing that we need to see from this...

4. Your story should point others to God's Story

What you see through Paul's story in his defense for the true gospel is that ***God revealed Christ to Paul so that he could reveal Christ through Paul*** (Chris Pappalardo)

Paul says in **verse 16** that Jesus was revealed to him so that he could preach to the gentiles...and then in **verse 22** he says:

22 I remained personally unknown to the Judean churches that are in Christ. **23** They simply kept hearing: "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith he once tried to destroy." **24** And they glorified God because of me.

God saved Paul because his story was to be evidence of God's story...

Paul's defense of the gospel that he preaches rests in the evidence of his story...

- This is **God's gospel** of no works from man
- Which is why only God's **gospel can produce real change**— change that was evident in Paul's life...
- Because it's all rooted in the **character of God** through his patient grace...

And we see that Paul's story is not only validation for the churches in Galatia, but it also caused the Judean churches to immediately glorify God... And that's just the beginning, because his story will also serve as validation for the gentiles who God has called Paul to preach too...

And his story will continue on even to today as we sit and study it, and hold it up as proof of a loving God and an incredible gospel!

The question for you is that do you see that God saved you to use your story to point to His story??

Do you see that in the same way that Paul was tasked with taking the gospel to the nations you're tasked with doing the same thing!

- God saved him to send him and God has saved you to send you, to your work place and to the ends of the earth!
 - Matthew 28:19-20
 - 2 Corinthians 5:20 – you are an ambassador!

Do you understand that God's plan all along was to save you to show off His glory through you and the story He has given you?!

Let me ask you this... ***How many people are glorifying God because of your story?***

Have you ever even shared your story?

For many of you, ***you claim to be saved by grace, but you silent about the grace you have been saved by...***

*For some of you it's rooted in fear... It's uncomfortable, it feels awkward...

- Is the same true when it comes to talking about your kids?
- Or talking about your favorite sports team, or the big win??

You have to reset your mind here remembering that you've been given the approval and acceptance of God in your salvation... So, you don't need the approval of others... you have all you need...

And you also need to understand that in your salvation God didn't just leave you to fend for yourself as you talk about the work that He's done in your life, He gave you The Helper- the **Holy Spirit** to go with you and before you in what He has called you to do!

Listen, you have to see that when you fail to share your salvation story your subduing the glory of God that was intended to be displayed in your life...

The gospel glorifies God! Because it says that God saved you when you were unworthy solely because of his grace and he alone deserves all the glory. (***JD Greear***)

Listen, your salvation story is a gift and it's one of the greatest tools that you can use to give God glory by sharing the gospel!

You ask, well what does this look like, how do I do it??

- Connect with the brokenness and hold up the restoration found in Jesus...
 - If you ask enough about someone they are going to reveal brokenness...
 - *Flesh this out...*
- You're not imposing, your sharing your story
 - **Example:** You are a cancer survivor...

*****VAMP*****

For some of you, all this is difficult you're completely isolated, you feel like you're the only one grinding... You have no community around you and it shows in your lack of intentionality for the gospel...

You need to put yourself in environments where people can encourage you in sharing your story and celebrate with you when you do...

- We do that here through **Community Groups**

One last thing that we can't jump over here, is the intentionality of God... God did a work in Paul's life so that He could send him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles...

- A Different race... a different nationality... a different ethnicity
- This proves the point that the gospel is for ALL PEOPLE...
- Praise God that he did otherwise you and me may not have heard!
- Does the gospel compel you to cross ethnic lines, to peruse people who don't look like you? The gospel is the one thing that can unify **any two people!**

Conclusion

Listen I don't know where you are today but for some of you, as you've sat here and listened today, you don't have a God Story- you don't have a **former way of life...**

- You've never understood the character of God and the magnitude of His gospel that's been accomplished for you!

For you, your story needs to start today... And how powerful that story will be!

Others of you have **forgotten** the Character of God...

- Other things have pulled you away...

Some of you are here, and you're **exhausted**, because you've been trying to change on your own, instead of looking at the power of God to change you, and you need to rest in the gospel, and root yourself in Jesus' finished work instead of trying to make it happen on your own...

And the last thing that we need to walk away with for those of you that are Christians, is the weight of the fact that **God saved you to use your story to point to His story!**

And He has placed you where you are to be a missionary for Him!
Your primary role isn't an employee for your company it's an advocate for Gods kingdom!

Listen one of the big Emphasis' this year for us as a church is that ***we want to impact the lostness of our city...***

- We don't want to just exist, we want to be a movement that pushes back the darkness of our city...

That starts with you, and the work that God has done in your life, you remembering that, and leveraging that in everyday life!

Pray