

GAL 6



((GAL 2:1-10))

PRAY

Well, even though we have stepped into CHAPTER TWO of this LETTER to the GALATIAN churches the SCENARIO and SUBJECT matter are still the same.

Paul is flabbergasted by the news that those churches HE just planted in the life giving soil of the sound gospel message HAD NOW begun to embrace a different gospel message...

A message being peddled by group of individuals WHO Paul despised...a group HE HAD had fought w/ in the past—a group KNOWN as the “circumcision party” (Jews who had reportedly turned to Christ YET were still hanging on to the OC clean laws as necessary to justification/salvation).

And SO as a means to preparing them for both the systematic dismantling of this position (and subsequently now their position) as well as a “full on” DEFENSE of his position (the right view of justification and the gospel)---PAUL DROPS several “gospel BOMBS” upon them---bombshell truths about the GOSPEL which are meant to BLAST AWAY any un-necessary loyalties or lingerings—which might otherwise KEEP them FROM making a serious consideration TO WHAT he is about to DIVE into (later in the book).

And THOSE BOBMBS include what we FIND (here) in the VERSES I just read in your HEARING...

Which means that (what we wb discussing this morning) is...

GOSPEL BOMBS PART 4 (in the series).

(AND the FOCUS) is the same as it was at the END of chapter ONE---getting the GOSPEL RIGHT.

This (iow) is STILL the kind of GOSPEL BOMBHELL TRUTH Paul is determined to DROP upon the DUPED GALATIANS...

AND that for obvious reasons: (one) b/c they are getting it wrong and (two) how to get it right is OBVIOUSLY not that apparent (hence why I call it a “bombshell truth”—it is something that would have had that kind of impact upon the Galatian readers—a blast of truth which they were previously unaware of)—AND (I believe) the EFFECT may be the same TODAY (which is the other reason I chose this TITLE)—b/c (I would GUESS) that the majority of CHRISTIANS (if asked) would NOT pick some (if not all) of the things Paul mentions (in this first part of Galatians) as necessary to getting the GOSPEL RIGHT...

AND that includes (most especially) THE ONE we are going to BEGIN discussing TODAY...

THAT which is NUMBER 7 in this GOSPEL BOMBS series...(and that is...)

7. Getting the Gospel right requires the church.

7.1. IOW: W/O the church there is no way of knowing that what we have embraced is the correct/true/sound gospel message.

The church is absolutely essential to getting the gospel right.

(AND) THAT (beloved) I would say is A BOMBHELL truth (for most)a shocker...a reality which has NEVER dawned the HORIZON of their Christian thinking...

YET it is the ABSOLUTE TRUTH---And I am not the only ONE who believes that!

7.2. This is why those considered the great men of the Christian Faith throughout history (from Augustine to Calvin) all believed that there was no salvation outside of the church (b/c the church was absolutely essential in getting the gospel right).

More importantly (however) than any of those men I just mentioned---is the apostle Paul.

Paul (also) believed that the church was absolutely essential/necessary to getting the gospel right. And this we see (through what he shares) in verses 1 and 2.

7.3. (1-2)

7.4. These verses are in reference to Paul’s second trip to Jerusalem from his home church in Antioch. A trip which was the result of “a revelation” (just as Paul states)---the revelation of the prophet Agabus regarding a great famine soon to come and the relief that would be needed in the Jerusalem church (Act 11:27-30).

7.5. Notice again (however) from our verses in Galatians that it is NOT just b/c of this revelation that Paul went to Jerusalem –BUT ALSO (as he says) to “set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles (i.e. a gospel not requiring circumcision or observance of the other clean laws), in order to make sure I was not running or had run in vain”.

7.6. “vain” = (κενὸν) = “kenosis” (the doctrine of Christ emptying Himself of His rights as God in becoming a man—Phi 2:8); empty or useless. In this case it is the latter of those two which most clearly reflects what Paul is getting at. He is worried that the GOSPEL he was preaching among the Gentiles (at Antioch—his home church where he functioned as an elder/pastor alongside Barnabas) was possibly an effort in futility---THAT it was “useless” —NOT b/c those WHO he was preaching it TO (were rejecting it)—BUT because it WAS the WRONG GOSPEL (and therefore a “useless” one when it comes to saving anyone).

7.7. (IOW): Paul was concerned (at that time) that he (might be the ONE) w/ the FALSE GOSPEL!

7.8. And so what does HE do (as a means to making sure he was getting it right)? He takes it to the church!!!!

7.9. “I went up...and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential)...” = WHO PAUL is speaking about (here) is the Jerusalem church (or more specifically—her leaders: “James and Cephas and John” –v9).

7.10. What this (then) establishes (w/o a shadow of a doubt) is this 7th GOSPEL BOMB (or bombshell truth)= Getting the GOSPEL right requires the CHURCH!

We (iow) need the church (and her views) if we are going to possess the correct/true/sound gospel message.

AND before I GIVE you the REASONS for this (which is what verses 3 through 10 are concerned w/) THERE ARE three immediate questions (none of which are on the power-point) that NEED to be answered---and this may be as far as we get today---BUT that should be of no discouragement TO YOU since what we FIND in the answer to these THREE questions are a wealth of SOUND ECCLESIOLOGY (i.e. study of the church)---as it relates to WHO makes up her number, HOW she is defined and what form of government she possesses---ALL things which we as CHRISTIANS NEED to know (and again) are things which immediately “pop up” (as questions to be answered) in light of the soap opera surrounding this portion of the letter and what Paul is talking about in these first two verse of chapter two.

ON that NOTE (then)---here is the FIRST QUESTION (and I hope in light of what I have just said—you are ready to listen—b/c not only is what we are going to talk about important to understanding the subject of the church theologically—BUT it is also going to require a lot of listening and thinking (iow: it is deep stuff which you are only going to get and appreciate if you are really listening an thinking through it)

So w/that here (again) is the FIRST question that needs to be addressed (and it may be one you have thought of—in light of where we have already been in our discussion of the book—since what I have just told you about chapter two seems to contradict what we already know about Paul and his conflict w/James and Peter—the leaders of the Jerusalem church):

7.10.1. **QUESTION #1: How Paul could oppose Peter and James** (the leaders of the Jerusalem church-- which is what he is ultimately doing in the writing of this letter—2:11-12) **and yet at the same time teach the necessity of the church** (including her leaders) **in order to get the gospel right?**

B/C those men (i.e. the church’s leaders) are not the church (IOW: the church is made up of more than just her leaders). Therefore is not always true to say that someone is opposing/rejecting the church when they oppose or reject her leader(s). And such was the case w/Paul. Though he writes Galatians opposing the “different gospel” position that Peter and James have taken, he is not opposing (or standing against the church)—any more than the Reformers were when they stood against the Roman popes (and the two cases are almost identical). The Reformers were standing NOT AGAINST the church --but her leaders (who had no regard for what the rest of the BODY of CHRIST thought—or could prove from God’s Word to be true). And (once more) the same is true w/Paul. “The different gospel” position which Peter and James were now convinced of WAS NOT w/regard to what the rest of the church thought (or based upon what the church had decided prior---which was in agreement w/Paul—2:9).

And so when Paul stands against them HE is actually upholding the VERY TRUTH he is communicating (here) in these first two verses of chapter TWO (that again—WE NEED the CHURCH—meaning the entire church—and not just her leaders to GET the GOSPEL RIGHT---since that was the GOSPEL confirmed to him during this second trip. Though it was a gospel confirmed to him by the leaders—it was also NO DOUBT a gospel which bore the seal of approval from the Jerusalem church as a whole---meaning more than Peter and James and John---but the entire church)!

Why do I say that (that the approval he receives from the leaders at Jerusalem ultimately bears the approval of the entire Jerusalem church)? (two reasons): (one) B/C this is the only paradigm we ever see in the NT: something doesn't get accepted as the truth w/o the entire churches' involvement (ex. Act 15:22; 1Co 14:29; Act 11:1-4). (two) B/C if this is not the case, then Paul's actions in getting only the leaders approval (here) (versus their approval as representative of the entire church body) is in entire contradiction to the THRUST of this letter as a whole (which is against the leaders Peter and James who are clearly acting separate from the church as a whole—Act 15:24—“this was not the collective view of the church”).

*The point NOT to miss = The church is made up and is recognized by more than just her leaders---it includes also her congregation who are also important when it comes to deciding what truths are being taught in the Word of God—most especially the GOSPEL. IOW: We all matter and are key to getting the gospel right! This is why Paul can say what he does in (1Co 12:12-21).

7.10.2. **QUESTION #2: What is the definition of a church?** (i.e. what constitutes something as a church)?

This (too) is a question that needs to be answered before we move on (to the reasons for its necessity in getting the GOSPEL right) since this is what Paul is speaking about when he says he “went up to Jerusalem” (he is again speaking about the Jerusalem church). AND SINCE there are so many groups out there today WHO CLAIM this particular TITLE (“church”) are (based on the Scriptures' definition) are NOT ---AND (therefore) we do not WANT to include them in our consideration of this truth (IOW: requiring the church to get the gospel right—DOES NOT mean all those w/“c-h-u-r-c-h” on their door—but only those who are legitimately churches—those recognized and defined as such by God's Word—or more specifically Act 11:19-26. That particular text exists in Scripture to establish to very important(and authoritative) paradigms: what it means to truly be a missionary and do missions work—AND---what defines a church—which is the GOAL of all truly legitimate and biblical missions work).

(Act 11:19-26)

These verses establish for us the 5 criteria necessary for any group to become (or be constituted/recognized) as a church:

- 1) A visible congregation of professing believers (19-21).
- 2) At least one biblically qualified elder/pastor initially under the support of another biblical church (22) (This implies he is qualified according to 1Ti 3:1-7 and Tit 1:5-9 and is sent out by another church who recognizes/appts him as such versus self-appointment—Act 20:30).
- 3) A commitment to faithful obedience (23) (this implies full compliance/obedience since this is the only thing God considers as “faithful obedience”—Mat 7).
- 4) A commitment to sharing the *gospel and making disciples (24) (this implies they possess the correct/true/sound gospel—b/c as we saw—w/o this you are nothing more than a band of “accursed” people—Gal 1:8-9).
- 5) A commitment to establish faithful elders and teaching (25-26) (once again this implies they are making elders according to the qualifications given in 1Ti 3:1-7 and Tit 1:5-9—anything less is just a glorified boys club).

*Why I say this is the definition of a church = B/C it isn't actually called a “church” until those things are in place (notice: verse 23-“them” v. verse 26-“church”).

*What this means (practically AND as it relates to this bombshell truth):

- 1) A vast majority of what exists as churches today are not recognized as such by God.

(IOW): they are not churches—or false churches—or apostate churches b/c they DO NOT meet the criteria given by God in His word.

Consider how many:

-have pastors who have self-appted (or started w/o the apptmnt and support of another church);
pastors who do not meet the qualifications of 1Ti 3 and Tit 1 (ex. they don't know the word well enough to be able to “exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict”—Tit 1:9. I had a pastor of a church once tell me he didn't know the Scriptures well enough—yet continues to pastor—Jam 3:1!)

-they are not committed to faithful (and full) obedience but rather selective obedience (BTW all will claim they are obedient and teach obedience—but it is selective). We were told by one church this week that certain sins are not salvific issues and so do not jeopardize salvation nor need to be disciplined. Example of selective obedience they have women pastors/elders and women teaching over men. Most of the big churches in the Denver metropolitan area have this—yet 1Ti 2:12-15 strongly condemns it and those who do it);

-they preach a false gospel. I have rec'd an email just this week from a pastor at one of the mega-churches close by who told me that obedience to Christ is not necessary—just faith. What you did—though it made God sad—ultimately would not jeopardize your salvation. That is a false gospel message which means they are a false church. The same w/true for all those w/selective obedience—this too according to what we see in Mat 7 and 19 is a false gospel.

-they appt. people who are not qualified to be elders/pastors (again the example of women. Do a little research sometime on the websites of some of Denver's biggest churches and see how many have women as elders/pastors—you w/ shocked!).

*The only thing these so-called churches have (then) are “professing believers”—but as we saw—that alone doesn't make you a church!

2) They are NOT who we sb turning to in making sure we have the GOSPEL right-- instead we sb running from them! They are not who God is establishing this principle (in our text in relation to)—and (therefore) NOT who Paul has in mind when he establishes this principle in the text (Paul would have never have never been a part of—or went to such churches for truth—most esp. the truth of the GOSPEL). Such so-called churches are a HINDRANCE rather than a HELP to getting the GOSPEL right (which is why there is so much mass confusion regarding the gospel—b/c these false churches are what dominate the landscape of America!

*It should NOT shock us that the majority of what is out there under the moniker of “church” is fake, false or heading in the wrong direction) since this was a problem even in the first century and we are warned it will continue to be a problem into the latter/last days (Rev 2-3: 5 out of 7; 2Pe 2:1; 2Ti 3:1, 4:3-4; Act 20:28-30; Rev 12:17 w/2Co 11:13-15).

(finally then)...

7.10.3. QUESTION #3: How does Paul saying he met with the church leaders “privately” (v2) affect our understanding of the church?

It tells us that though THE CHURCH is made up of both her leaders and her congregation, she is NOT a democracy (or “pure democracy”) but rather a republic (or “representative democracy”):

Democracy (or “pure democracy”) = all the people (or church members) have equal authority and therefore all decisions are made through the voting process versus through those chosen (and qualified) to be the peoples’ representatives (or elders/pastors).

This (again) cannot BE the government of the church IN LIGHT of the FACT that Paul was able to confirm his gospel (as the right one) without the direct vote (or approval) of the entire congregation—but (instead) by simply meeting “privately” w/the elders.

(which brings us to the republican form of government)...

Republic (or “representative democracy”) = the people (or congregation) choose those qualified to serve as their authorities and representatives before God; and to make the decisions for them in relation to the church. These leaders of the people (or elders/pastors) therefore serve in the peoples’ best interest (according to God’s Word) and assume the affirmation and submission of the people to their decisions unless it is communicated otherwise and demonstrated to be false from the Word of God (at which time they either change or are removed). This (once more) is the form of government which God has ordained for His church which is why I have taken a little more time to explain the details about it. The church is a republic: authority has been given to the peoples’ leaders by the people and they therefore can exercise that charge in making decisions without always having to have the people present (which is again the case in what takes place w/Paul in Gal 2:1-2). It is a private meeting w/those chosen to be the peoples’ leaders—those chosen to make decisions for the church (and in relation to the gospel)—which is what they DO w/PAUL. AND we are going to talk more about this next week—but for NOW here is...

*The point NOT to miss = The leaders of the church have been given authority by God to govern the affairs of the church and to make decisions on her behalf (and for her people)---NOT as a dictatorship—BUT NOT as a pure democracy either. The leaders (elders/pastors) are accountable to the people (in making sure their decisions and lifestyle are in agreement w/God’s Word)---and (likewise) the people to them (in making sure they are showing submission and respect).

*Support (that the elders/pastors have been given such authority and therefore can give the kind of approval they extend to Paul in Galatians chapter 2—w/o the need to go before the entire church):

(Mat 18:17-20 w/Joh 20:23—which shows who Jesus is most specifically thinking of when He mentions the “church” in Mat 18 is her leaders (this is the “two or three” gathered; Tit 2;15; 1Ti 4:16; 1Ti 2:12...3:1; Act 4:35, 11:30; Act 8:36, 11:1-4, 18, 15:22---both of these show accountability to the people YET once the testimony/support of the elders is heard, there is submission by the congregation).

*What happens to churches when they are not run as republics (the way God ordained) = The same thing that would happen in America were it a pure democracy. It would become a nation (or church) run by the manipulation of one (“dictatorship”), or each man for himself (“anarchy”) or the coercion of those mobs of people who formed to overthrow the individual (“mob rule”). And (unfortunately) b/c so many Christians don’t understand (or outright reject) God government for the church, these three are thriving in the Christian community TODAY (dictatorships = most rock-star pastor fall into this category. People believe everything they say, question nothing and let them do basically whatever they want—even defending them when they are in CLEAR sin and disqualified from office---ex. Charles Stanley; anarchy = solo scripturists; mob rule = all the different coalition groups and conferences which are by their sheer size and influence are coercing the churches to their agenda and doctrines---ex. urban ministry—reaching the city through hip city living and talking theology in bars—now churches are scrambling to become just that –and seminaries are offering degrees in it.).