**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**What Did Paul Preach?**

The question I want to consider today on our program is What Did Paul Preach?

Our text this morning is taken from Galatians chapter one. In the book of Galatians Paul is dealing with a controversy in the church. There were Judaizing teachers that were saying that Gentiles who wanted to become Christians had to be circumcised according to the Law of Moses in order to be saved. That was a false teaching, and these churches in Galatia had been influenced by these false teachers. Paul writes this epistle to oppose this teaching and to bring these Galatian brethren back to the truth.

Evidently, one thing these false teachers had tried to do is discredit Paul, the one who had first preached the gospel to the Galatians. They were thinking that if they were to have any influence on these Galatian churches they would need to discredit Paul as a preacher. One thing they said is that Paul did not receive his apostleship from Christ, and that what he preached really came from the other apostles, and did not come directly from Christ. Well, the first thing Paul says to these brethren in chapter 1, verse 1, *“Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead).”*  In verses 11-12 Paul says, *“But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.* Paul makes it clear that what he preached he had received through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

But what did he preach? There are three terms here in Galatians 1 that describes what he preached. Let us consider them.

In verse 11 he said, “*But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.”* Paul preached the gospel. What is the gospel? The word “gospel” means “good news.” The gospel is the good news of salvation from sin through Jesus Christ. It basically involves three things: facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, and promises to be received by those who obey the commands. You will remember that Jesus told the apostles to *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”* (Mark 16:15) That is what they did. After Jesus’ ascension into heaven they return to Jerusalem and wait there for the coming of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost they are filled with the Holy Spirit and began *“to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”* (Acts 2:4) They begin to preach the gospel. But what did they preach? Look at what Peter preached beginning with verse 22, *“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know -- Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”* What is he preaching? He is preaching some facts, isn’t he? He is preaching the death, burial, resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are the foundation facts of the gospel out of which everything else develops. Now, Peter proceeds to prove that Jesus was raised from the dead. Peter then concludes his sermon by saying, in verse 36, *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”* As the result of this preaching many of the people were convicted of their sins and wanted to know what to do. It says beginning with verse 37, *“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”* What are the facts to be believed? --the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, proving that He is Lord and Christ. What are the commands to be obeyed? – repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. What are the promises to be received?—remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Someone might be asking, “how can commands fall under the category of good news?” Let me illustrate it like this. Suppose you received in the mail a notice that you have just won a new Mercedes-Benz. You check it out and you learn it is legitimate. But there are no instructions on how to receive it. You ask around about it and you are not able to find out how you may receive this new automobile. But the next day you receive in the mail the instructions of what you must do to receive your free, new Mercedes-Benz. Let me ask you, would you consider those instructions good news. Of course. Commands to be obeyed are a part of the gospel to be preached. Paul said in 2 Thess. 1:7-8, *“and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Notice, the gospel is to be obeyed. The gospel was preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost: facts to be believed--the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ; commands to be obeyed--repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; and promises to be received--remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Did Paul preach this same gospel? Look with me in 1 Corinthians 15, beginning verse 1. Paul says, *“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you -- unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”* What did Peter preach when he preached the gospel on the day of Pentecost?—the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What did Paul preach when he preached the gospel to the Corinthians?—the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Did Paul also preach the commands of the gospel? Well, to whom is he writing here? It is to the Corinthians. In Acts chapter 18 we read of Paul coming to Corinth to preach the gospel. In verse 8 it says, *“…And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.”* It sounds like what the Jews did on Pentecost, doesn’t it? Paul, not only preached the facts of the gospel in Corinth, he also preached the commands of the gospel, the same thing Peter preached in Jerusalem. And both the Jews and the Corinthians who obeyed received the promises. You may hear some teachers talk about the Petrine gospel as opposed to the Pauline gospel. They believe that Peter taught one gospel and Paul taught a different gospel. That is not what I read in the scriptures. When I read what Peter and Paul preached, they preached exactly the same gospel. And that is what we would expect because they were both guided by the Holy Spirit. And Paul even says in this chapter, Galatians 1, that there is but one gospel. Beginning with verse 6 Paul says, *“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.”*

What did Paul preach? He preached the gospel.

But as we continue to read here in Galatians 1, notice what Paul says in verses 22-23. He says *“And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. But they were hearing only, ‘He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy.’”* Notice, Paul preached “the faith.” What is that? This is not normally the way we use the word “faith.” Generally when we think of faith we think of one’s own personal faith, one’s conviction in God and Christ. But that is not the usage here. The faith of this passage is what is to be believed, the contents of faith—“the faith.” It is that which Paul preached. We would not then think that “the faith” which Paul preached was different than the gospel which he preached. Really, “the faith” is a parallel term to the gospel. In Acts 6:7 Luke records, *“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”* Notice, “the faith” was obeyed. Therefore, “the faith” would include facts to be believed and commands to be obeyed. Sounds like the gospel. And those who obeyed the faith, no doubt, received the promises.

But we also need to know that the Bible teaches there is only one faith. Ephesians 4:5 says there is “one faith.” Sometimes you may hear people say they are of the Catholic faith, or someone else says they are of the Methodist faith, or of the Presbyterian faith. But this passage says there is “one faith.” Just as there is one gospel to be obeyed, there is one faith to obey. Jude says in verse 3, *“…I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”* There is one faith that is approved of God. What is that faith? It is “the faith” that was delivered “once for all” to the saints. When was it delivered? It was delivered in the first century to the apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit. It was delivered then “once”, one time for all time. We now have it preserved for us in the scriptures. Whatever “the faith” was in the first century is “the faith” in the twenty-first century. There have been no changes, no additions, no subtractions, it is the faith once for all delivered. Consequently, if we want to stand on the one faith of Ephesians 4:5, we must get our heads in the book and find out what was delivered to the saints in the first century which is for all time, and take our stand there. And so, “the faith” is not determined by what I believe, and it is not determined by what you believe. It is determined by what was “once for all” delivered to the saints in the first century. That is the gospel that Paul preached, and that is the gospel that we must preach.

Also there is another term here in Galatians chapter one that tells us what Paul preached. Look in verses 15-16, *“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood.”* Notice, Paul preached Him - Jesus. Now, let me ask you this question, Does this mean that Paul preached something different than the gospel? When he preached Jesus did he preach something different than “the faith”? Is he saying “sometimes I preach the gospel and sometimes I preach “the faith” and at other times I preach Jesus?” Of course not. Preaching Jesus is the same as preaching the gospel, and preaching “the faith.” Preaching Jesus is not just preaching about Jesus. It includes that, but it involves more than that. It includes preaching His commands and His promises. In Acts 8 we read of Philip preaching Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch. After the eunuch heard Jesus preached he said, *“See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”* You see, preaching Jesus includes preaching baptism. Preaching Jesus then includes preaching the facts about Jesus, it concludes preaching the commands of Jesus and the promises of Jesus.

What we are saying today is that Paul preached Jesus, which means he preached the gospel, he preached “the faith,” the one faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. We need to be preaching the same thing today.

Our time is gone for today, but before we close we want to invite you to check out our web site. On this website you are able to hear sermons on a variety of topics, and you also are able to hear previous Bible Talk radio broadcasts. The web address is sjchurchofchrist.com.