

“CALLED BY GOD”

GALATIANS 1b

We left off last week with Paul declaring that he was more concerned with pleasing God than pleasing men. THAT is wisdom.

Proverbs 29:25 - The fear of man brings a snare, (**trap**) But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.

- The fear of NOT being accepted can tempt a young person to behave in a way that he/she would not otherwise behave... Can the same thing happen to us older folks? YES!
 - We call it “the flow of traffic...”
 - The fear of man motivated Abram to tell people that Sarai was his sister... The fear of man motivated his Son, Isaac to do the very same thing, didn't it?

For the Apostle Paul, it was either serve God and please Him, or serve men and please them.

- Spiritually... This is really important. Why? Because if we “go with the flow” it could cost somebody their eternity... SO... Like the Apostle we stick to scripture to interpret scripture. NOT what is popular or pleasant to hear...

IN CONTRAST TO BEING TRENDY...

Galatians 1:11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it* (**By man**) but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ. **WHEN? Acts 9**

Let's read it - Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest **2** and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women,

he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.

4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

7 And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice (Sound) but seeing no one. 8 Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. **BLIND** But they led him by the hand and brought *him* into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. **I wonder if he thought this was his new life.**

10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." 11 So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. 12 And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."

WHY ME LORD?

13 Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."

15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer

for My name's sake."

17 And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

MY "B. C. DAYS"

13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to* destroy it.

- Remember when we first met Paul who was then Saul?
- Acts 7:58 tells of the young man who held the coats of those who were killing Stephen... Paul regreted this behavior for the rest of his life...

14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

- Paul was a success in the business of persecuting Christians... Right up until he became one...
- He was schooled and disciplined in the traditions of the Jews... It WAS his salvation, he thought... Sadly, religious Jews STILL believe this today.

OUR PURPOSE – PLEASING GOD!

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb (**God called Paul BEFORE he was born - Hmm**) and called me **through His grace**, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, (**us**) I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to

those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

- For three years the Apostle just studied and prayed and listened to the Lord. THEN he started meeting the other Apostles.
- IE, his message was NOT from other men... But from the Lord.
- May we be able to say the same.
- **GUZIK** - Before Paul was a Christian, the emphasis was on what he had done: **I persecuted . . . I advanced . . . (I was) more exceedingly zealous.** Once Paul follows Jesus Christ, the emphasis was on what God had done: **God, who separated me . . . called me . . . reveal His Son in me.**
- I WANT people to see Christ in me too, don't you?

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. 19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

- COURSON - "After three years, I went to Jerusalem to see Peter," said Paul. "I didn't see any of the other apostles, except James, the Lord's brother. Peter greeted me and welcomed me for fifteen days. James did so briefly. The other apostles wanted nothing to do with me."
- How could God have saved a wretch like Paul? GRACE
- You KNOW the question I am going to ask, right? How could God save me? You? Us? GRACE!

20 (Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)

- Paul raises his hand in an oath...
- How would we say this...? "I swear to God..." "With God as my witness..." "I swear on a stack of bibles..."
- THIS silliness is why we need to be truth tellers and promise keepers.

21 Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22 And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ.

- Thought they had never seen him, you had better believe that they HAD heard of him.
- In many places Paul went, the Christians had no desire to see him either...
- He is a hero to us... but in his day he was infamous.
 - Who is it in your life that has hurt you or your family so deeply, that even IF they got saved and started preaching you might not want to see them....? THAT was Paul to much of the early Church.
- BUT SOME rejoiced in his conversion!

23 But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once *tried to destroy*." 24 And they glorified God in me.

GUZIK - Paul's status as *unknown* is certainly different from our own habit of puffing up any prominent convert as soon as they come to Jesus. Paul was happy and well served to spend many years in obscurity before God raised him up. In this whole section, Paul shows there was *enough* contact between him and the other apostles to show that they were in perfect agreement, but not so much that it would show that Paul got his gospel from them instead of God.

Some of us are still shaking our head that God would come find us, save us, and even use us to bless others... Why does He do it? GRACE... As the hymn says: Grace that is greater than all my sin!