

- **The Gospel - Accept No Substitutes (Part 4)**
Rocklyn Clarke Sr. - Sunday May 19, 2013
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<http://www.LifeChurchBoston.org/>
- **The Gospel - Accept No Substitutes (Part 4)**
 - **Preparation**
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 - **Introduction**
 - Welcome to another church meeting at the Hampton Inn & Suites.
 - Welcome Cards -
 - “I want to call your attention to the Welcome Card that you were given on your way into the auditorium”
 - These cards do two things for us:
 - They help us get to know our new visitors better.
 - They also give anyone (visitors or members) a chance to express a need or to give us feedback.
 - By filling it out you will help us to better serve you.
 - We're going to provide time for you to complete the cards at the end of our service, but we encourage you to start filling them out now.
 - **Please use this card:**
 - if you're a **first time visitor** or if you've **never** filled one out before,
 - to tell us about a **decision you made** today,
 - to ask us for more information, or to give us **feedback**.
 - **Please include your contact information** unless we already have it. At the **end of service** we'll ask you to complete the card and then place it in the designated box or give it to someone from our staff on your way out.
 - Regularly Invite People To Join Life Church
 - Transition
 - Review what it means to be a Christian.
 - What does it mean to be a Christian?
 - "Christ" = "anointed one" - effectively "king".

- The Disciples were first called "Christians" at Antioch - Acts 11:19-26
Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. **The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.**

- "Christian" = "belonging to Christ".
- Christians follow Jesus
 - Jesus' people know his voice and follow him - John 10:22-30
Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."
Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."
 - Remind them of how we illustrated "following" with "Simon Says".
- As followers of Jesus, we gather on Sundays (The Lord's Day) to celebrate him.
- Review two-stage process of divine revelation.
 - Think about two-stage journeys:
 - Fly to Florida to take a cruise.
 - Taxi to airport to catch a flight.
 - Jesus' contemporaries were flying from LaGuardia.
 - We're flying from Logan.
 - The words "Father", "Kingdom", "good news", etc. are the first leg of the journey. We then use stories to take us to a more complete understanding.
 - Other people's stories will control you unless you establish the story that God wants you to tell.

- **Read the Passage: Galatians 2:1-10**

Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. [This matter arose] because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

As for those who seemed to be important — whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance — those men added nothing to my message. On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews. For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

- **Exegetical Idea**

The Apostles and the Jerusalem Church did not change Paul's Message!

- **Homiletical Idea:**

?

- **What does this mean?**

- Paul and Barnabus went to Jerusalem in response to a revelation (Acts 11:27-30; Acts 12:25)
- Paul presented the gospel that he preached to the Gentiles.
- No one objected to or added to Paul's message.
- No one tried to compel Paul's companion Titus to be circumcised.
- Circumcision was the badge of identity as a Jew.
- They agreed that Paul should continue to preach to the Gentiles and they would continue to preach to the Jews.

- **Is it True? Do I believe it?**

- **What difference does it make? So What?**

- Paul's teaching preserves the pure gospel as expressed to Gentiles.
- As Gentiles we don't have an intuitive grasp of Jewish culture so we would have a hard time sorting out what was essential to the gospel from what was merely a Jewish cultural expression of the gospel.

- It's important that we don't preach extraneous things as if they were a part of the gospel.
 - Robert Tilton - pledge of allegiance
 - American flags on the altar
 - Sexual orientation?
- Am I drawing my identify from anything other than Christ?
- **Purpose of the Sermon (what listeners should do)**
 - Understand Galatians so far.
 - Be able to define the Gospel.
- **Understand Galatians so far.**
 - God wants us to think about things the way he does.
 - The Bible trains our thinking. - Deuteronomy 22:13-29
 - For Paul's letter to the Galatians to train us properly we have to understand how Paul was thinking.
 - What was Paul's main motivation for writing his letter to the Galatian churches? What was going on?
 - What accusations was Paul defending himself against (Frank Viola)?
 - What was Paul's defense?
- **Discussion Questions - Part 1**
 - Review Galatians 1 & 2.
 - What accusations was Paul defending himself against?
 - What was Paul's defense?
 - What does Paul want the Galatians to understand accurately?
- **Be able to define the Gospel.**
 - Don't use a word you don't understand!
 - Illustrations:
 - If I want to know something about my house's internal structure do I consult the current building codes or the codes that were in effect when my house was built?
 - Sariah, Leah, and Nunchuks - dangerous weapon or Wii video-game controller?
 - What do we have to do to properly understand the word "gospel"?
 - What does the word "gospel" mean?

- Who in the Bible is associated with this word?
- Why are "Matthew", "Mark", "Luke", and "John" called "gospels"?
- **Discussion Questions - Part 2**
 - Preparation:
 - How long was Jesus' public ministry? How could you figure this out?
 - As individuals take 5 minutes to list up to 10 key events you remember from Jesus' life.
 - Working as a team, take 5 minutes to assemble these events into a rough timeline of Jesus' life on earth (group by: pre-ministry, ministry beginning, early, middle, late, end).
 - Where in the Bible would you look to find a definition of the gospel?
 - Working as a team, develop a simple definition of the gospel. Base your definition on 1 - 3 specific Bible passages and explain your reasoning.
 - Would an unchurched person understand the definition you developed? If not, rework it for an unchurched person and get rid of any "churchy" words.
- **Discuss outcomes**
- **Conclusion**
 - You now have a working definition of the gospel. Use it!
 - Explain it to people who bring it up.
 - Evangelize the curious.
 - Don't just tell people the gospel. Show it to them in the Bible.
 - Use the Bible to start an extended conversation.
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- **Supplemental Notes**
 - What accusations was Paul defending himself against (Frank Viola)?
 - Paul was not commissioned by Christ:
 - Jerusalem is the center of God's work on earth.
 - The twelve apostles are the only authority of what the true gospel is.
 - The twelve apostles were commissioned by Christ himself.
 - Paul did not come from Jerusalem.
 - Paul was not commissioned by Christ.
 - Paul is a late-comer who was commissioned by the twelve.

- He visited Jerusalem shortly after his conversion.
- He spent some time with the apostles.
- They taught him the basic principles of the gospel and authorized him to preach it.
- Paul modified the gospel to make it more acceptable to Gentiles.
- Paul's gospel is deficient.
 - The Jerusalem leaders believe in and practice circumcision, observing the law and traditions - the "hard" parts of the gospel.
 - Paul is a people-pleaser - omitting the "hard" parts of the gospel.
 - Paul's gospel is not supported by the apostles or the Jerusalem church.
 - You need to believe in Jesus and obey the Law of Moses.
- Paul dissed Peter.
- Paul is inconsistent.
 - He doesn't preach circumcision to the Gentiles, but he preaches circumcision to the Jews.
 - Paul is a trimmer - he adapts the gospel to his environment.
- Paul's Defense:
 - Paul was commissioned by Christ:
 - Paul's apostolic authority is not subordinate to the twelve.
 - Paul's gospel is the "real deal" and complete.
 - Paul dissed Peter for good reason.
 - Paul is consistent.
- **Life Group Material**

- **Life Group Word Material**

These are sample discussion questions / topics. Your life group leaders may choose to adjust these questions, substitute new ones, or spend the Word section of the meeting in a different way altogether.

Scripture taken from the [HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION \(NIV\)](#).
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Galatians 1

Paul, an apostle — sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead — and all the brothers with me,
To the churches in Galatia:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles — only James, the Lord's brother. I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie. Later I went to Syria and Cilicia. I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they praised God because of me.

Galatians 2:1-10

Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. **I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles.** But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. [This matter arose] because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

As for those who seemed to be important — whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance — those men added nothing to my message. On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews. For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

Galatians 2:11-21

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles.

But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other

Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

"We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

"If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker. For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. **I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.** I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Discussion Questions - Part 1

- Review Galatians 1 & 2.
- What accusations was Paul defending himself against?
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- What does Paul want the Galatians to understand accurately?

Discussion Questions - Part 2

- Preparation:
 - How long was Jesus' public ministry? How could you figure this out?
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- **Scriptures For 5/19/2013 Life Church Sermon**

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Life Church Mission Statement

Our mission is to teach people:

to enjoy knowing Jesus without fear, inadequacy, guilt, or shame,
 to follow him together as his family,
 to function together as his body,
 and to work together to expand his kingdom.

Understanding The Bible

Unless otherwise indicated, scriptures are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV) Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. ®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Here, for your convenience, are the Bible passages for today's sermon at Life Church. We use mostly the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible so that you can read it in modern English. You may have been accustomed to reading or hearing the King James Version of the Bible, which uses older English (with words like "thee" , "thou", "thine", "believeth", etc.). Don't be alarmed - the passages are really from the Bible!

The Bible was originally written in three ancient languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. None of the people in the Bible, and none of the people who God used to write it spoke English. In fact, English did not even exist as a language when the Bible was written. The King James Version, first published in 1611, was a translation of the Bible from it's original languages into the every day English that people used back then - almost 400 years ago! They didn't just speak that way in church - they spoke that way with everyone. The King James Version was "modernized" in 1769, but, even so, English has certainly changed a lot since then! **We believe that if you're reading an English translation of the Bible it ought to be up to date - written in the English you speak every day. God wants you to understand his Word so that you can put it into practice!**