

Defending the Gospel

(Galatians)

May 30, 2010 AM

In the 1920s and 30s, the Fundamentalists and the Modernists battled over the essentials of the gospel. Harry Emerson Fosdick, a liberal Baptist pastor, kicked off the controversy by preaching a sermon entitled, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" Among the Fundamentalists who fought for the Gospel was T. T. Shields. In one of his sermons he warned, "In hell entire congregations will rise up and curse their liberal pastors who did not preach the gospel."

Like Paul in Galatians, true ministers of the gospel have stood for the purity of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

Chuck Colson led both Evangelicals and Roman Catholics to sign the Manhattan Declaration in November of 2009 to stand for the sanctity of life, traditional marriage, and religious freedom. While all of these are worthy goals, pastors like John MacArthur refused to sign because the agreement compromised the Gospel. From the document are these statements: "We are Christians who have joined together across lines of ecclesial differences," and "It is our duty to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Paul took an unpopular stand for the Gospel in Galatians, his Battle Epistle.

1. In chapters 1-2, Paul gives his personal response and defends his apostleship.

2. In chapters 3-4, Paul gives his doctrinal response and defends justification by faith alone in Christ alone.

3. In chapters 5-6, Paul gives his practical response and defends sanctification by faith.

In chapter one Paul begins by

- A. Expounding the Gospel in 1:1-5
- B. Condemning the False Teachers in 1:6-9
- C. Clearing his Name in 1:10-12
- D. Sharing his Salvation Experience

1) Our Sinful Past (1:13-14)

a) Paul persecuted the Church of God in 1:13.

- 1. First in Jerusalem in Acts 8:1-3
- 2. Then north to Damascus in Acts 9:1-2. Paul was bent on exterminating the gospel.
Illustration: Martin Luther before his salvation as a RCC priest and theologian hated the gospel preacher John Huss. "I counted it a sin even to think of him. I would gladly have furnished the wood to burn him. I would have felt I had done God a real service.

b) Paul promoted a religion of works for salvation in 1:14. Here is a contrast between salvation by grace and salvation by works in 1:14.

1. The Jews' Religion
 - a. Opposes the gospel
 - b. Persecutes believers
 - c. Based on Tradition
 - d. Works for salvation

2. Christianity
 - a. Preaches the gospel
 - b. Wins the lost
 - c. Based on God's Word
 - d. Salvation by Grace

2) Our Supernatural Conversion (1:15-16)

a. We are saved because God chose us

1. Why did God choose us? God chose us because "it pleased Him." "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor 1:21).
2. When did God choose us? Before our birth and even before the foundation of the world.

b. We are saved because God called us

1. Acts gives the outward call, "Saul, Saul." This is similar to God's call of Samuel in 1 Sam 3 "Samuel, Samuel."
2. God calls today through the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14)
 - a. The Holy Spirit convicts us of the sin (John 16:8)
 - b. The Holy Spirit persuades us (John 6:44) "No man can come to me except, the Father who has sent me draw him."

Conclusion: When D. L. Moody was at the height of his preaching ministry he held a great evangelistic campaign in Boston. There was a wife who was a Christian and her husband, a travelling salesman was not.