

Galatians 1: No Fine Print

5-Day Devotional

Overview of Sermon, Devotion Below

GALATIANS 1

GRACE IS FREE. THE GOSPEL IS ENOUGH.



INTRODUCTION — SETTING THE LETTER

- Paul planted this church, poured himself into it, and left
- While he was gone, people showed up with a message that sounded like Paul's — but with additions
 - "Sure, Pastor Paul said that — but if you really want to belong, there's more you need to do. Let me add to the gospel."
- This is the oldest move in the church playbook — the impulse to add
- Paul's response: no warm-up, no pleasantries, straight to curse
- The thunderclap opening isn't rudeness — it's a pastor on fire

THE FREEWAY AND THE TOLLWAY

THE FREEWAY (GOSPEL)

- Jesus built a road to himself and to heaven — and he built it for free
- Paid for entirely at the cross — nothing owed, nothing added, nothing required at the gate
- The freeway is the gospel in its pure form



THE TOLLWAY (NOT THE GOSPEL)

- Then somebody showed up and set up a tollbooth
- Didn't build the road. Didn't die for anyone. Just showed up with a collection bucket on someone else's infrastructure
- "I can't believe you're wearing shorts."



THE TOLLBOOTH HAS NO AUTHORITY — BUT IT HAS A LOT OF NERVE.

TWO WAYS TO GET STUCK AND REJECT GRACE



THE IMPULSE TO ADD

- You can only be a real Christian if...
- The unwritten dress code, political code, music code, theology code
- Nobody posts it on the wall but everyone feels it when they walk in
- Appointing yourself toll collector on a road you didn't build



THE IMPULSE TO SUBTRACT

- I've done too much, been gone too long, am too far behind
- Running a private tab on yourself for years
- Convinced the toll is real — and equally convinced you can never pay it
- Internalizing a tollbooth that was never supposed to be there



THE HONEST PASTORAL NOTE



Some of you walked in here this morning with a list. You know what a real Christian looks like — and you know who in your life isn't measuring up.



Some of you walked in running a tab on yourself. You know what a real Christian looks like — and you're convinced you're not it.



And some of you are just on the freeway. That's where Paul wants all of us.



The hardest truth: some people are both simultaneously — the strictest enforcers are sometimes the most privately convinced they're barely hanging on.

PAUL EXPERIENCED GRACE BEFORE HE WAS DESERVING



HE WASN'T JUST A RULE ENFORCER — HE WAS ON A MISSION



- Paul didn't see Christianity as a rival religion — he saw it as a theological attack on everything God had given Israel.
- The law was the gift. The covenant was the structure. Mount Sinai was the foundation.
- And here comes this movement saying the law isn't the point anymore — that a crucified criminal is the fulfillment of everything Moses received.
- From Paul's perspective this wasn't just wrong — it was dangerous. An attack on God himself.
- His violence was principled. He was the good guy in his own story, doing what faithfulness required.

ROAD TO DAMASCUS: THE MOMENT OF CONVERSION — THE COMPLETE INVERSION



- God didn't just stop Paul from doing bad things.
- God showed up and told Paul that the thing he was destroying in God's name — was God.
 - "Saul, Saul(Paul), why are you persecuting me? Not my people, Me."
- That's not a correction. That's a complete inversion of everything Paul thought he knew about faithfulness, the law, and God's will.
- Grace came on a road when he was on his way to do more damage.
- Grace didn't wait for Paul to clean up. Didn't wait for his reputation to recover. Didn't require Jerusalem to sign off.
- Grace was first. Everything else was catching up to what grace had already done.

WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

- If the tollbooth had been real — if there was a minimum — Paul never gets on the freeway. Ever.
- Paul is the argument against both impulses — the one to add and the one to subtract.



GRACE DOESN'T SAND YOU DOWN, IT AIMS YOU

PAUL BEFORE DAMASCUS: PRICKLY, ZEALOUS, DANGEROUS



PAUL AFTER DAMASCUS: PRICKLY, ZEALOUS, WRITING LETTERS THAT ARE THEOLOGICAL HAND GRENADES FOR THE GOSPEL



GRACE DIDN'T MAKE HIM A DIFFERENT PERSON — IT TURNED THE WEAPON AROUND.



GRACE CHANGES YOUR APPROACH — IT DOESN'T CHANGE YOUR PERSONALITY, IT FOCUSES YOUR STRENGTHS.



- The zeal that made him a persecutor became the zeal that drove him across the Roman world planting churches.
- (Personal note — that's me too)
- What are your strengths? Grace doesn't eliminate them — it aims them toward something worth spending them on.

THE CLOSE

- ✓ THE ROAD IS FREE. IT WAS ALWAYS FREE.
- ✓ IT WAS PAID FOR BEFORE YOU KNEW YOU NEEDED IT.
- ✓ GET BACK ON THE FREEWAY.



Day 1: Grace Without Additions

Reading: Galatians 1:6-10

“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all.” — Galatians 1:6-7a (NIV)

Devotional:

Paul’s astonishment at the Galatians reveals something profound: grace is complete in Christ alone. No human additions, qualifications, or requirements can improve what Jesus accomplished on the cross. Today, examine your own heart. Have you built toll booths on God’s freeway of salvation—for yourself or others?

Perhaps you’ve believed you need to earn God’s favor through perfect behavior, or you’ve judged others as “not Christian enough.” The gospel Paul preached was radically simple: Jesus paid it all. Nothing you do can add to His finished work.

Let this truth liberate you from performance-based religion. Grace doesn’t need your improvements; it needs your acceptance. What “additions” to the gospel have you been carrying? Lay them down today.

Reflection: What “additions” to the gospel have you been carrying—requirements you place on yourself or others? What would it feel like to lay them down?

Day 2: Grace Transforms, Not Conforms

Reading: Galatians 1:11-17

“But when God, who set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles...” — Galatians 1:15-16a (NIV)

Devotional:

Paul’s encounter with Jesus didn’t erase his personality—it redirected his passion. The same zeal that once drove him to persecute Christians became the fire that planted churches across the empire. This is grace’s beautiful paradox: it doesn’t grind you into a cookie-cutter mold but focuses your unique strengths toward kingdom purposes.

God designed you with specific gifts, temperaments, and abilities. Grace doesn’t demand you become someone else; it invites you to become your truest self in Christ. What are your natural strengths? How might Jesus want to redirect them for His glory?

Perhaps your analytical mind can serve in teaching, your compassion in caring for the hurting, or your creativity in worship. Grace transforms your trajectory, not your identity.

Reflection: What natural strengths or passions do you have that God might want to redirect for His purposes? How have you seen Him already doing this?

Day 3: The Freeway of Salvation

Reading: Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 6:23

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” — Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

Devotional:

Imagine a toll booth on a freeway you didn't build, collecting fees for a road that's already free. This is what happens when we add requirements to God's grace. Jesus constructed the entire highway to heaven through His death and resurrection. The price has been paid in full.

Yet we're tempted to install unauthorized toll booths: "You must dress right, vote right, act right, or believe exactly as I do." These additions aren't just unnecessary—they're offensive to the One who paid everything.

Today, consider: Are you trying to pay for what's already free? Are you demanding payment from others? The gospel invitation is simple: "Come, all who are thirsty, without money and without cost." Accept this gift freely, and extend the same grace to others.

Reflection: Where are you tempted to add a toll booth—either for yourself or for others? What would it look like to tear it down this week?

Day 4: When You Can't Afford Grace

Reading: Romans 5:6-8; 1 John 1:9

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." — Romans 5:8 (NIV)

Devotional:

Some people externalize the toll booth, judging others as unworthy. But many internalize it, convinced they can't afford the grace offered to them. Too many mistakes. Too much regret. Too far gone.

If this describes you, hear Paul's testimony: he was a murderer of Christians, yet grace found him first. Grace didn't wait for his reputation to recover or his behavior to improve. It simply showed up. The scandal of grace is that it comes to us at our worst, not our best.

You cannot out-sin God's grace. Your past doesn't disqualify you; it positions you to understand grace's magnitude. Whatever shame you're carrying, whatever secret keeps you from fully embracing God's love—bring it to the cross today. Grace is always free, always sufficient, always for you.

Reflection: Is there a part of your past or present that you've convinced yourself is too much for God's grace? What would it mean to truly believe that grace is for you—right now, as you are?

Day 5: Fighting for Grace

Reading: Galatians 2:15-21; Jude 1:3-4

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." — Galatians 2:20 (NIV)

Devotional:

Paul's passionate defense of grace wasn't theoretical—it was personal. He knew what it meant to receive undeserved mercy, and he refused to let anyone diminish it. Sometimes love requires us to fight for truth, to protect the gospel's purity from those who would burden it with human requirements.

This isn't about being combative or divisive; it's about preserving the life-changing message that saved us. In your sphere of influence, are you protecting the simplicity of the gospel? When you encounter legalism—whether in others or yourself—do you have the courage to call it out?

Grace is worth defending because lives depend on it. People drowning in shame need to know the water is fine and the entrance is free. Stand firm in grace today, and help others find the freeway to freedom.

Reflection: Where do you encounter legalism most often—in yourself, in others, or in a community you are part of? What would it look like to gently but firmly contend for grace in that space?

