**SO THAT THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL MIGHT BE PRESERVED**

Galatians 2:1-10

Key Verse 2:5

“We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.”

**Introduction**

 

This passage is continuation of previous passage. By sharing what happened during his visit to Jerusalem, especially between him and other apostles, Paul continues to prove that the gospel he preached was the true gospel. He also asserts that God gave him the same authority as the other apostles. Paul resolutely fought against false teachings to protect the one true gospel.

1. **Read verses 1-2. Who did Paul take with him when he went to Jerusalem and why? (1) What did he speak about in a private meeting with the church leaders? (2a) What did he want to be sure of? (2b)**

**1-1, Read verses 1-2**.

 Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. 2 I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain.

**1-2, Who did Paul take with him when he went to Jerusalem and why? (1)**

• Paul made another journey to Jerusalem 14 years after his former visit (1:18)

• According to the the book of Acts, Paul had visited Jerusalem a total of 3 times.

- First : three years after he was converted to meet Peter (Acts 9:26)

- Second : To deliver offerings from the Antioch church to the believers in Judea (Acts 11:29-30)

- Third : To attend the council at Jerusalem. (Act 15)

- Paul’s visit in this passage might have been his third. At the Jerusalem council the circumcision issue was discussed. During this time, he also met with church leaders, including Peter and James.

• For 14 years Paul preached the gospel independently. He preached the gospel with equal authority as the other apostles, without being called into question.

•  **Barnabas** – He was sent by the Jerusalem church to Antioch (Acts 11:22) He introduced Paul to the Jerusalem church (Acts 11:24) Paul and Barnabas were chosen by the Antioch church to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. They worked together for the same purpose.

• **Titus** – He was an uncircumcised Gentile believer. Paul called him ‘his true son’. (Titus 1:4) He was a good coworker to Paul and had a close relationship with Corinthian church. (2Co 8:23)

• Paul took Titus along with him to introduce him to the Jerusalem church.

• Paul wanted the Jerusalem church to see that he was neither ashamed nor afraid to own the gospel which he had constantly preached.

• Titus was by birth a Gentile and uncircumcised. Paul’s taking Titus as his companion showed that Paul’s gospel and practice were consistent. As he had preached the non-necessity of circumcision, and observance of the law of Moses, so he was ready to converse with those who were uncircumcised.

**1-3, What did he speak about in a private meeting with the church leaders? (2a)**

• In response to a revelation – Paul went up by revelation; not of his own idea, much less as being summoned to appear there, but by the order and direction from Heaven.

• Meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, he presented the gospel that he had preached among the Gentiles.

- He presented the gospel to establish agreement and unity with the Jerusalem church.

- It was important to make sure that both Paul and the Jerusalem church preach the same gospel.

- Paul knew that some people in Jerusalem were not grateful about the gospel that he had preached. But he was not afraid of presenting it. He presented it to the leaders privately and let them judge whether or not it was the true gospel of Christ.

- This was also remarkable love on Paul’s part. It would have been easy for him to say, “I’m right and anyone who disagrees with me is wrong, and I can’t wait to confront them publicly.” But he didn’t. He knew that being right didn’t mean he had to be rude.

• He chose to present the gospel in a private, rather than public way. He chose to present the gospel to the apostles themselves, or to the leaders among the Jewish Christians, rather than more openly to all. For when he came to Jerusalem, there were multitudes who believed, and yet they continued to be zealous for the law (Acts. 21:20).

**1-4, What did he want to be sure of? (2b)**

• And the reason for caution was to prevent him from running his race in vain and stirring up opposition against himself.

• He wanted to make sure that his work to preach the gospel might not be in vain due to any kind false teaching.

. Paul wanted to avoid unnecessary conflict with the leaders of the church in Jerusalem. Also, if false teachers were encouraged in some way by the leaders in Jerusalem, it would have undone Paul’s previous work of planting churches and raising disciples for Jesus. Then all of Paul’s labor would have been done in vain.

**2. Read verses 3-5. Why wasn’t Titus compelled to be circumcised? (3) Why did the matter concerning circumcision arise? (4) Why did Paul not give in to have Titus circumcised? (5)**

**2-1. Read verses 3-5.**

 Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. 4 This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. 5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

**2-2.Why wasn’t Titus compelled to be circumcised? (3)**

• Titus was a Gentile believer. But when he met the Jewish believers in Jerusalem, Paul didn’t compel him to be circumcised. No one in the Jerusalem church, including church leaders, told him to be circumcised either.

• In practice, Paul firmly adhered to the gospel which he had preached. Paul was a man of resolution, and would adhere to his principles; and therefore, though he had Titus with him, who was a Greek, he would not push him to be circumcised. He would not betray the gospel of Christ, as he had preached it to the Gentiles.

• It does not appear that the apostles in Jerusalem insisted upon circumcision. Even though they might allow the use of circumcision among the Jewish converts, but they were not imposing it upon the Gentiles.

**2-3. Why did the matter concerning circumcision arise? (4)**

 ***Some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.***

• False believers in the church who were still holding to Judaism argued that Gentile believers should get circumcised.

• By letting Gentile believers to observe the law and get circumcised, they tried to take away the freedom that the Gentiles had received in Jesus, making them slaves to the law again. They tried to bring the Gentile believers under bondage to Moses’ law.

• These false believers were rejecting the gospel and doing serious harm to the church and the gospel.

**2-4. Why did Paul not give in to have Titus circumcised? (5)**

 ***We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.***

- He didn’t comply with the false teachers’ argument at all.

- They did not give in to the false teachers even for a moment. Paul never compromised.

- Paul didn’t want his work to have been done in vain. So he refused to compromise with false teachings.

• Paul didn’t compromise, that he might preserve the truth of the gospel for the Gentiles.

- The truth of the gospel – ‘the true message of the gospel’ ‘the true gospel’

- Paul fought to protect and preserve the true gospel from the evil attacks for the the sake of the Gentiles.

- He wanted the truth of the gospel to continue on with the Gentiles, not being mixed together with Judaism.

**3. Read verses 6-8. How did Paul consider those who were held in high esteem and why? (6a) What did the leaders do to Paul’s message? (6b) What did the leaders recognize about Paul and Peter? (7, 8)**

**3-1. Read verses 6-8**.

 As for those who were held in high esteem—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—they added nothing to my message. 7 On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised,[a] just as Peter had been to the circumcised.[b] 8 For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles.

**3-2, How did Paul consider those who were held in high esteem and why? (6a)**

 ***As for those who were held in high esteem—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism***

• Those who were held in high esteem might have included Peter, John, James, or the apostles and other church leaders in Jerusalem.

• God does not show favoritism - God doesn’t support truth according to title or position. He doesn’t show any favor to certain people in dealing with truth.

• Whoever they were, it was no matter to Paul. He was equally an apostle as they were; for God does not call people on the account of any such outward merit or advantages.

• God supports people who deliver the truth of God regardless their position.

**3-3, What did the leaders do to Paul’s message? (6b)**

 ***They added nothing to my message.***

- He didn’t receive any additional message about the gospel from the leaders. The leaders didn’t add anything to the gospel that Paul had received from God.

- The apostles must have told him only what he had already known by revelation from God. So Paul didn’t consider himself inferior, but was equally qualified to be an apostle as they were.

- It means Paul taught the same gospel that the leaders in Jerusalem taught.

- The other apostles were fully convinced of Paul’ divine mission and authority, and acknowledged him as their fellow-apostle.

**3-4. What did the leaders recognize about Paul and Peter? (7, 8)**

 ***I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised.[b] 8 For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles.***

• Peter served mainly the Jews and Paul served the Gentiles.

• Even though Peter and Paul served different groups of people, the gospel they preached was the same. They taught exactly the same gospel to both the Jews (the circumcised) and the Gentiles (the uncircumcised).

• God worked through both Peter and Paul. It means God approved the gospel that both of them preached.

• They justly concluded that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to Paul, as the gospel of the circumcision was to Peter.

**4. Read verses 9-10. What did the leaders give Paul and Barnabas? (9a) What did they agree upon? (9b) What did they ask Paul to do? (10)**

**4-1. Read verses 9-10.**

 James,Cephas and John, those esteemed as 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 circumcised. 10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

**4-2 What did the leaders give Paul and Barnabas? (9a)**

. James, Cephas, John- esteemed as pillars – They were the top leaders of Jerusalem church. James was the chairman of the council of Jerusalem.

• They gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship - It means that the leaders accepted Paul and Barnabas as brothers in the Lord who had the same faith and agreed to the gospel that Paul and Barnabas preached.

• It was a symbol of their acknowledgment that Paul and Barnabas were equal with them. They showed their agreement to have Paul and Barnabas preach to the Gentiles, while they continued to preach to those who were circumcised. This would make their ministry more effective as they divided their work.

**4-3. What did they agree upon? (9b)**

 ***They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.***

- The leaders recognized that God called Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles, and they were called to the circumcised.

**4-4. What did they ask Paul to do? (10)**

 ***All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along***

• The leaders encouraged believers to help the poor continually. So the only caution from the leaders in Jerusalem was that Paul should remember the poor. In this case, these were probably the poor saints in Jerusalem, whom Gentile believers should not forget.

* Paul certainly did remember the poor in Jerusalem. He put great effort towards gathering a contribution among the Gentile churches for the sake of the saints in Jerusalem.

- Helping the poor with love was another way for Paul to express the gospel message.

- Their meeting ended in harmony and agreement. They approved the gospel that Paul preached along with his conduct. They fully embraced him as an apostle of Christ. They had nothing further to add, only that he would remember the poor, which of his own accord he was looking forward to do.

Acts 11:25-30 reads,

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, **26** 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.

**27** During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. **28** One of them, named Agabus,stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) **29** The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. **30** This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

**Conclusion**

 Paul proved that gospel he preached was the true gospel. The other apostles were in agreement and considered him to have equal authority as them. He never compromised with any false teachings, in order to preserve the truth of the gospel. May God help us to have absolute confidence about the gospel that we received and enjoy the freedom that God has given us through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**One Word: The same gospel**