

"Grace: Proven by its Power" Galatians 1:11-2:10

Paul's life proved that his message was from God. No man would have selected him as the messenger for this most important message. No other system could have transformed such a violent and self-righteous man. Paul's life proves to us that no one is beyond the reach of the gospel, and no one is beyond the power of God's grace in Jesus Christ. Do you believe this about yourself? Do you believe it on behalf of others?

Read 1:11-12. This is a divine message.

Only God's grace would **rescue, change, use** a man like Paul

My life proves my message (Paul)

I. Rescued by God's grace – 1:13-14

A. Enemy of God

διώκω- Persecuted; imperfect illustrates continual action;
characteristic of Paul's lifestyle

ὑπερβολή – Beyond measure, excessively

ἐπόρθουν (πορθέω) - To ravage, to destroy; soldiers ravaging a city;
imperfect tense again

destroy the church – Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2; 26:10-11; out of control

Irony – thought he was serving God; blaspheming God

John 16:2; "an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to
think that he is offering service to God."

B. Lover of religion. Pursuing empty ambitions – 1:14

Advancing in Judaism; not in love for God and others but in the
practice of my religion

Competitive

Rom. 10:1-3 (motive); establish my own kingdom of righteousness. So angry at Christians because getting in his way. Disrupting his system

C. Self-righteous enemy turned friend – 1:15

“well-pleased”; it gave God pleasure. Party in heaven.

1 Tim. 1:12-17; Rom. 5:8-10

NO ONE BEYOND THE REACH OF THE GOSPEL; don't give up. God loves sinners

II. Transformed by God's grace – 1:15-24

A. Indwelt by God – 1:16

4:19; Rom. 12 – metamorphosis?

B. Trained by God – 1:17-2:1

Some preaching during that 14 years; but not the leader of the movement; not life's work of planting churches among gentiles.

Joseph – slavery, prison

Moses – 40 years in Egypt; 40 years in desert

David – anointed, then back to the sheep

Jesus – 30 years as son and carpenter for 3 years ministry

Maybe you feel sidelined. God use me. Maybe God is digging the foundation deeper. Maybe you are serving, but He wants to dig the foundation deeper. God desires to use you.

III. Commissioned by God's grace – 1:15-16a

A. Set apart for service – 1:15-16a

From birth. Jer. 1:5

God grace was working on Paul's life long before Damascus Road

- Raised in a Greek culture; knew Greek language, thought, philosophy
- Raised in Jewish home
- Trained in theology by Gamaliel in Jerusalem

God has been lining things up in your life for service

Good things

Hard things; grace of God can pull you joyfully through abuse, divorce, physical illnesses, handicaps

“My grace is sufficient for you.”; grace is power

God wants to hold you up as a masterpiece of His grace; not your own accomplishments. We are often content with our own accomplishments.

B. Result: Did not hold his apostleship arrogantly - 2:1-10

1 Cor 15:8-10 and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He [the resurrected Jesus Christ] appeared to me also. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

- Independent from human agency; just like all other apostles. Each called directly by Jesus Christ. Not the person's choice
- Submissive
- Confirmed

Application

1. You are not beyond reach of gospel

2. You are not beyond power of grace

- Do I expect God to change me? Do I expect small things from God?
- Do you believe God can do that in the lives of others?
- Share your own story of God's grace in 3-5 minutes. Practice with a friend, spouse, roommate.

3. You are not disqualified from serving Jesus Christ

Not qualified for some places of service.

If God can use Paul, God can use you. Do you believe it?