RECEIVED BY REVELATION - *Galatians 1:11–2:10* | October 25, 2026

Have you ever been absolutely convinced you were right about something? Not pretty sure. *Certain.* You had the facts. You'd lived it. Nobody was going to talk you out of it. Until one day… you found out you were completely wrong. Anybody been there?

I actually asked my wife, April, about this recently. I said, "Babe, can you think of a time when I was absolutely convinced, I was right about something, only to discover I was completely wrong?" I know. I opened that door myself. She said, "Oh, absolutely. I just can't think of anything specific at the moment." And I thought, well, that settles it. After 23 years of marriage, she cannot come up with a single time I've been wrong. Which is exactly what it sounds like when someone is absolutely convinced, they're right.

Here's the thing, though. **K2 Being sincere doesn't make you right.** Being passionate doesn't mean you're walking in truth. You can be certain, committed, completely sold out… and still be heading in the wrong direction.

And that's exactly where we find a man named Saul. Saul was brilliant. Religious. Passionate. He knew the Scriptures. He was advancing beyond his peers. And he was absolutely convinced he was serving God. There was just one problem. **He was fighting against the very God he thought he was serving.**

And then everything changed. Not because Saul found Jesus. **Because Jesus came for Saul.**

The man who tried to destroy the church became one of its greatest messengers. But that raises an important question. **If Saul was so convinced he was right—and he was completely wrong—how do we know we can trust what he's preaching now?**

Last week, Pastor Derek reminded us that there is only one gospel. Jesus gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age, and nothing can be added to His finished work. So **K3 how do we know that gospel is true?** If it came from a man—even a sincere, passionate, brilliant man—then it's just another human claim. **But if it came from God, then everything changes.**

And that's exactly what Paul is going to show us today. So if you have your Bibles, turn with me to Galatians chapter 1, beginning in verse 11. And if you need a Bible this morning, just raise your hand. We'd love to get one into your hands.

[READ GALATIANS 1:11–17] [OPENING PRAYER]

Remember, Paul is writing to churches he planted. He preached the gospel, people came to faith in Jesus, and churches were established. But now other teachers have come in with a different message. They're saying, in effect, "Trusting Jesus is a good start. But if you really want to be fully accepted by God, you also need to keep the law of Moses. You need to be circumcised." In other words: **Jesus plus.**

And to make their case, they're challenging Paul's authority. Paul wasn't one of the original twelve. Did he really receive his message from Jesus? Or was he preaching a watered-down version of what the other apostles taught?

But look at the verse right before our passage. **Galatians 1:10 (ESV):** *"For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ."*

Paul isn't trying to win a popularity contest. He's defending his authority for one reason: **if they can discredit the messenger, they can rewrite the message.** And if you change the gospel, you change the message of salvation. That brings us to the first thing Paul wants us to understand.

We Didn't Invent It: The Gospel Is Revealed — Galatians 1:11–12

Look again at verses 11 and 12. **Galatians 1:11–12 (ESV):** *"For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, **but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ."***

K4 The gospel is not an invention. dreamed up, philosophy, brand, or attempt to start a religious movement. It **is not merely a human tradition.** Paul says, "I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ." verse 16. God was pleased "to reveal His Son to me." **Jesus is both the One who reveals the gospel and the One the gospel reveals.**

Pual is saying gospel's authority doesn't come from credentials, experience, or opinion. **It comes from Jesus Christ.**

And here's what I love about this: **K5 even the messenger answers to the message.** Paul already said it back in verse 8: "Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed." That includes Paul himself. **Paul isn't asking the Galatians to put their faith in Paul. He's calling them to put their faith in Christ.**

And church, that matters for us today. We've spent weeks talking about hearing God's voice and walking in step with the Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit who inspired the apostles' message lives in every believer and **the Holy Spirit will never contradict the gospel revealed by Jesus and proclaimed by His apostles.**

The truth is that t**he Spirit doesn't lead us away from Jesus, but deeper in the truth of Jesus.**

POINT 2: K6 We're Changed by It: Gospel Transforms by Grace — Galatians 1:13–24

Look at verses 13 and 14. **Galatians 1:13–14 (ESV):** *"For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers."*

Paul didn't need anyone to convince him to take God seriously.

Paul's problem wasn't that he didn't try hard enough. His zeal was devoted to the traditions of his fathers, and when God sent the Messiah, Paul fought Him. He had knowledge. He had devotion. He had zeal. **And he was wrong. Paul didn't need more religion. He needed Jesus.**

That ought to give us something to think about. Because sometimes the greatest danger to our spiritual lives isn't the obvious sin we're trying to hide. **Sometimes it's the very thing we're most proud of spiritually.** Our knowledge of the Bible. Our convictions. Our faithfulness. Our willingness to stand for truth.

Those are good things. But something happens when we begin to trust in them instead of Christ. We can become so committed to being right that we stop being teachable. So committed to defending truth that we stop loving people. So confident in our obedience that we forget how desperately we need grace.

So here's the question I want to ask: **Is it possible that the thing you point to as evidence of your spiritual maturity has become the very place where you're resisting the work of God?**

And that's what makes the next two verses so extraordinary. Notice who's doing everything in verses 13 and 14. *I* persecuted. *I* tried to destroy. *I* was advancing. *I* was zealous. Then verse 15 changes the subject. Paul doesn't say, "But when I finally understood." He doesn't say, "But when I became a better person." He says, **K7 "But when God…"**

Galatians 1:15–16 (ESV): *"But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles…"*

But when God…

Paul was persecuting the church, but God had already **set him apart**. Before Paul had accomplished anything, before he had built his reputation, before he had even taken his first breath, God had a purpose for his life.

Paul was advancing in religion, but God **called him by grace**. Not because he deserved it. Not because he'd earned it. He was actively fighting against the people who belonged to Jesus.

Paul was opposing Christ, but God **revealed His Son to him**. The Jesus he had been fighting became the One he would spend the rest of his life proclaiming among the Gentiles.

Paul wasn't working his way toward Christ. Christ came for Paul. He wasn't searching for a new religious experience or trying to turn his life around. **God interrupted his life with grace.**

And I wonder how many of us could look back over our lives and say, "But God…" I was going one direction, but God. I was building my life around things that could never satisfy, but God. I thought I had everything figured out, but God.

Maybe your story is dramatic. God rescued you from a life that was falling apart, and you remember the moment everything changed. Or maybe your story is quieter. You grew up in church. You knew the Bible stories, you knew how to pray, you knew all the right things to do. But somewhere along the way, you realized that being religiously active isn't the same as being spiritually alive.

Dramatic or quiet, the truth is the same. None of us could earn our way to God. **Grace isn't God's reward for your spiritual performance. It's God's gift to people who could never earn it.**

And grace didn't just change Paul's standing before God. It changed the direction of his life. After encountering Jesus, Paul went to Arabia, then back to Damascus. Only after three years did he go up to Jerusalem, where he spent fifteen days with Peter. Why does Paul tell us that? Because he's still making his case. He didn't get his gospel from the apostles in Jerusalem. Christ had revealed Himself to Paul years before Paul ever sat down with Peter. **His calling came before their recognition.**

And the evidence of God's grace wasn't just in Paul's words. It was in his life. **Galatians 1:22–24 (ESV):** *"And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only were hearing it said, 'He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.' And they glorified God because of me."*

These churches had never even met Paul face to face. But they had heard the news: **the persecutor had become the preacher.** And verse 24: "They glorified God because of me." **[Pause.]** Not because Paul was impressive. Because they could see what God's grace had done.

That's the order of the gospel. **God doesn't save us because we've already changed. He saves us by grace, and then His grace begins to change us.**

POINT 3: The Gospel Is Sufficient and Sets Us Free — Galatians 2:1–10

The same gospel that changed Paul's life was the gospel he refused to compromise. And in chapter 2, we discover just how much was at stake.

Fourteen years later, Paul goes up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and he brings a man named Titus along with him. Titus was a Greek. A Gentile. He had put his faith in Jesus Christ, but he had never been circumcised.

That might not sound like a big deal to us. But in the early church, it became a defining question. **Was faith in Jesus enough? Or did someone like Titus also need to become Jewish to be fully accepted as one of God's people?**

Titus believed in Jesus. He belonged to Christ. But some people insisted something was still missing. Jesus was good. Faith was important. But if Titus really wanted to belong, there was one more requirement. **Jesus plus.**

Look at verses 3 through 5. **Galatians 2:3–5 (ESV):** *"But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery—to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you."*

Notice Paul's words: **freedom** and **slavery**. **K8 Adding** requirements to the gospel doesn't make you more spiritual. It brings you back into slavery. And notice how strongly he responds: "We did not yield in submission *even for a moment*." Why so strong? Because this wasn't simply a disagreement about religious customs. It was a disagreement about what makes someone right with God.

If Titus had to be circumcised to be accepted, then Christ wasn't enough for Titus. **And if Christ wasn't enough for Titus, then Christ isn't enough for anybody.** That's why Paul wouldn't budge. Circumcision itself wasn't the ultimate issue. **The sufficiency of Jesus was.** And church, this is where Galatians gets **uncomfortably personal**. Most of us aren't arguing about circumcision. But we can still live as though Jesus isn't quite enough.

We say we're saved by grace, and then we start measuring our standing with God by how well we're doing spiritually. Had a good week? Read your Bible every morning? Prayed consistently? Served faithfully? We feel close to God. But miss a few days? Lose your temper? Fall into the same sin again? Suddenly we feel like we have to work our way back into His favor.

Without realizing it, **we've turned the Christian life into a scorecard.**

That's not the same requirement Titus faced. But it's the same dangerous instinct: treating our performance as the basis of our acceptance with God. So let me ask: **Have you begun to believe that God's disposition toward you rises and falls with your spiritual performance? [Pause.]**

Now, hear me clearly. Prayer matters. Scripture matters. Repentance matters. Obedience matters. We've spent weeks learning the rhythms of a Spirit-filled life, and I believe in every one of them. But those rhythms are not the price of admission into God's family. They're how we grow *because* we've already been welcomed in through Jesus Christ.

We don't read our Bibles to make God love us more. We open His Word because the God who loves us has spoken. We don't pray to earn a place at His table. We pray because, through Christ, we've been invited to come near. We don't pursue holiness to purchase God's acceptance. We pursue holiness because His grace is changing us.

K9 We don't practice spiritual rhythms to become God's children. We practice them because, in Christ, we already are. Jesus didn't die to give us a better system for earning salvation. **He died to accomplish what we could never earn.**

Now, in verses 6 through 9, Paul meets with the recognized leaders of the Jerusalem church: James, Peter, and John. And I want you to catch one phrase in verse 6. **Galatians 2:6 (ESV):** *"Those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me."* **Added nothing.**

They didn't hand Paul a new gospel. They didn't correct his message by adding the law of Moses. They recognized that the same God who entrusted Peter with ministry to the Jews had entrusted Paul with ministry to the Gentiles. **Different assignments. Same gospel.** And they gave Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship.

Now, remember the question we started with this morning? If Saul was so sure he was right—and he was completely wrong—why should we trust what he's preaching now? Here's your answer. Paul received the gospel through a revelation of the risen Christ. Peter and John had walked with Jesus through His earthly ministry. James was the Lord's own brother, who encountered the risen Jesus. These men knew Jesus. And when they compared the message Paul preached with the gospel they proclaimed…it was the same gospel.

Nothing to add. Nothing to correct. Just the right hand of fellowship.

And understand, Paul's gospel didn't become true when the apostles approved it. Its authority came from Christ. Their agreement confirmed that he was preaching the same message. **One Savior. One gospel. One people brought together by grace.** And then Paul includes one final detail. **Galatians 2:10 (ESV):** *"Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do."* I love that this is here. After refusing to add a single requirement to salvation, Paul doesn't conclude that what we do doesn't matter. He says he was *eager* to remember the poor.

Grace doesn't make us indifferent to good works. It gives us a new reason for doing them. **We don't serve to earn grace. We serve because we've received it.**

That's the freedom of the gospel. Not freedom to live however we want, but freedom from the exhausting burden of trying to make ourselves acceptable to God. Freedom to love people, to obey Jesus, and to serve without constantly wondering whether we've done enough. **Because Jesus has already done what we could never do.** We started this morning talking about being sincerely wrong. Saul was sincere. He was devoted. He was certain. **And he was wrong about Jesus.** He thought he was defending God's work, when he was actually fighting against it.

And then everything changed. Not because Saul finally figured everything out. **Because Jesus came for Saul.** So we asked a question: Where did the gospel come from, and why can we trust it? And Paul has answered. **K10 We didn't invent the gospel.** Christ revealed it, and even the messenger answers to the message. **We're changed by the gospel.** The man who tried to destroy the church became a messenger of the faith he once opposed. **And we can't add to the gospel.** The apostles added nothing to Paul's message, and we can add nothing to Christ's finished work.

Before we pray, go back with me to one verse. **Galatians 1:24 (ESV):** *"And they glorified God because of me."* These believers knew the name. They knew what this man had done to followers of Jesus. And now they were hearing that the persecutor was preaching the faith he once tried to destroy. They didn't praise Paul. **They glorified God.** That's what the gospel does. It changes a life in a way that points beyond the person to the grace of God.