

Gal. 1:1 Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),

1:2 and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:

1:3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,

1:4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

1:5 to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

1:6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,

1:7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

1:9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

January 11, 2026 Galatians 1:1-10

Sermon Title: "Christ's Servant"

[From Today's Sermon]

We have set this year's scripture as "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is faith expressing itself through love," and we are proceeding with our reading from the Book of Galatians.

What Christianity is and is not is clearly outlined from the very beginning of this epistle.

"Paul, an apostle—not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead." Here, his starting point is explicitly stated.

Paul had once been renowned as a disciple of the esteemed Gamaliel, actively persecuting Christianity.

But the realization that the very learning which had driven him to persecute the Lord Jesus Christ was itself a mistake came as a tremendous shock to him. Never again would he tread the path of error. He resolved to thoroughly understand and grasp the essence of the matter. He sought not a teaching crafted by humans, nor one tainted by human hands and distorted into a human-centered doctrine, but the very source handed down directly from God Himself. He began that struggle. This holds profound significance for us as well. It is not about knowing Christian things, but about knowing Christ Himself. We must thoroughly examine once more

what truly is Christ's teaching and what is not. Shall we begin this year by focusing on that very thing?

Good morning, everyone. I hear we're facing a once-in-a-decade alert-level snowstorm this holiday weekend. Please, everyone, be very careful. It started snowing suddenly this morning too. When it piles up, it does so deeply and quietly, transforming the landscape into a winter wonderland before you know it.

Last week's earthquake must have startled many of you. I hope you are all safe. I imagine the people of Noto have endured tremendous hardship since that New Year two years ago and ever since.

Now, we are opening a new book.

We have set this year's scripture verse as: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything. What matters is faith working through love." We are reading from the Book of Galatians.

What Christianity is and is not is clearly outlined right from the beginning of this epistle.

"Paul, an apostle—not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead." Here, his starting point is clearly stated.

Paul had once been renowned as a disciple of the esteemed Gamaliel, zealously persecuting Christianity.

Yet the realization that the very learning which had driven him to persecute the Lord Jesus Christ was itself mistaken came as a profound shock to him. Never again would he tread the path of error. He resolved to thoroughly grasp and master the essence of the matter.

He wanted to grasp the source handed down directly from God Himself—not man-made teachings, nor teachings distorted by human hands into self-centered doctrines. He began this battle. This holds profound significance for us too. It is not about knowing Christian things, but knowing Christ Himself. We must thoroughly examine once more what truly is Christ's teaching and what is not. Shall we begin this year by starting with that?

1:1 Paul, an apostle—not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead—

1:2 and all the brothers with me, to the churches of Galatia.

1:3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:4 Christ gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.

1:5 To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

This year, we wish to explore the essence of Christianity even more deeply. While we have long believed in God the Father of Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit, we desire to deepen this faith.

God the Father raised His Son Christ, the Redeemer, from the grave. Here lies an overwhelming victory. Here is the sign. Here is the reality of victory. We believe in the Lord of victory. By believing in the reality of the Lord who grants victory in our actual lives, we believe in the living Lord.

Our religion is not one that merely chants a mantra; it is a religion that brings real results. It is the religion of the Lord's resurrection.

Luke 17:20 The Pharisees asked Jesus, "When will the kingdom of God come?" He replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with signs to be observed.

17:21 Nor will people say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For the kingdom of God is within you."

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

14:18 Whoever serves Christ in this way is acceptable to God and approved by men.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Sadly, this world is not currently flowing in a way that prospers God's will.

But Jesus has rescued us from that torrent, freed us from the snare of sin and destruction, and redeemed us from the path of perishing. Herein lies salvation. According to this gospel, Jesus did not complete His work of redemption and then retire, nor do we simply receive it gratefully and stop there. Rather, we wait for Jesus, gazing intently upon Him as we live.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with

perseverance the race marked out for us.

12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

1 Peter 2:21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps.

2:22 Who committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth.

2:23 When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.

1:6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—

1:7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

1:8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!

1:9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

1:10 Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

How do we view this church?

To stray to a different gospel is utterly unthinkable. Have they run off into heresy? For us, that is unthinkable, inconceivable. Where else could we possibly believe, having abandoned the Scriptures and the salvation of Jesus?

Yet Paul also earnestly believed this: the temple was resplendent, and the people of God, Israel, the people of the Exodus, believed they were under God's protection. They harbored not a shred of doubt that their actions contained any error. But here lies the problem.

We face temptation. There is always a tendency to prioritize pleasing our own hearts over walking in God's way.

“Are you trying to please God? Or are you trying to please people?”

This creates another distorted, gospel-like substitute. God's church becomes reduced to a man-made church.

Paul, an apostle—not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead—a servant of Christ.

With this deeply engraved in my heart, I desire to walk in faith this year as well.

◇Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for today's worship. In this new year, protect us from all calamities. Deliver us from every error and establish us in the unshakable gospel. Guard us through the cold and snow. Lead all who suffer into Your salvation and peace. Bless our families and our neighbors. Use us for Your purposes. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.