

Gal. 1:11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

1:12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1:13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.

1:14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,

1:16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,

1:17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

1:18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.

1:19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

1:20 (Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)

1:21 Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

1:22 And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ.

1:23 But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy."

1:24 And they glorified God in me.

January 18, 2026 Galatians 1:11-24

Sermon Title: "Not from Man"

[From Today's Sermon]

"The gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any human source, nor was I taught it; it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ." We also saw this in the previous passage: "Paul, an apostle—not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead." Why does he emphasize this point so many times? He was so passionate about his teaching that he never wanted to make the same mistake again. He never wanted to experience that despair again—believing something was true, only to discover it was a complete lie and error.

Could he truly believe it? Was it certain? Could he stake his life, his very existence, on

following it? Would it be safe this time? He sought to verify it thoroughly. He did not curry favor with people, but observed from a distance, seeking whether God's work was present there—not human intent or human effort, nor something sustained solely by human connections, but whether God's work was truly there... He scrutinized it thoroughly, and after his seclusion, he met with Peter. He too was rebuked by the Lord for “thinking of human things, not divine,” and though he failed by denying the Lord three times, he was called “the Rock” in the Lord's grace. Our eyes also rest on the beautiful sight of the flock praising the Lord for the return of the former persecutor.

Good morning, everyone.

The weather forecast says another cold wave is coming starting the 20th. I hope it misses us, but the cold wave forecasts have been remarkably accurate lately, so it's truly concerning. Please take good care of yourselves and avoid catching colds.

Now, we have reached the conclusion of Galatians chapter 1.

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—

1:11 Brothers and sisters, I want you to know clearly that the gospel I preached is not of human origin.

1:12 I did not receive it from any human source, nor was I taught it; I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

What was Paul's mindset as he repeatedly emphasized the same point from the very beginning?

He was so devoted to his teaching that he never wanted to make the same mistake again. He never wanted to experience that despair again—believing something to be true, only to discover it was a complete lie and error.

Could he truly believe it? Was it certain? Could he stake his life, his very existence, on following it? Would it be safe this time? He sought to verify it thoroughly. Without trying to ingratiate himself with people, he kept his distance to observe: Is God truly at work here? Is it not merely human intention or effort? Is it not sustained solely by human connections? Is God's work genuinely present here...?

Paul stated this in verse 10:

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 am still trying to win people's favor, I am not a servant of Christ.

God led Paul to enter the very Christian community he had persecuted. Paul may have been stunned, wondering how he could possibly show his face among them. The truth was within that very group he had previously regarded as enemies. Yet he had dismissed it as a lie, persecuting and seeking to destroy it. Now, however, God commands him to live among them. What a strange twist of fate! It might have been easier if he had been told to go somewhere completely different. But to be sent to the very place he had been persecuting with fiery zeal just days before... How utterly humiliating.

1:13 You have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.

1:14 I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my ancestors.

1:15 But when He who set me apart before I was born and called me by His grace

1:16 revealed His Son to me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult any human being,

1:17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia. Then I returned to Damascus.

1:18 Three years later I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him for fifteen days.

I don't think this means he avoided the apostles because he felt ashamed.

He was zealous beyond measure, far surpassing all his contemporaries in the land in his zeal, growth, and depth. He is recalling his former self.

1:13 You have heard fully of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.

He poured his entire energy into it, beyond measure, completely off the scale, undoubtedly throwing his full weight behind trying to destroy the heretical teaching of Christ and its followers. That was his former way of life. He was far more zealous than anyone else. He was

the type to see things through to the bitter end. He was the type to push forward without compromise on the path he believed in.

“I was more zealous for Judaism than many of my contemporaries among my own people, and I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors,” he says, comparing himself to his peers, his rivals, so to speak. Isn't he implying that in his former life, he worked frantically, desperately striving to outdo his rivals of similar age, unwilling to be surpassed?

Furthermore, in verse 10, he asks, “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.” This suggests that in his former way of life, before knowing Christ, he was zealous to please people and win their favor.

He was capable, a disciple of a renowned teacher, and well-regarded by others. Within that, wasn't there a fierce ambition to surpass his peers? Hadn't many of his schemes borne fruit? Wasn't he the type who ambitiously desired to leap above others by comparing himself to them, striving and striving among people to achieve results?

If that was the case, when God compelled him to change direction, shouldn't he have adopted a strategy to win over influential people, especially given his history of malicious persecution, under the goal of succeeding in a new field? He was an active person, so he didn't seem like the type to mope around in seclusion for three years, unable to show his face. Yet he didn't do that. Why?

1:15 But the one who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace  
1:16 was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles.

He came to believe that even the darkest parts of his history—the events where he misjudged the truth and caused great harm—were all within God's guidance. This was a self that could not be placed in any favorable light, a self that could not show its face. The self that caused trouble. The things he had trusted with all his confidence, which had strayed from God—not entirely, but were nonetheless splendidly the product of human error. He was made painfully aware of the truly pitiable frailty and foolishness of misjudging truth inherent in human beings. He was made to realize, to the point of disgust, all the superficiality of being liked by others, being valued more than others, gaining fame, and taking pride in himself.

He must have desired to completely sever ties with his former way of life, casting aside the path of being noticed by influential figures, meeting people's expectations, being esteemed,

and excelling. He wanted to be taught by no one, to be noticed through no one, desiring only to be guided by God alone. That must have been the meaning of his three years of seclusion. He desired that God Himself would personally nurture this encounter and revelation, which began with Jesus' call, deepening it until it became an unshakable conviction. He no longer wanted to be deceived by human expediency. Even knowing he could skillfully climb to the top from the bottom, he didn't want recognition through such means. He longed to receive directly from God, to grasp the core truth, to never stray from it. That was his intense desire.

One senses his fervor to pursue not merely Christian things, but Christ Himself. This time, he earnestly desired to have his eyes opened to what he could truly believe in, without ever being deceived again. He longed to commit his entire life, stake his very existence, and follow without doubt the authentic, the genuine. He lived a life of prayer in the Arabian desert, longing even for Mount Sinai, tracing the Scriptures, and remembering Moses, to the extent that he felt life held no value if he could not grasp this. And God answered his seeking.

1:18 Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him for fifteen days.

This conversation with Peter lasted fifteen days.

Matthew 16:23 But Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me. You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of man." This is the same Peter who said he would die with Jesus, yet denied Him three times before dawn and wept bitter tears.

Peter undoubtedly welcomed his former persecutor as a fellow weak sinner, rejoiced in God's guidance, and shared with Paul all that Jesus had taught him.

I believe this is the fellowship of Christians. We are companions who share Jesus. There is absolutely no room for human calculation or hierarchy.

1:15 But the One who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by His grace

1:16 was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.

People are still sinners who make mistakes, but the Lord, who sees all this, forgives, heals, and teaches those who go against such truth by His grace, transforming them into those who live in truth. And God Himself guides them to do great work.

1:19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

1:20 What I am writing here is true before God—I am not lying.

1:21 After that I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

1:22 But I was unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.

1:23 They only heard that “the one who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he used to try to destroy.”

1:24 And they glorified God because of me.

It was not out of old grudges or enmity, but because they too, as believers in God, recognized God's great and mighty work and glorified Him. Such a God-centered flock has great harmony. Even among human gatherings, the church is God's flock under His guidance—a people whom God Himself leads. That is the church.

◇Prayer: **Heavenly Father, we thank You for today's worship. We are truly grateful that You Yourself have given us Jesus—the infallible Gospel, the good news we can truly trust and cling to. We thank You that You will personally protect us this week, unaffected by people or visible circumstances. Lead all those who suffer into Your salvation and peace. Bless our families and our community. Use us. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.**