Lesson 2: The Gospel Paul Received And Defended

Galatians 1: 11-24 English Standard Version (ESV)

11 For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.

12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

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

14 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.

15 But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace,

16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone;

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

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days.

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

20 (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!)

21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

22 And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.

23 They only were hearing it said, “He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”

24 And they glorified God because of me.

Galatians 2: 1-10 English Standard Version (ESV)

1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me.

2 I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.

3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

4 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

5 to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

6 And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me.

7 On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised

8 (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles),

9 and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

10 Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

Acts 9:19-22 English Standard Version (ESV)

19 and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.

20 And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”

21 And all who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?”

22 But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

1) Paul called and taught by God

Paul tells the Galatian believers that the Gospel he preached was given to him by God. He also recounts how God called him when he persecuted the church. All this for the defense of the Gospel.

1. Read Galatians 1:11-14
2. He received the Gospel by revelation of Jesus Christ. In v12 the word for revelation is **apokalypsis** (ἀποκάλυψις) - revelation or unveiling, something God makes known.
3. Paul had been a religious zealot deeply committed to Judaism, and was a persecutor of the church, causing havoc among the early church.

2) Called by grace to be the apostle to the Gentiles

God called and commissioned Paul to the Gentiles, and eventually met Cephas (Peter) and James in Jerusalem.

1. Read Galatians 1:15-24
2. In verse 17 Paul tells us that he went to Arabia to be taught the Gospel by Jesus Christ. This relates to Paul's conversion in Acts 9:19-22.
3. He was "set apart before I was born" or chosen by God. Paul knew that it was God's grace that saved him and also called him to be an Apostle.
4. Paul tells us the story of how he went to Jerusalem and met with Peter and James and sharing all what God had done in his ministry. People were amazed and glorified God for Paul's calling.

3) Paul accepted by the Apostles, preserving the truth of the Gospel

Paul recounts his visit to Jerusalem, where he presented a ministry report to the apostles, who affirmed his ministry to the Gentiles. Paul begins to share the dangers from false brethren.

1. Read Galatians 2:1-10
2. Barbanas and Paul visited Jerusalem to confirm their ministry to the Gentiles.
3. They defended the "truth of the gospel" which gives us freedom from bondage, sin, and the captivity of the Jewish Law.

4) Teachings for us today

1. God has called each of us for a specific ministry, just like he called Paul.

2. The Gospel teaches us that grace can radically redirect a life, as we serve God and others.
3. Nothing may be added to Christ's sacrifice and death as a requirement for justification (forgiveness).
4. Gospel unity does not require identical ministries, we can all do our part to fulfill God's calling for his church.