

Galatians 1:3-5  
Paul's prayer-wish for his readers

Purpose: To sharpen our focus on the God-glorifying death of Jesus Christ

Introduction: This is Paul's basic greeting similar to the normal letter writing of his day. What does he desire for his readers? How does Paul describe Jesus Christ? What does God the Father deserve?

- 1) The greeting—1:3-4 What Paul desires for his readers
  - a) The content of his desire for them—1:3a
    - i) Similar to the Greek culture—<sup>3</sup> *Grace* [χάρις] *to you*<sup>pl</sup> ...
      - (1) The normal Greek greeting was “joy” [χαίρειν]
      - (2) This grace is obviously not limited to unmerited favor for salvation. It is God's freely given favor, specifically His transforming power demonstrated in the lives of His redeemed image-bearers.
    - ii) Hebrew culture—*and peace* [εἰρήνη] (similar to Shalom)
      - (1) A state of well-being and spiritual prosperity that results from grace.
    - iii) The order is significant—grace always precedes peace; no grace, no peace; know grace, know peace
    - iv) Cf. Galatians 6:16 “peace and mercy”
  - b) The Source of what he desires—1:3b-4 *from* [ἀπό] ... (as equal sources)
    - i) God the Father—*God the Father* ...
    - ii) God the Son—*and our Lord Jesus Christ* (cf. 1:6),
  - c) Who is Jesus and what has He done?—1:4 <sup>4</sup> *who* ...
    - i) A voluntary sacrifice—*gave* [aor. act. ptc. δίδωμι] *Himself* ...
    - ii) A substitutionary sacrifice—*for* (on account of) [περί] *our sins* (NB the plural),
      - (1) Some Greek texts read ὑπέρ (on behalf of)
      - (2) The point is that Jesus Christ offered Himself as the one propitiation, so that He is also the source of grace and peace. Men are raised out of the state of sin when their guilt is forgiven, and the power of sin is broken within them; and both blessings are traced to the self-sacrifice of the Son of God.
      - (3) This verse cannot be used to determine the extent of the atonement.
    - iii) A purposeful sacrifice—*so that* [ὅπως] *He* (Christ) *may rescue* [aor. mid. subj. ἐξαίρέω] *us* ...
      - (1) Rescued us from what? *out from* [ἐκ] (the control of) *this present* [pf. act. ptc. ἐνίστημι] *evil* [πονηρός] *age* [αἰών],
        - (a) So don't get sucked back into it by these false teachers.
      - (2) This refers to justification, not sanctification.
      - (3) This refers to the atonement of a particular group of people.
      - (4) Believers are set free from sin's penalty, power, and pleasure. We have been set free from the anti-God values of this age. God has invaded

human existence in Christ in order to rescue people from this evil world.

(5) We await the final removal from this age at the Rapture.

iv) A submissive sacrifice—*according to* [κατά] *the will* [θέλημα] *of our God and Father,*

(1) Not a human plan, but the plan of the God who is also our Father.

This was not an experiment or a suddenly invented plan. It was according to God's eternal purpose that the self-sacrifice of Jesus on the cross took place.

v) Paul refers to the cross in every chapter of Galatians: 2:20; 3:1, 13; 4:5; 5:11; 6:12-14.

d) God the Spirit—He produces the fruit of peace in our lives (5:22)

2) The doxology—What does the Father deserve?—1:5 <sup>5</sup> *to whom* (the Father) *be the glory* [δόξα] *unto the ages of the ages* (i.e. for evermore, in contrast to this present evil age) [εἰς ὁ αἰών ὁ αἰών]. *Amen.*

a) Glory is what God possesses in His own being, and grateful men should acknowledge the legitimate weight of this glory as they see His glory demonstrated in His saving of men.

b) The Amen, when read publicly, would expect a spoken Amen in response from the congregation who is listening.

c) Is the “glory of God” simply a term I have learned about, that can roll off my lips in a way that sounds cool without any accompanying sense of God's incomparable greatness, His radiant holiness, His brilliant majesty, His righteous splendor, His redeeming greatness? (cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:6-7)

d) The Father does not love us because the Son died for us. Rather, the Son died for us because the Father loves us. The cross's origin is in our Father's heart. Every rescued believer is delivered because of the sovereign, gracious will of God. Salvation is thus removed from the will of man and is buried deep in the sovereign decree of God.

e) If all the glory goes to God, what comes to us is only grace.

3) The notable absence

a) There is no prayer of thanksgiving or commendation for them in this letter. Some have argued that this is evidence of Paul's anger or resentment toward these churches.

b) What is clear is that Paul has neither the time nor the inclination to thank God for the Galatians when their very identify as Christians hangs in the balance. [Moo]

4) **Take-home truth:** the Gospel Paul preaches results in glory to God alone because it is God who saves by judging Jesus in place of sinners.

Next time: We will look at Galatians 1:6-10.