



SERIES: We Are Free December 2022-January 2023

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Wednesday, December 7, 2022

Scripture: Galatians 1:6-7

TITLE: Stop Buying Counterfeits

Counterfeits are everywhere. Recently in New York, I saw street vendors selling Neekees instead of Nikes, Louis Kouton instead of Louis Vouton, and Bolex instead of Rolex. What amazed me was that people were spending money for these cheap and blatant knock-offs.

But the counterfeit game isn't just for clothing and jewelry. It even happens to Christianity. Paul saw it 2,000 years ago, and we're seeing it today. That's what we want to talk about as we turn back to the Book of Galatians. Paul writes this beginning in Galatians 1:6.

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—

Paul's words are rather frightening. He says "I am astonished." It means "amazed" or "bewildered." He is frankly shocked. He cannot imagine how these believers could so quickly desert Christ. He says not only are they deserting Christ, but they are doing so quickly.

Quickly here can mean "easily" or "soon," and sometimes both. Probably this is what was happening with the Galatian church. They were quickly abandoning the message of Jesus Christ and the true Gospel.

It's really quite amazing. Paul spent quality time with these people. Preached to them. Shared the Gospel with them. And yet it says after he waved goodbye and started the car, they had already abandoned the true Gospel.

Paul says that they are deserting him, who called them by the grace of Christ for a different gospel.

Here's the problem: the Judaizers, these legalists, were a problem for the church. But I think many of them may have actually understood that Jesus was the Messiah. They recognized that this was their long-awaited rescuer.

But the problem is they began to add requirements to the Gospel. They think they could improve the Gospel. The problem is there is only one true Gospel. And the moment you take anything away from it or, in this case, add one thing, it ceases to be the Gospel.

So what is the Gospel? It's that Jesus came, died, and rose again to pay for our sins. This salvation is a gift. It comes freely from God to those who turn from their sin and turn to Him. It's by grace through faith.

And this is why Paul was writing the Galatian church. People were saying, "Yes, it is by grace you are saved. But you also need to do these rituals, go and perform these ceremonies and add a little bit of your own work to make sure the salvation sticks." That's why Paul continues in verse 7

...not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

This is salvation by grace plus works. It's not even a false gospel. It's no gospel. Quite the remarkable claim that a false gospel, anything added to the grace of Jesus Christ, is no gospel at all.

These Judaizers likely understood who Jesus Christ was but wanted to alter the message. When they did this, it became a false gospel. The Gospel is good news. Anything else is bad news because it leaves you dead in your sins.

Today there are false gospels and false teachers everywhere we look. Whether they promote license, abusing grace to sin, or adding works to the grace of Jesus Christ, they are all false teachers and are all leading people astray.

It is my prayer that we will all carefully evaluate who we listen to and what it is we really believe about Jesus Christ and the Gospel He provides.

What is it that you have allowed to creep into your belief about the Gospel today? Eliminate it. Today reject the false teachers and the false gospel you may have believed and embrace that life-transforming and soul-saving Gospel. Because of Jesus Christ, you are free.