

## **Dr. Tim Gombis, Galatians, Session 3, Galatians 1:11-2:10**

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This is Dr. Tim Gombis in his teaching on the book of Galatians. This is session 3 on Galatians 1:11-2:10.

Welcome to this third lecture on Galatians. In this lecture I'm going to be covering Galatians 1.11 to 2.10, which really consists of two sections of text in 1.11 through to the end of chapter 1 to 1.24. Paul gives a report of his own gospel performance. He does elaborate the divine origin of his gospel, but I like to think of it as how Paul performs the gospel. Or, we could say it this way, how the gospel performs Paul.

Because what he's trying to get at is how his life has become a revelation of Jesus Christ. His life is basically a depiction of the gospel. He does that in order to help the Galatian audiences understand how the gospel wants to move into their communities, shake things up, and reorder everything.

So that's the first thing that we'll see. Second, in 2:1 to 2:10, Paul talks about his first visit to Jerusalem, how things went there, and his relationship with the so-called Jerusalem pillars that are proving influential in the lives of the Galatian communities.

So, let's first look at chapter 1, verses 11 to 24.

As I said, the divine origin of Paul's gospel, or what I like to call Paul's gospel performance. Paul's rhetoric here works on two levels. Really, on sort of a surface level, Paul, in this section, is articulating or defending the divine origin of his gospel and his apostolic ministry.

Paul did not cook up his apostolic ministry out of nowhere. He received a call from God, and that's why he's doing what he's doing. He wants the Galatians to understand that.

Furthermore, however, Paul is going to elaborate on his own life as a performance of the gospel. That is to say, when you look at Paul's life before and after his gospel call, you can see that he had a relationship with his Jewish heritage that went in one direction and had certain results. Now, it has had dramatically different effects, and we're going to see how those unfold.

So, he's telling his own life story because it is the result of the gospel. His life has become the result of the gospel. This section begins in verse 11 with three consecutive sentences that each begin with a conjunction.

The conjunction four. Now, when you see a conjunction like this, usually in my Bible classes, I talk about the wonders and the glories of conjunctions. I won't bore you with all that now.

But when you see these consecutive fours, they're doing something. Paul is typically explaining something or maybe he's drawing out the logic of a statement that he makes or maybe he's elaborating something or he's providing the ground of an assertion that he makes. This is a little bit unusual because he begins three consecutive statements this way.

In verse 11, he says, I would have you know that my gospel is not from man. Then, verse 12, for it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. Then, verse 13, for you heard of my former manner of life in Judaism.

Now, the connection between the first and second of those statements is supportive. That is, Paul is providing grounds for his claim. So, in verse 11, I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel which I preached is not according to man.

Four, and what I mean by that is I'm giving you proof here: I didn't receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. Then, the second four, the one in verse 13, the second connection, is going to be elaborative. So, in verse 13, Paul says four, you heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, etc., etc., etc.

So, he makes a claim in verse 11, I want you to know that my gospel is not according to man because it has a divine origin. Now, let me elaborate. Now, here's what I mean by that.

I'm going to go on and explain how my life is a revelation of Jesus Christ—or I should say how my apostolic ministry is the result of a revelation from Jesus Christ. Going back to our discussion of the apocalyptic, this is not necessarily a revelation in terms of new information.

In Galatians, there's a sense in which revelation has more of the sense of some kind of radical inbreaking into this present world order that has dramatic effects. So, life goes along for folks, and life goes along for Paul, and Paul's life is radically interrupted. It was almost like heavens were opened up, and Jesus Christ, by his spirit, just reached down, grabbed hold of Paul's life, and dramatically turned it around.

Something dramatic happened to him in his arrest on the road to Damascus. His whole life orientation is now dramatically different. Whereas at one time his life orientation was determined by all kinds of social dynamics in the human realm, now

his life orientation is oriented by a radically new set of dynamics that come from this new creation realm.

Because that's the realm in which Christ is Lord and which Paul is now living his life. So, how did the gospel transform Paul's life? Let's look at the dimensions of this difference. Paul talks about his former life in Judaism.

What is the nature of this former manner of life in Judaism? Now, I just want to be clear here. When Paul talks about the mode of life that he was engaged in, in Judaism, that is not the same as the modern religion that we know as Judaism. Paul was Jewish, and he was a Jew, but when he uses that expression, his former manner of life in Judaism, he is talking about the subgroup among Jews that was passionately committed to the purity of Jewish life, the purity of Israel.

He's talking about the group that was committed to seeing that all the Hellenizing influences were kept free, trying to sort of scrub clean the purity of Jewish life from any kind of outside cultural influences. So, he's talking really, I don't want to use the term militant Judaism, but passionate, zealous Judaism, which would have been a movement within this religious community, the Jewish community, that would have secured God's blessing for this community. So he's not just a Jew advancing in Judaism.

He's involved in this intense, zealous, coercive, passionate kind of. They end up kind of grabbing power and driving an agenda for the whole, the rest of the nation. Now, as part of that kind of group, what was his life like in that kind of group? Let's look at some of the features of what Paul did. What are the features of this kind of life? You've heard of this former manner of life that I was wrapped up in.

How I used to persecute the Church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it is so fascinating. Think about how Paul, as part of this community that is zealous for the purity and the blessing of Israel, thinks that he's actually going to secure God's blessing for Israel and realizes he's actually fighting God and trying to destroy the work of God on earth. He talks about how he was advancing in Judaism beyond his contemporaries, so he's more zealous than all the rest of them, which he actually does go on to say, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

I think it's interesting to say that Paul does not say that he's passionate for God, he's not passionate for Scripture, he's not passionate for God's glory. He's committed to the traditions, he's committed to all of the ways of life, the teachings, the body of knowledge that his group would have told themselves, we're committed to this, which secures our commitment to Scripture, or we're committed to this, which actually is the embodiment of our commitment to God. It's very easy to be so committed; it's easy for anybody who's zealous for God to think that their zeal for

God is zeal for God when it's actually zeal for maybe the inherited ways that zeal for God has been embodied in the past.

Subgroups within religious communities need to always be asking themselves if they're committed to tradition or committed to God. But all of this, everything that Paul's life consisted of, is basically what the human realm looks like. It's control, passion for control, a passion to shape God's reality on earth by old inherited patterns.

Paul was trying to fit what God's people should look like into accepted cultural expectations. He's basically trying to domesticate the work of God. Now, Paul would not have thought that that's what he was doing, but looking back, he can see that that's what he actually was doing.

But the rhetorical effect of all of this, that is, Paul's advancing in Judaism, persecuting the Church of God, trying to destroy it, zealous for the tradition of the fathers, the rhetorical effect of this is that his excelling in this kind of Judaism is actually fighting God's purposes, which would have come to a shock for that Paul. The post-conversion Paul understands that this is actually what his pursuit was all about. Well, in that life pursuit comes this revelation of God's Son in Paul, which is a very interesting way of talking in verse 15.

But when he had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, he was pleased to reveal His Son in me. This is what I mean when I say that this transformation is a performance of God, is Paul's performance of the gospel, because the transformation of pre-conversion Paul to post-conversion Paul is what the revelation of Jesus Christ is. Jesus is revealed in that transformed life.

I had struggled with this expression for a long time about God revealing his Son in Paul. And I thought I had wondered if that expression in verse 16, in me, could be better translated as God revealing his Son to me. It just seemed to make a whole lot better sense to me.

But I came to see that the revelation actually is a revelation that takes place within Paul. I should say in Paul. Now, this is not the internalized sense in which we all have Jesus in our hearts, or Paul has Jesus in his heart.

What he's saying is that his body is basically a site that, at one time, embodied the glory of Paul's ancestral tradition. It is now the glory of Christ. His body is a site, and his life is a site that has been taken over by Jesus Christ and is now a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Let's look at Paul's life after his conversion and see some of the facets that he mentions to see what this revelation actually looks like. We get God's call of Paul

here in verse 15. God called me through his grace and was pleased to reveal his Son in me.

This revelation in Paul involves the commission to preach the gospel among the nations. Now, this is a dramatic reversal for Paul. Remember, his advancing within Judaism is that small, isolated, passionate, zealous group within the nation that is keeping itself pure and unstained from all kinds of foreign cultural influences and wants to be an agent of the purification of the rest of the nation, to keep it free from all foreign influences.

Because what's outside the borders of Israel? Sinners! That's the location of God's judgment. Now that Paul has been called by God, he's going to have Jesus himself revealed in his body, which is going to be part and parcel of his preaching the gospel to the nations. So, think of that transformation.

Commitment to a narrow agenda that was to the exclusion of the nations, now preaching the gospel to the nations. That is the revelation of Jesus Christ. Think about the implications of this for so many relationships across national boundaries.

How do Christian people regard those of other ethnic groups? How do we regard people of other nations? How do we regard contemporary debates about immigration? Aliens, illegal aliens, legal aliens. How do Christians think about all these issues? If it's the case, the revelation of Jesus Christ for Paul involves the transformation of how he regards people on the international scene for God. Here's the effect that this transformation and revelation had on Paul's life.

When we look at the actual verbs that unfold in this context, when this happened, when God was pleased to reveal his son in me, here's what Paul did do or didn't do. He did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. Very interesting.

Think about the rhetorical effect of that. He did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. Paul did not immediately go down to Jerusalem and talk to the Jerusalem leaders.

So, he's kind of associating Jerusalem with a humankind of construction. Very interesting rhetorically. Very subtle.

Paul also says, I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. So, I should have put the map back up here, but if you think about where Jerusalem is geographically, and he is up there in Damascus, he waited three years before he went down to Jerusalem. If you just think about geographical movement and the problem there in Galatia, they have this influence from the Jerusalem church, which is basically trying to get Galatian Christian life oriented around Jerusalem and oriented around the pillars of Judaism.

And Paul is trying to say God is not cooped up there in Jerusalem. The gospel is about the nations. God loves Jerusalem and Jews and the land of Israel, and he loves Rome, he loves Arabia, he loves Egypt.

God is on an international agenda in his work of redemption in Christ, and Paul's life is an embodiment of that transformation. So, when he is transformed, and when part and parcel of Jesus is revealed in Paul, there is no urgency to go to Jerusalem because that's not the center of God's new work. But rather, he stays there, he goes away to Arabia, and he returns once more to Damascus.

I think that by Arabia, Paul just means Syria. He's not going out to the desert, but I think that Paul actually uses the term Arabia because he knows that it will be a bit more inflammatory to the audience, to the Jewish Christian audience there in Galatia. Again, the geographical work of the gospel is not oriented around Jerusalem.

It's going in every different direction. Whereas previously, Paul's life had been thoroughly oriented around Jerusalem and around the purification of Judaism, now it's going in all these different directions. Paul does mention that, at one point, he did go to Jerusalem.

That was three years after his conversion of verse 18. Then, three years later, I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and I stayed with him for 15 days. I was only there for three weeks.

Sorry, I was only there for two weeks. Only then, after three years, did he go to the center of Jerusalem. Verses 19 and 20, it's interesting, Paul says, but I did not see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

Now, in what I'm writing to you, I assure you before God that I'm not lying. It seems that verses 19 and 20 are in there because these agitators, the teachers of missionaries, whatever you want to call them, the teachers there in Galatia that are from Jerusalem could be saying something like, you know, Paul's gospel is just cooked up from nowhere. He's not authorized by the Jerusalem leadership because when we were there, we never saw him.

Surely if he was being commissioned, we would have seen him there. So, Paul can say, perhaps he needs to say, you know, I was only there for two weeks and I wasn't going around, sort of, you know, on a public relations kind of a show. Well, Paul continues his recounting of his performance here in verse 21, when he says, Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, again, going in a different direction and in different directions than having a life oriented around Jerusalem.

Yet, what is the payoff? What's the net payoff of what's happening as a result of Paul's life? Even though he was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea, which were in Christ, but only they kept hearing. He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy, and they were glorifying God because of me. Basically, in Judea, Paul's transformed life and his new mission of preaching the gospel among the nations is resulted in churches in Judea glorifying God. So again, what Paul is doing here in verses 11 to 24 of chapter 1 is twofold.

He's putting the teachers there in Galatia back on their heels. He's offering an explanation of what he's been up to. He's kind of a little bit of a defensive measure in explaining his relationship to the Jerusalem church.

But beyond that, it's a theological account from a gospel perspective of what life looks like that has been taken over by Jesus himself. Commitment to historical ancestral heritage, thinking that that commitment is also a commitment to God, is now being transformed into a genuine commitment to the gospel, not even a commitment to the gospel, but just being taken over by the gospel, resulting in international ministry. So, narrow focus, coercive, fighting God, international Jew-Gentile service resulting in the glory of God.

And Paul's hope here, just like in a lot of his letters where he gives a personal account, is that his audience will begin to think, okay, we see Paul's transformation, we see what the gospel has done in his life, and that's a model for how the gospel needs to have an effect on our lives, on our community life. And what Paul wants to see happen for the Galatians is that they become a community of non-Jewish Christians who do not have a life that is oriented around Judaism like the teachers want them to have, but that they have a life that's oriented around Jesus, that is in touch with Jerusalem, but not oriented by Jerusalem. So, thinking about how the gospel transforms a life, we can just draw a couple of lessons here.

Life is not oriented by the old world and the old ways. Paul had received a heritage, but his life was not oriented in those ways. Furthermore, community life and life in Christ are lived in response to revelation from God, not in response to human wisdom.

It's not oriented by human wisdom. And, of course, a life like this results in the glory of God on the part of the Church that hears of this kind of transformation. If we just stop, and this is what I would normally do with classes on Galatians, but if we just stop here and think about a couple of questions, especially because these come up in the history of the study of Paul, texts like Galatians and a few other texts in the New Testament have been pivotal, tragically, in the developing anti-Judaism that has grown up in the Church and among Christians over the last 2,000 years.

Is Paul, however, being anti-Jewish? Can we say that Galatians, especially some of the statements that Paul just makes even in chapter 1, are anti-Jewish statements? Do they betray an anti-Jewish sentiment? I have to say, I don't think so. I don't think that there are any grounds for saying that Paul is anti-Jewish here for several reasons. First of all, Paul is not talking about a former manner of life in the religion Judaism.

Remember, Judaism is used very much like it's used in the Maccabean literature to talk about a subgroup of Jews who are passionately committed to the purification of Jewish life. I don't even want to say Judaism at large because it's not thought of as a religion, but they're passionately committed to the renewal and purification of a Jewish way of life. Paul betrays a heartbroken love for his kinsmen according to the flesh, as he says in Romans 9. He sees that that former passion for the purification of his people is misguided, and that's what he turns away from.

There's no anti-Jewish rhetoric here. Furthermore, he wants to say that his life is no longer oriented by and dominated by Jerusalem. It doesn't take its geographic orientation point from Jerusalem.

However, he does go there. He wants to be on good terms with the Jerusalem leaders. So, just to say, as we make our way through Galatians, we may revisit that question again.

There's nothing anti-Jewish about this text to this point. All right, let's move on and think a little bit about what's going on in Galatians 2, 1 to 10. Actually, before I do that, let me take a step back a little bit here and put this into an apocalyptic framework.

If we think about the framework that I had just used in a slide in our previous lecture, I had a scenario like this where we live at the crossover of the ages here. I had said that this is really the present evil age. I'll try to write so that you can see what I'm actually writing up here.

We might say that this is the old humanities, which is the language that Paul uses elsewhere. This is what we have been delivered out of by the cross. The church has been delivered out of this cosmic realm by the cross, and the cross is the means by which God created this new realm, the new creation of the cosmic mode of existence.

When the cross-claims our lives, the cross is the means by which we are brought into this new realm of existence. Paul's aim in most of his letters when he talks about this sort of dynamic, and he'll speak about this throughout Galatians, Paul's aim is to get his communities to have their lives fully oriented around their identity as inhabitants of the new creation and not have their lives oriented by their ongoing connection



with the present evil age. Paul does recognize that churches inhabit this kind of slice of life where we live at the overlap of the ages.

What Paul would want to see here, I think, is his life within that subgroup that he calls Judaism. In my opinion, he was involved in a mode of life that was thoroughly oriented by the present evil age. Now, I think this is also another way in which we can say that Paul's rhetoric is not anti-Jewish.

He loves and is grateful for his Jewish heritage, but his membership in that subgroup he sees as sort of a mode of life that was working against God's purposes. It was not necessarily a doctrinal problem, but it was a life orientation problem because this was a coercive mode of life. It was power-grabbing.

It was power-seeking. It set him against other people. It's interesting that he talks in terms of how he was advancing beyond many of his contemporaries because he set himself in competition with other people.

Life in this realm is generative of dynamics of destruction, power dynamics, and dynamics of destructive competition. It led Paul to construct an identity where he saw himself as better than other people. Other people needed to be imitators of him and his achievements or whatever.

All of that is done away with as Paul is crucified with Christ and brought into this new creation age where he now takes on a mode of love for others, service, humility, inhabiting the death of Christ. In fact, his big question now is how can life as Paul look like the cross. When Paul lives a life of power delegation, power surrender, service to others, love for others, and inhabiting the cross, when he lives that kind of cross-shaped life, that kind of life is generative of even more resurrection power. That kind of life is generative of the blessing of the presence of God.

Paul wants his communities to know when you take on lives shaped by the cross and you inhabit your identity shaped by the cross; you enjoy even more resurrection power in your communities that brings about renewal, restoration, redemption, unity, mutual rejoicing, and the glorification of God. Just to say, by way of appropriation here, especially among churches, I think we need to be very, very careful as Christian people to hold loosely the institutional aspects that kind of creep into Christian existence. Denominational loyalties, doctrinal heritage loyalties, my church, my institution, my seminary, my sort of theological orientation.

It's very easy for me to have loyalty and develop a passion for a subgroup within the larger Christian church and then to kind of construct my identity based on my loyalty to that subgroup. I think that my passion for my denomination reflects my love for God and that somehow will invite even more of God's blessing. Realize that

institutions can be for our blessing and joy, but institutions can also become agents of the dynamics of the present evil age if we don't regard them properly.

We have to make sure that our identities are genuinely shaped by the cross so that if I see people of other denominations, how do I regard them? Siblings in Christ, sisters, brothers in Christ, partners for ministry, neighbors that I can seek to bless and be blessed by. Those are different ways of regarding institutions or perhaps my denominational loyalty or perhaps how I regard myself theologically among other people who might differ with me. Think about these different postures, how Paul is an illustration of a destructive posture toward others, and how posture toward others can be far more fruitful.

So, let's move on to talk about Galatians 2, verses 1 to 10. And here, Paul is going to talk about how his gospel and his apostolic commission are not from man but from God. And this especially has to do with his relationship to the Jerusalem leadership.

First of all, let's talk a little bit about Barnabas and Paul and how they took Titus up to Jerusalem as a test case for their gospel. Paul is again recounting, he's in the middle of recounting this narrative of transformation. He says that he did not go up to Jerusalem again except after an interval of 14 years.

He went with Barnabas, taking Titus along with them. Again, this is interesting because Paul says, I only went up there because of a revelation in verse 2. It was because of a revelation that I went up. So again, Paul is portraying his new life narrative as a constant response to hearing from God.

So, if you have objections to Paul's gospel or if they're in Galatia, that's a revelation from God's problem, not a Paul's apostolic, you know, Paul is an apostle issue. So, he goes up to Jerusalem in response to a revelation, and he goes there to submit to them his gospel to the Jerusalem leaders. Now, this is not Paul submitting his gospel to the Jerusalem leadership to get their approval for what he's preaching.

As he's talked about elsewhere, he knows that his apostolic commission and the gospel is preaching is a revelation from God. That's not an issue. He did not get his gospel from men.

He got it from God. However, Paul does mention that he submitted it to them for fear that I might be running or had run in vain. This is not to say lest I had preached the gospel all wrong.

What he wants to do is to make sure that his apostolic preaching is going to result in the unification of the Jewish church and the non-Jewish church. He said that it's going to result in one body of Christ, and he does not want to see his gospel ministry result in the bifurcation of the Christian church. So, he would be running in vain if

there was this sort of abiding ongoing fissure between his ministry and the ministry of the Jerusalem leaders.

Paul mentions in verses 3-5 that there was pressure to have Titus circumcised. So, they brought Titus along with them to Jerusalem as sort of a test case. He is a Gentile, so how is Jerusalem leadership going to regard this Gentile? Well, the Jerusalem pillars didn't pressure him.

Here he is thinking in terms of Peter and James and John, other leaders of the Jerusalem church. They provided no pressure to have Titus circumcised. So, Paul and the Jerusalem leadership are on exactly the same page.

However, some pressure was brought to bear by some false brothers. Who are these false brothers pressuring Paul and Barnabas to have Titus circumcised? Well, these are most likely Jews who are Christians, who are from the same group as those that have gone up to Antioch previously and caused trouble into the Jerusalem council. These are probably from the same group of missionaries who have gone up there to Galatia and are causing all the trouble there in Galatia.

Paul calls them false brothers, which is pretty serious for Paul to call them this. Is that a result of Paul being pretty fired up as a result of how troubled he is by this situation? I'm not sure if I want to weigh in on that. That's just a pretty serious charge, a pretty serious thing for Paul to say about people who thought differently than him about this.

But Paul mentions the truth of the gospel there in verse 14. It's very interesting when he says, But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, the truth of the gospel, that led to his confrontation of Peter, whom he calls Cephas here, in verse 14. The truth of the gospel.

What I want to point out here is how it is that the truth of the gospel is mentioned very specifically in a context where Paul is speaking about the uniting of Jew and Gentile in one family in Christ. So, the truth of the gospel is very specifically having to do with God building one multi-ethnic, multi-national people in Christ. Again, going back to contemporary relevance, the Christian church cannot be in a position where they are giving some consideration to how the gospel might have relevance to ethnic differentiation, issues of immigration, issues of racial diversity, racial tensions, racism.

The Christian church can't be in a position where we're just sort of thinking about this. The Christian church has to be in a position where we see the truth of the gospel as having everything to do with all those issues. Because this is how Paul saw it.

When we don't understand that God is building this one multi-national people and we prioritize one group over others, Paul sees that as an issue having to do with the truth of the gospel. Having seen this, Paul basically confronts Peter and says, I'm sorry, I've lost my place here. Going back to verse 5, Paul says that these false brothers, Barnabas and Paul, did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

That's what I was getting at. When he mentions in verse 5 the truth of the gospel, that is repeated again there in verse 14, the truth of the gospel. They did not yield to them for even an hour so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

So, Paul ties together that confrontation in Jerusalem with the situation in Galatia. If Paul and Barnabas had yielded in the situation with Titus there in Jerusalem, that would have been an indication that worldwide this is what the gospel is. You've got to be Jewish and you've got to be circumcised.

In Father Mosaic law, you cannot remain in whatever condition that you are in. You've got to be Jewish in order to be saved. Paul sees that as an issue of the truth of the gospel that has to do with ethnic differentiation.

So, they resist having Titus circumcised, which is kind of interesting because in another context, Paul has Timothy circumcised. So, what is the deal there? This is in Acts 16, verses 1 to 3, where Paul brings along Timothy as a partner in his ministry but only after circumcising him. Why is Timothy circumcised, but Titus is uncircumcised? Well, it seems to me that Paul has Timothy circumcised because he's a Jew, and that would be an offense when Paul brings Timothy on mission.

People are going to be offended by Timothy's non-circumcision. And that's a ministry issue. That's just being fully honest and respectable; it's kind of an issue.

But he resists having Titus circumcised because if Titus is circumcised, that's an offense of the cross kind of an issue. It is going to be an offense that God is including others based on faith in Christ alone without any reference to the Mosaic law. That will be an offense to Christian Jews, and that's the offense of the gospel.

The inclusion, the radical inclusion of people who are different than me, people who I've historically regarded as sinners. So that's why Timothy is circumcised. That's a ministry wisdom issue.

Titus is not circumcised because that's an offense of the gospel kind of an issue. So, moving on to verses 6 through 10 of chapter 2, Paul now mentions how the Jerusalem leaders moved to affirm Paul. It's interesting.

Paul uses some slightly sarcastic language here when he calls them pillars. But those who were of high reputation, those who were of reputation in verse 6, they contributed nothing to me. He goes on in verse 9, saying that they were those people who were reputed to be pillars.

Why does he seem to sort of speak about the Jerusalem leadership in this sarcastic way? Is Paul betraying animosity toward Peter, James, John, others of the Jerusalem leadership? In my opinion, I don't think so. I think what Paul wants to do is sort of take a little bit of a dig at the Galatians because of what he understands is their tendency to hero worship. These high-flying, very, very interesting, and well-connected people have come from the Jerusalem church, trotting credentials out, and the Galatians are taking this in.

And this gets at all the notions having to do with image. So, if I seem to be somebody, if I appear to have good connections, perhaps I'm going to be more apt to be listened to than somebody who isn't. Paul is taking a little bit of a dig at them for this, these big shots, these teachers from among the Jerusalem pillars.

Paul, on the other hand, when he speaks to the Galatians, he's sort of constantly highlighting the gospel itself. He makes himself less and less of an issue, which is interesting because that's a ministry mode based on new creation realities, based on doing ministry from the posture of the cross. Something to think about.

In my opinion, we see a lot of examples in our world of ministry modes that are shaped by corrupted ways of thinking and corrupted postures. They come from the present evil age where we tend to have a whole lot more respect for people based on their credentials, based on their personal charisma, based on all their accomplishments. It's not a Pauline way of thinking about ministry.

At any rate, Paul is not going after the Jerusalem leaders, but he is taking a little bit of a dig at the Galatians, who are perhaps given to succumbing to credentialization instead of the truth of the gospel. But Paul says that these Jerusalem pillars added nothing to me. There was affirmation.

They contributed nothing to me, but on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the truth of the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised, and recognizing the grace that was given to me, they gave me the right hand of fellowship. So, there's affirmation based on recognition of the work of God, which is kind of interesting. I'm trying to see in verse 9, recognizing.

Recognition, or I should say seeing, is oftentimes an apocalyptic tip-off word. So, people who are involved in apocalypses are seers. They have wisdom.

They have insight. Usually, verbs of knowledge or sight or hearing are connected with apocalyptic situations. In this instance, the revelation of God in Paul, of God's son, is recognized and seen and affirmed by the Jerusalem leadership.

So, this is another argument that Paul is giving to the Galatians. They are the ones affirming his credibility because they recognize God's call on his life and God's commissioning him with an apostleship. It is interesting how Paul sort of closes this section and then moves; before we move into the next one, they did ask Paul for one priority.

Paul says this is the priority that he was also eager to set as a number one priority. The only thing that the Jerusalem leadership added was they asked us to remember the poor. The very thing I was also eager to do was very, very interesting.

If you think about how the two aspects of the early church, the mission among the Gentiles and the mission there among the circumcision in Jerusalem, there was that tension, but they're being held together. And the one thing that these two wings agree on is the priority of the poor. Again, think about how it is that in our current wider set of discussions in our world, focused on economies, focused on growth, focused on wages, etc.

It's a temptation to want to say, well, what possibly to politics can Scripture have any relevance? For God's people, the poor is a massive priority. Richard Hayes says that it is very likely Paul has Deuteronomy 15, verses 7 through 11, in mind. Keep in mind that Paul has a Scripture-shaped mind.

Thinking about anything, he is ranging back and forth in Scripture, thinking about texts that can be brought to bear. So, very likely, Hayes is dead on here. This is what Deuteronomy 15:7 through 11 says.

If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns, in your land which the Lord your God has given you, you shall not harden your heart nor close your hand from your poor brother. But you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his needs and whatever he lacks. Beware that there is no base thought in your heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of remission, is near, and your eye is hostile toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing.

Then he may cry to the Lord against you, and it will be a sin in you. You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings. For the poor will never cease to be in the land.

Therefore, I command you, saying, You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land. Some people think that this is a reference to the collection, which was part of Paul's ongoing mission to make sure that the poor in Jerusalem were sufficiently taken care of. But it very well may also have to do with, and I think it's more likely, having to do with a general orientation for ministry, that wherever the Christian church is planted, wherever there are Christian communities, Paul wants them to understand that there is this priority of taking care of the poor.

Again, another way in which resurrection life experienced by communities of God's people has everything to do with holistic modes of existence. It's not the case that these are habits and practices that we should be doing because God's done so much for us. It's more the case that we enjoy the presence of God fully inhabiting our communities because we're part and parcel of the new creation.

One strategic way for our full enjoyment of that is through practices of generosity and hospitality to those who have nothing and who are social outcasts. So, proceeding with Paul's argument so far up through Galatians 2:10, Paul is not only offering a defense for his apostolic ministry, but he's portraying his own life as a depiction of the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is Dr. Tim Gambas in his teaching on the book of Galatians. This is session 3 on Galatians 1:11-2:10.