

Galatians 1:11-12 "I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. **V12** I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ."

Paul preached a message that was not an invention of man, a tradition received from man, or an instruction taught by man. It was the gospel of God revealed to Paul from Jesus Christ.

Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Jesus speaking to all who are oppressed by routine, overwork, responsibility, and tension. Those *burdened* endure something that is laid on them from an outside source. Jesus' form of *rest* is not absence of work but rejuvenation and refreshment.

Galatians 1:13-14 "For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. **v14** I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers." Prior to meeting the Lord, Paul believed that killing Christians and destroying the church was a noble service to God. The emphasis on the **church of God** highlights the *enormity of his sin*. Paul emphasizes what a devout Jew he was—in practice as well as ancestry—so his conversion carried more weight with the Jewish Christians.

Acts 8:1 "And Saul approved of their killing him." (Stephen)

8:3 "But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison."

26:10 "And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests, I put many of the Lord's people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them.

1 Timothy 1:13-16 "Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. **V14** The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. **v15** Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. **V16** But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life."

Paul reminds us of his past to highlight God's mercy and forgiveness.

No sin is beyond the scope of God's forgiveness. Paul's salvation demonstrates:

- 1) God is merciful and has great patience
- 2) His grace can reach even the boldest and most vile opponents
- 3) The power of the good news transforms lives and hearts.

1) God loves to save bad people.

Many have been transformed by the saving power of Jesus. *According to Scripture, all of God's people have been rescued.* Paul preached what was from God's revelation and not from human logic. His _____ "is not based on _____ thought." Paul received it by "revelation from _____." **Man did not invent the gospel of grace; it came from God. Vv11-12**

2) The message of grace—the work has already been done by Christ—we do not naturally trust it. We want _____. Works righteousness is motivated by unbelief. Keep working the gospel into your heart. We don't need more _____ advice, or moral improvement. But, the _____ news from God about the _____ life in Jesus! **Grace** is doing for us that we cannot do for ourselves. That is the unmerited favor and divine kindness of our Holy God. **Mercy** is not doing to us that we do deserve. This is having God's compassion, His pity, and tenderness.

3) It is of most importance we get our beliefs from the right source.

Have you ever had a GPS lead you to a wrong destination? That can happen if you've chosen a system of _____ that is faulty as well. You can end up somewhere you never expected to go and _____ want what it offers. Paul was a fanatic headed in the _____ direction. He had _____ intentions, sincerity, passion and zeal, the right credentials, and religious connections. All of this directed to what he thought was _____. However, **his belief was faulty**. We must be sure we are trusting the right source; Jesus. (Matthew 11:28) Jesus says "_____ to me..."

4) The difference Jesus Christ can make in a sinner's life (1 Timothy 1:15) Paul's story as a terrorist. Galatians 1:13-14 In Need of Grace: *Paul persecuted God's _____ and believers.* He approved the stoning death of Christian servant, Stephen (Acts 8:1). Dragged Christian men and women to prison (Acts 8:3); and cast his vote against Christians (Acts 26:10). But he met the *risen Christ!* *And it changed everything.* Paul was sincere in his misdirected beliefs before meeting _____. Paul describes himself and his actions. (1 Timothy 1:13-16) "the worst of _____".

Sincerity cannot bring you to salvation if you do not sincerely believe in the truth of the gospel.

You can be sincerely _____! Mislead by false religions, teachers, or secular ideologies.

5) God's Work of Grace Galatians 1:15-16a Work the truths of these verses into your heart. Consider the work of God in the conversion and commission of Paul. These verses focus on God's work. The previous verses focus on Paul's work. How might it be like your own?

6) Conversion involves God's intervention. The gospel is a rescue mission! *God has done the same for all believers.* Paul's life is interrupted by God's _____. His conversion was not a mood change, or behavior modification regarding his outward actions, it was the radical change of his _____ created by the radical message of the _____ of Jesus Christ!

Galatians 1:15-16a But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased v16 to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles..." The story of Paul's conversion is so important the NT records it five times. His calling to preach among the Gentiles doesn't mean that his message was not also meant for the Jews. He viewed both audiences in need of the gospel of Christ. This verse is similar to other ones in:

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." Jeremiah knew he was not a prophet by his own choosing—God had set him apart and commissioned him.

Isaiah 49:1,3 "Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born the LORD called me; from my mother's womb he has spoken my name. v3 He said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor.' God's servant's weapon of choice is the words of God.

Luke 1:12-17 "When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear v13 But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. v14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, v15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.

V16 He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. v17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and *the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous*—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord

Ephesians 1:3-14 Those in *Christ* have every spiritual blessing needed for spirit, soul, and body: for

the past, present, and future; for salvation and service; for time and eternity, both now and forever.

Psalm 67:1-2 "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us v2 so that

your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations."

The psalmist desires God's blessing in order that, through the nation of Israel—God's covenant people—*his salvation may be known to all the world*.

1Peter 2:9 "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here! V18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." As a result of being a new creation, the world's standard of judgement (from a world's point of view) no longer applies. This passage does not mean a person's lusts, temptations, and carnal thoughts dissolve. Those struggles rage on. But with the Spirit's help, the Christian's "practice" *will align more with his or her position* day by day (**Phil 1:6**) until the Son returns and makes every believer whole. God has no need to be reconciled to humanity, but humans have a desperate need to be reconciled to Him. Not counting means "not keeping track of." Through the work of Christ, believer's sin is blotted out and they are reconciled to the Father. Not recording every believer's sins and failures, as sin deserves.

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7) Conversion involves God's eternal planning.

V16 "Reveal his Son in me (Paul) so that I might preach him (Jesus) among the Gentiles," *Paul was saved to preach the gospel of Jesus among the Gentiles*. This verse is similar to Jeremiah (*Jeremiah 1:5*) and Isaiah (*Isaiah 49:1,3*) and to John the Baptist in (*Luke 1:12-17*). How amazing is it that God called Paul before he was born, yet Paul spent years rebelling against God and persecuting the church. Paul says that Jesus showed "His extraordinary patience" to him. God remained patient with this terrorist. Aren't we grateful that God is patient with us too? God has chosen us as a people for Himself as part of His eternal, sovereign, and gracious _____ for our lives.

Those in Christ have every spiritual blessing needed for spirit, soul, and body: for the past, present, and future; for salvation and service; for time and eternity, both now and _____. (*Ephesians 1:3-14*). *It is in the heavenly realms these spiritual blessings will endure forever!* Unlike earthly blessings that will pass away.

8) Conversion involves God's gracious calling with a purpose.

God called Paul powerfully and effectively, just as He calls us to Himself. Not like we call our children to dinner and they show up 10 minutes later. *God's call is action and His Word is deed.* It is reality. When God says "Let there be light," there is light! Jesus says, "Silence,! Be still," it gets still. Not "I invite you to be still," or "I hope you are still." Jesus says, "Lazarus, come out!" He doesn't need to go in the tomb to perform CPR or offer an incantation. *His Word brings life!* Consider this powerful calling is an act of grace. Paul says God "called me by His grace."

Paul, nor us, were converted just for ourselves. V16 tells us Paul's purpose "so that I could _____ among the Gentiles". His conversion came with a commission (*Psalm 67:1-2*). What is his commission? "so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among _____ nations." Paul's life wasn't _____ but it was purposeful. Many chose an easy life that is meaningless. Living in a life that is centered on self, seeking pleasure, entertainment, and comfort. A secular life and worldview. This Scripture leaves us amazed at God's transforming _____. As we think of Jeremiah, Iasiah, John the Baptist and Paul their calling preceded their being in the womb. Their lives were not easy, sometime tear-filled, _____ they were meaningful lives.

9) Our conversion also comes with a commission, a plan for good works in our life.

(1 Peter 2:9) "...a people for His possession, *that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*" Sometimes we may feel like we are in a desert. Others in the Bible like Moses, Nehemiah, and even Jesus endured "silent years." Waiting time is not wasted time. God wastes nothing in the lives of His servants. Paul says "Everything is from God" (*2 Cor. 5:18*) Noone is beyond His amazing grace!