

Riverview Baptist Church
Sunday School Teaching Plan
October 18, 2015
Galatians 1:13-24
“A Changed Life in Jesus Christ!”

Memory Verse

Galatians 1:23-24 NIV - They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they praised God because of me.

The Big Idea:

Sermon Scripture: The sermon will be the fifth in a series of expository sermons on Galatians.

Sunday School Scripture: Galatians 1:13-24

Sunday School Title: “A Changed Life in Jesus Christ”

Essence of the Sermon in a Sentence: *Everything about our lives is changed by a “saving” relationship with Jesus.*

Preparation:

Read through this passage at least twice, slowly. Read from two different Bible translations.

Galatians 1:13-24 (NIV)

¹³For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵But when God, who set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me by his grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being. ¹⁷I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus.

¹⁸Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas¹⁸ and stayed with him fifteen days. ¹⁹I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord’s brother. ²⁰I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie.

²¹Then I went to Syria and Cilicia. ²²I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. ²³They only heard the report: “The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.” ²⁴And they praised God because of me.

Presentation:

Brainstorm some types of “Life Changing Events”. Some might include death of loved ones, marriage, divorce, birth of children, change of jobs, moving to a new town...

Remember that entering into a saving relationship with Jesus by repentance and faith is the most life-changing event they will ever have. While the action itself is inward, the outcome of it impacts every aspect of our lives.

Today we will discover how Paul's life was radically changed by his saving relationship with Jesus. He was changed so much that even those whom he persecuted heard of his change and praised God for the changed man he became.

Read Galatians 1:13-24. If time permits read from another translation of the Bible. Don't rush through this as the power of God's word is active as we hear it read!

The Value of Personal Testimony! If Paul was among a group of people for a while, preaching the gospel to them, it wouldn't be long until he shared his personal testimony. The value of a personal testimony is not restricted to those who have a dramatic conversion story like Paul did. We can see the glory of God's work just as much in those who think they have a "boring" testimony.

Are there people whose testimony helped you become a believer in Jesus Christ? If so, share who it was and why.

Saul's former Life: Verses 13-14

Persecutor of the church: Acts 8:1-3, Acts 9:1-2, Paul actively sought the destruction of the people who followed Jesus. He was present and approving of the murder of Stephen and was headed to Damascus with the intention of attacking believers there.

Persecutor of Jesus: This fact is repeated in three recorded testimonies of Paul in Acts!

- Act 9:4 NIV - He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"
- Act 22:7 NIV - I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'
- Act 26:14 NIV - We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

Have you or do you know anyone that is this antagonistic toward God and his people the Church? What ways might we witness to them? Some suggestions might be to live a consistently changed life before them, talk to them about Jesus as often as they are willing to, be as bold in our faith as they are in their attacks against it....

Pharisee beyond compare: Read Philippians 3:3-5

It is a great temptation to depend upon our own goodness and achievement as the basis for a good reputation with men. Some even believe that their good religious works make them approved before God. Why is this untrue?

God's Sovereign Plan to Save: Verses 15-16

Martin Luther summarizes Paul's idea: *"Did God call me on account of my holy life? Or on account of my pharisaical religion? Or on account of my prayers, fastings, and works? Never. Well, then, it is certain God did not call me on account of my blasphemies, persecutions, oppressions. What prompted Him to call me? His grace alone."*

Salvation begins with God and not us! The mystery of the timing of salvation is just that a mystery of God's way with people. Some have dramatic experience, like Paul. Some have a less dramatic but just a real experience. For some it is sudden and for others it may be gradual. But in every circumstance, God is the one who draws men to himself.

"But when it pleased God": Paul did not come to Jesus because any *man* decided that he should. It wasn't at the pleasure of any *man*, but when it pleased God. Additionally, God did not choose Paul because there was something in Paul that pleased him; God called Paul through His grace, God's unmerited favor.

(As a side note, very faithful and committed Christian writers and preacher disagree with the exact meaning of the fact that God initiates salvation. Some believe that regeneration happens from God apart from the willing belief of men. Others disagree. The point of this text is certainly not to take away the biblical injunction from Jesus to "follow me!", or of Peter to "repent and be baptized" or of Paul to receive salvation by faith alone. It is my teaching and preaching position that one can maintain belief that salvation is from God and that men are to believe in order to be saved, because God declares that both of those things are true. While I may not be able to reconcile all points of Scripture within a manmade theological construct of Calvinism or Armenianism. That is ok because God doesn't command me to do so, reconcile His word with manmade theological constructs. The requirement for me is repentance and faith. God will do what God does. I must do and ask others to do what they must, repent and believe! God receives the glory in it all!)

God had a plan for Paul from the womb! Read Jeremiah 1:4-8

Compare God's call to Jeremiah with what Paul says about God's plan for Paul.

"Separated" is an important word. The Greek word *aphorizo* is related to the word used as a title for the religious elite in Paul's day, the "separated ones" known as the *Pharisees*. Before Paul came to Jesus, he was an important Pharisee (Philippians 3:5), but he wasn't *really* separated to God. Now, through the work of Jesus, he was really separated to God!

- What does this plan of God to save and call us say about the importance of human life in general?
- What does it lead you to think about the value of your life? You are valuable because God has a purpose for you in this world. Your value comes from the value God gives you! You are valuable to him.

God wants to show out in your life!!!!!!

*"God wants to do more than reveal Jesus **to** us; He wants to reveal Jesus **in** us."* Guzik

"What begins by being a revelation of Christ to Paul becomes a revelation of Christ in Paul as the Spirit produces his fruits in unaccustomed soil." (Cole)

God made the change not "other people". Verses 17-22

Within Paul's larger argument in this letter, this story is told to maintain his distance from the Jerusalem leaders and himself. Paul wanted to show that his gospel, his changed life, his apostleship and ministry are from God and not the Jerusalem leaders. At the same time he wants to show that he was unified them in the gospel. So much so, that the church there celebrated what God had done in Paul!!!

Paul did not travel to what we would call Saudi Arabia. The area known in that day as **Arabia** in his day extended all the way to the city of Damascus. Paul probably lived in some quiet desert place outside of Damascus.

Paul did not learn the gospel from the apostles, because he had been a Christian for three years before he even met the apostles Peter and James.

(Lightfoot) The idea is that Paul was *not* commanded to come to Jerusalem to give an account to Peter or the other disciples, but he came of his own accord, and visited as a "tourist."

Paul shows there was *enough* contact between him and the other apostles to show that they were in perfect agreement, but not so much that it would show that Paul got his gospel from them instead of God.

Praise God for Changed Lives!!! Compare the verse 13 to verse 23-24.

How difficult is it to change your mind about a person's behavior and motives?

The only thing that helps us change our mind is usually consistent changed behavior over time!

God used this time in Paul's life as a time to establish Paul's relationship with Jesus and the gospel apart from the influence of the Jerusalem church directly. He also used this time to show the true change in Paul!

He went from "intense persecution" trying to destroy the church, to preaching the faith and being a source of praise!

Apply:

"Paul's whole point in the second part of this chapter is important. His gospel was true, and his experience was valid, because it really came from God. Does your gospel come from God, or have you made it up yourself? Does your Christian experience come from God, or have you made it up yourself? Only what comes from God can really save us and make a lasting difference in our lives." David Guzik

- What difference has God made in you?
- What are you doing for Him? How is Jesus revealed in you?
- Give thanks for the changed life of another believe today!

The following notes are taken from Blueletter Bible by David Guzik.

http://www.blbclassic.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=20170&commInfo=31&topic=Galatians&ar=Gal_1_9