# Paul and the Galatians (Oct. 26, 2025)

Galatians 5:1

Have you ever written a heartfelt letter to someone you love? Before social media and smartphones, we used to write real letters. You remember those days—paper, pen, maybe even a little perfume on the envelope!

Back in the 1990s, I met my wife through pen-pal letters. I was in the United States; she was in Korea. We wrote letters back and forth across the ocean. Those letters opened our hearts to each other. And after a year and a half of writing—we got married. These days, hardly anyone writes letters anymore. We send texts, emails, or emojis. But there's something special about a letter—it carries the writer's heart.

The Apostle Paul wrote letters too. Not short notes or quick messages, but deep, spiritual letters filled with love and truth. One of those is the Letter to the Galatians. Paul loved the Galatian believers like his own children. But then he heard that the church wase confused. Some false teachers had come and twisted the gospel. Paul's heart broke. He must have thought, "Why have they forgotten the joy of the gospel? Why are they turning back to the old ways?"

So Paul picked up his pen. And with tears and love, he wrote. This wasn't a letter of anger—it was a letter from the heart. He said, "My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you." (Galatians 4:19) Through this letter, we see Paul not just as a teacher, but as a spiritual father, a man whose love changed lives.

Galatia was located in what is now central Turkey. During Paul's first missionary journey—Acts chapters 13 and 14—he visited cities like Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, and established churches there. After Paul left, some false teachers arrived and confused the believers. They said, "You must follow all the old Jewish laws and be circumcised to be saved."

So, around A.D. 52 to 55, Paul wrote this letter. His goal wasn't to argue or defend himself. He simply wanted the church to stand firm in the grace of Christ. In this letter, Paul demonstrated what true spiritual leadership looks like—what we might call transformational leadership today.

It has four parts: 1. Living as an example (Idealized Influence), 2. Giving hope and vision (Inspirational Motivation), 3. Challenging people to think (Intellectual Stimulation), 4. Caring for each person (Individualized Consideration)

### I. The Heart of Love

When I read Galatians, I can almost hear Paul's heartbeat. He wasn't cold or distant—he was full of love. That's what we call Idealized Influence—inspiring others by example. He started his letter this way: "Paul, an apostle—sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father." (Gal. 1:1) Paul wanted them to know—his calling didn't come from people. It came from God.

After he met Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), he was completely transformed. He could confidently say, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." (Gal. 2:20) That kind of faith is powerful. He didn't just talk about the gospel—he lived it. He didn't act like a boss over the Galatians; he walked alongside them as a brother in Christ. His influence came from his life, not from his title.

# II. The Lessons of Paul

Paul's teaching wasn't about rules—it was about transformation.

### 1. Stay true to the gospel.

Paul was heartbroken that the Galatians were losing sight of grace. He wrote, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel." (Gal. 1:6) And then he said plainly, "There is no other gospel" (Gal. 1:7). Salvation isn't based on what we do. It's based on what Christ has done. But Paul didn't stop there. He said, "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:2) In other words, freedom in Christ isn't doing whatever you want. It's about using your freedom to serve with love. That's the true mark of a healthy church—a place where stories of grace are written every day.

## 2. Think deeply about your faith.

Paul didn't just comfort the believers—he challenged them. He said, "You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?" (Gal. 3:1) It sounds harsh, doesn't it? But he wasn't angry—he was desperate for them to wake up. They were drifting away from the truth. So he reminded them, "We know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ." (Gal. 2:16)

Paul wanted them to think—to ask, "Why do I believe what I believe?" Faith is not blind obedience; it's deep understanding and trust. Friends, that's a good question for us too: Is my faith just a habit, or is it my conviction? Is worship just a routine, or is it a true encounter with God? Paul still asks us today, "What do you believe—and is that belief changing your life?"

### III. What It Means for Us

Paul's leadership wasn't about control—it was about care. This is the final trait—Individualized Consideration. He saw each believer as precious. He wrote, "My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you." (Gal. 4:19)

Can you hear his love in that? Like a mother longing for her child to grow, Paul longed for Christ to grow in each believer. Leadership for Paul wasn't about giving orders. It was about walking with people—praying for them, crying with them, waiting patiently until their faith grew strong again. That's the kind of heart the church still needs today.

Dear friends, Paul's letter to the Galatians is not just a lesson in theology. It's a love story. It's the story of one man who believed that love and grace could change people. His leadership wasn't about power. It was about presence. Not command—but companionship. He reminds us, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." (Gal. 5:1)

In Christ, we are free—free from fear, guilt, and everything that holds us back. And now, we are called to use that freedom to love, to serve, and to help others find their way home to God. May we all become a little like Paul—people who walk humbly, love deeply, and shine brightly for Christ. May we become storytellers who can share this truth with others: "This is my song, this is my story, this is all about the grace and love of God."

When that confession flows from your life, someone else will find the strength to rise again through your story. May your homes, your church, and your everyday life be filled with stories of grace and holy transformation. Amen.