

I. Introduction.

II. Paul's gospel stands on its own – Men of repute contributed nothing. v. 6

- A. What was Paul's attitude towards the Jerusalem Apostles? v. 6a,2,9**
1. Paul respects them as having been chosen and used by the Lord, but he does not elevate them above his own apostolic status. 2 Co. 11:5 12:5,11 Lu. 9:28 Jo. 21:7
 2. Paul does not elevate himself either. 2 Co. 12:5,11 1 Co. 3:5-9 15:9-10 1 Ti. 1:15f
 3. God is not a respecter of persons. Acts 10:34-35 Js. 2:1ff 1 Sa. 16:7 Luke 20:21
- B. Because Paul's message was directly revealed to him through Jesus Christ, he did not need the blessing or the approval of others. v. 6b 1:11-12,1**
- C. Application: Don't be awed by human glory.**
1. Do you inordinately long for the respect and approval of people? 1:10 Pr. 29:25 Luke 22:24-26 1 Co. 1:30-31 3:7
 2. What should our attitude be towards our leaders and teachers? 6:6 Heb. 13:17 1 Th. 5:12-13 Acts 10:25-26 14:11-15 Rev. 19:10 Isa. 6:1ff
 3. What matters most is not having an impressive messenger, but that the true gospel message is faithfully proclaimed. 1:8-9 4:12-15 1 Co. 2:1-5
- D. Application: Who is authorized to preach the gospel and do missions/church planting work? Mark 9:38-40 Phil. 1:15-18**

III. Paul's calling and message was ratified by the other Apostles. v. 7-9

- A. The Jerusalem Apostles recognize Paul's message and mission. v. 7-9**
1. They acknowledge that God graciously entrusted Paul with the gospel. v. 7a,9a
 2. They see that God is working powerfully through Paul. v. 8 Acts 15:4,8-9 10:47
 3. The right hand of fellowship signifies that these men share deep love and unity in their message and mission. v. 9 1 Co. 10:16 1 Jo. 1:7 Phil. 2:1,10
 4. Neither Paul, nor Peter, nor James, nor John would work alongside of someone who is preaching a false gospel.
 5. The theologians and critics who claim that Paul, James and Peter preached different gospels are deluded!
- B. The Apostles agree to cooperate in the division of labor in evangelism. v. 7-9**
1. Paul and Peter were each entrusted by God with grace to preach the gospel in a particular sphere. Titus 1:3 1 Tim. 1:11
 2. Peter's emphasis was to be on reaching those from a Jewish background. v. 7b
 3. Paul's call was to evangelize the Gentiles. v. 8 1:16 Acts 9:15 22:21
 4. This, however, is not a strict division of labor. Acts 17:1 18:4 10:1ff
 5. They preach an identical message to different audiences. 1 Co. 15:9-11
 6. God worked powerfully through each of them. v. 8 1 Co. 1:30-31 3:7
- C. God is building His holy temple (the church) from both the Jews and the Gentiles. Eph. 2:19-22,11-16 1 Pet. 2:4-5 1 Co. 3:9-17 John 2:19-21 Mt. 16:18**
1. Christ is the Cornerstone. Eph. 2:20b
 2. The Apostles are foundational pillars. Eph. 2:20a 1 Ki. 7:15-22
 3. All believers, Jew and Gentile, are united as living stones. 3:7 28-29 Eph 2:21 1 Pe. 2:4-5

D. Application. Mark 9:38-40

1. The same gospel message is preached in every place and time.
2. With whom can we cooperate? 2:4-5 1:8-9
3. In what situations might it be good for us to coordinate with other Christians?
4. Are there strict boundaries of ministry?
5. We should regard all those who preach the gospel as partners, not competitors.
6. We too have been entrusted with a stewardship from God who works powerfully through us. 1 Pet. 4:10-11 Acts 1:8 Mt. 28:18-20
7. Our most important building project is building the church (people) through evangelism, church planting, discipleship and missions. 1 Co. 3:9ff

IV. Those who proclaim the gospel are concerned about the poor. v. 10

A. The Jerusalem Apostles urged Paul to remember the poor.

1. Godly leaders don't just care about theology. v. 10b Acts 11:27-30
2. Those who are justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone bear the fruit of good works. 6:9-10 Eph. 2:10 Titus 2:14 John 13:34-35
3. Helping the poor was a major emphasis in the early church. Acts 2:44-45 4:32-37 6:1ff Js. 1:27 Lu. 14:13-14 Mt. 25:35-36,43 2 Co. 8-9 Ro. 15:25-27 1 Co. 16:1-4 Ex. 23:10ff 30:15 Lev. 19:10 Dt. 15:7-11 Jer. 22:16 Dan. 4:27 Am. 2:6-7

B. Why are some of God's people poor?

1. Poverty is not necessarily an indication of God's disfavor, nor are riches always an indication of God's favor. Pr. 30:8-9 22:2 Lu. 16:16ff 9:58 Mt. 18:16ff
2. God uses the sacrificial love of the Gentile churches towards their poorer Jewish brethren to unite the early church. Acts 11:27-30 2 Co. 8-9 Ro. 15:25-27
3. God used earthly poverty for the good of our souls – trust, contentment, gratitude. Mt. 6:11,19-24,25-34 Phil. 4:11-13 1 Th. 5:18

C. How does this apply to us today? 6:10 1 Jo. 3:17 2 Co. 8:9

V. Concluding applications.

Discussion questions

1. Why was Paul in Jerusalem?
2. What attitude should we have towards church leaders?
3. How are some people sinfully disrespectful of spiritual authority?
4. How do some people go too far in venerating mere men?
5. With whom should we cooperate in missions and evangelism?
6. What are some ways in which Christian churches and agencies are cooperating in the same way as the early Apostles worked together? How could this be done better?
7. What authorization does someone need to preach the gospel?
8. How would you answer someone who claims that Peter and Paul preached a different gospel, or that both deviated from Jesus?
9. What is the significance of this summit between Paul and the Jerusalem Apostles in the history of the early church?
10. Why does God allow some of His people to be poor?
11. What more should we be doing to help the poor?
12. How does the imperative to help the poor relate to the truth that the gospel is all of grace?