



## **On the Epistle to the Galatians**

*“And from those who were reputed to be something (what they were makes no difference to me)” (Gal. 2:6). This is a vehement and proud refutation. For Paul does not call the true Apostles themselves by any honorific title. Almost as though he wanted to minimize their position, he speaks of ‘those who were reputed to be something,’ that is, those who were in authority and on whose nod or refusal everything depended. Nevertheless, the authority of the Apostles was actually very great in all the churches, and Paul does not take any honor away from them. But this is his way of giving a contemptuous answer to the false apostles, who sought to weaken Paul’s authority and to cast suspicion upon his whole ministry by pitting the authority of the Apostles and of their pupils against Paul in all the churches. This Paul would not stand for. . . .*

*“This was one of the strongest arguments that the false apostles used. The Apostles, they said, had close association with Christ for three years. They heard all His sermons and saw all His miracles. Besides, they themselves preached and performed miracles while Christ was still living in the world, long before Paul, who never saw Christ and was not converted until several years later. Therefore the Galatians should now consider whom of these they should believe more — Paul, who was all by himself, a disciple, to be sure, but only one and one of the last, or the most important and most excellent Apostles, who had been sent out and confirmed by Christ Himself long before Paul.*

*“Paul replies: ‘So what? This argument does not prove anything. Let the Apostles be ever so great; let them even be angels from heaven — that makes no difference to me. The issue in this controversy is the Word of God and the truth of the Gospel. This must be preserved at all costs; this must prevail. Therefore it makes no difference to me how great Peter and the other Apostles have been or how many miracles they have performed. What I am contending for is that the truth of the Gospel be preserved among you.’ It seems to be a rather weak rebuttal when Paul disparages the Apostles and their deeds, which the false apostles were citing against him, and counters their powerful argument with nothing more than the statement: ‘It makes no difference to me.’ Still he gives a reason in support of his rebuttal.*

*“‘God shows no partiality.’ Paul cites this passage from Moses, who says this very thing, not once but many times: ‘You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great’ (Lev. 19:15). And this is a principle of theology: ‘God shows no partiality.’ With this statement he silences the false teachers. It is as though he were saying: ‘You pit against me those who are reputed to be something, but God does not care about such things.*

*He is not swayed by the office of an Apostle, a bishop, or a prince. He does not look at the honor or the authority of men.’ As a sign of this, God permitted the apostasy and the damnation of Judas, one of the most important of the Apostles, and of Saul, one of the greatest of the kings and the first among them. He rejected both Ishmael and Esau, though both of them were the first-born. Thus you will find throughout the Scriptures that God often rejected the very men who, according to external appearances, were the best and the saintliest. In these instances God sometimes seems cruel, but these dreadful deeds had to be manifested and described. For we are inclined by nature, and we have the innate fault, that we show great respect for the position of men and pay more attention to it than to the Word. God, however, wants us to cling and be attached only to the Word itself. He wants us to choose the kernel rather than the shell, to care for the householder more than the house. He does not want us to admire and adore the apostolate in the persons of Peter and Paul, but the Christ who speaks in them and the Word of God itself that proceeds from their mouth.*

*“It is not given to the secular and unregenerate man to see this, but only to the spiritual man. He alone can distinguish the position from the Word, the divine mask from God Himself and the work of God. Until now we have dealt only with the veiled God, for in this life we cannot deal with God face to face. Now the whole creation is a face or mask of God. But here we need the wisdom that distinguishes God from His mask. The world does not have this wisdom. Therefore it cannot distinguish God from His mask. When a greedy man, who worships his belly, hears that ‘man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds, from the mouth of God’ (Matt. 4:4), he eats the bread but fails to see God in the bread; for he sees, admires, and adores only the mask. He does the same with gold and with other creatures. He puts his trust in them as long as he has them; but when they forsake him, he despairs.*

*“I am saying this to keep anyone from supposing that Paul simply condemns these external masks or social positions. He does not say that there should not be such social positions, but that God shows no partiality to certain positions. There must be masks or social positions; for God has given them, and they are His creatures. The point is that we are not to worship and adore them. The emphasis is not on the things themselves but on our use of them, as I have said before. There is nothing wrong with circumcision or uncircumcision — ‘for neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision’ (1 Cor. 7:19) — but with the way it is used. To worship and adore circumcision, to ascribe righteousness to it, and to ascribe sin to uncircumcision—this is a damnable use of it and must be eliminated. Once this has been eliminated, both circumcision and uncircumcision are something good again.”*

***(From Dr. Martin Luther’s Lectures on Galatians, A.D. 1535)***

# ***Walking with Our Savior this Week***

**TODAY**            Divine Service of Communion            9:00 a.m.  
                          Coffee & Refreshment Downstairs    10:30 a.m.  
                          Catechesis / Family Bible Class      10:45 a.m.

**MONDAY**            *Vespers*    **6:00 p.m.**

**TUESDAY**            *Pastor’s Writing Day (but do call in cases of emergency)*

**WEDNESDAY**      THE FEAST OF SAINT MARK, THE EVANGELIST  
                          Children’s Choir                                        5:00 p.m.  
                          *Divine Service of Communion*                **6:00 p.m.**

**THURSDAY**            *Pastor’s Family Day (but do call in cases of emergency)*

**FRIDAY**            Catechesis Class                                        5:00 p.m.

**SATURDAY**            Individual Confession & Absolution    5:00—7:00

**NEXT SUNDAY**    Divine Service of Communion            9:00 a.m.  
                          Coffee & Refreshment Downstairs    10:30 a.m.  
                          Catechesis / Family Bible Class      10:45 a.m.

*You may also want to keep in mind, in your observance of daily prayer at home:*

*This Wednesday (25 April) is the Feast of Saint Mark, the Evangelist  
 Readings: Isaiah 52:7–10; 2 Tim. 4:5–18; and St. Mark 16:14–20*

*The Appointed Readings for next Sunday, the Fifth Sunday of Easter:  
 Acts of the Apostles 8:26–40; 1 John 4:1–21; and St. John 15:1–8*