



# Galatians

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# Introduction to Galatians

## Introduction

We are going to start off our study of Galatians tonight with a contextual overview in which I'm going to answer five big questions.

- 1.) Who wrote Galatians?
- 2.) Who was Galatians written to?
- 3.) When was Galatians written?
- 4.) Why was Galatians written?
- 5.) What does Paul say in Galatians?

## Sermon

### 1.) Who Wrote Galatians?

Galatians 1:1-2 – 1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) 2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

The apostle Paul wrote the book of Galatians (with the issue of legalism at the heart of the book), and he did so as someone who had been raised in strict Jewish legalism. He had been circumcised as a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin and raised in Tarsus (Acts). He had been disciplined by the rabbi Gamaliel and rigorously taught the Jewish law (Acts 22:3). He had become a Pharisee and devoted himself to persecuting Christians as those who departed from the law. Thus, he was both a scholar and an activist for legalism. He described himself as a Hebrew of the Hebrews, zealous towards his religion, and as flawless as one could be with regards to the keeping of the law (Phil. 3:5-6).

Beyond that, there are some who believe that Paul, in his desire to advance beyond his peers as an activist for Jewish legalism (Gal. 1:14), may have even been a missionary for Judaism prior to his conversion. We don't know the extent of his evangelistic endeavors prior to his conversion, but from Gal. 5:11, we have indication that prior to his conversion, Paul did indeed preach circumcision as a requirement for a right relationship with God. (George, 2020, p. 34)

Paul was a legalist. He was a scholar of the law and an activist for the law. He believed that the keeping of the Old Testament law was the way to a right relationship with God, and he persecuted those who opposed it. And yet God had a plan for Paul the legalist. He was going to free him through faith in Jesus Christ and call on him to spread that gospel freedom all over the Gentile world.

The resurrected Christ appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus (as described in six New Testament passages: 1 Cor. 9:1-2; 15:3-11; Gal. 1:11-16; Acts 9:1-7; Acts 22:6-10; Acts 26:12-16), and Paul became a Christian. He realized that man could not be saved through the keeping of the law. He could only be saved through faith in Jesus Christ, the only one who had ever perfectly kept the law, and who then died on the cross as the means of atonement for a world who had broken God's law. He believed this and shortly after he got saved, he began preaching it on his missionary journeys. (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 170)

And one of the major advantages Paul would have enjoyed during his missionary journeys was his Roman citizenship. During this time period of the Roman empire, those in the Roman provinces who set themselves apart through education, wealth, influence, etc. could be granted Roman citizenship. Since Paul was born a Roman citizen, it's likely that his father or grandfather earned their Roman citizenship in some way and then passed it down to Paul by birth. This is significant because Roman citizenship acted as a universal passport throughout the empire. Thus, this would have made it very easy for Paul to travel on his missionary journeys throughout the Roman empire. (George, 2020, p. 38)

Paul wrote Galatians to a regional group of churches that he had planted on his first missionary journey, and He did so to combat the false teachings of Jewish legalists who were infiltrating the churches and trying to add the keeping of the law to faith in Jesus.

I say all of this to emphasize that when Paul wrote Galatians to combat those who taught that Christians had to keep the law to be saved, he was not writing as someone who didn't know what he was talking about. He wrote of legalism from firsthand experience, and he wrote of the gospel from firsthand experience as well. He wrote as one who had been saved out of legalism by God's grace and who had been called to share that same gospel message that had saved him with others. (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 188)

Who wrote Galatians? Paul, the former legalist.

2.) Who was Galatians Written to?

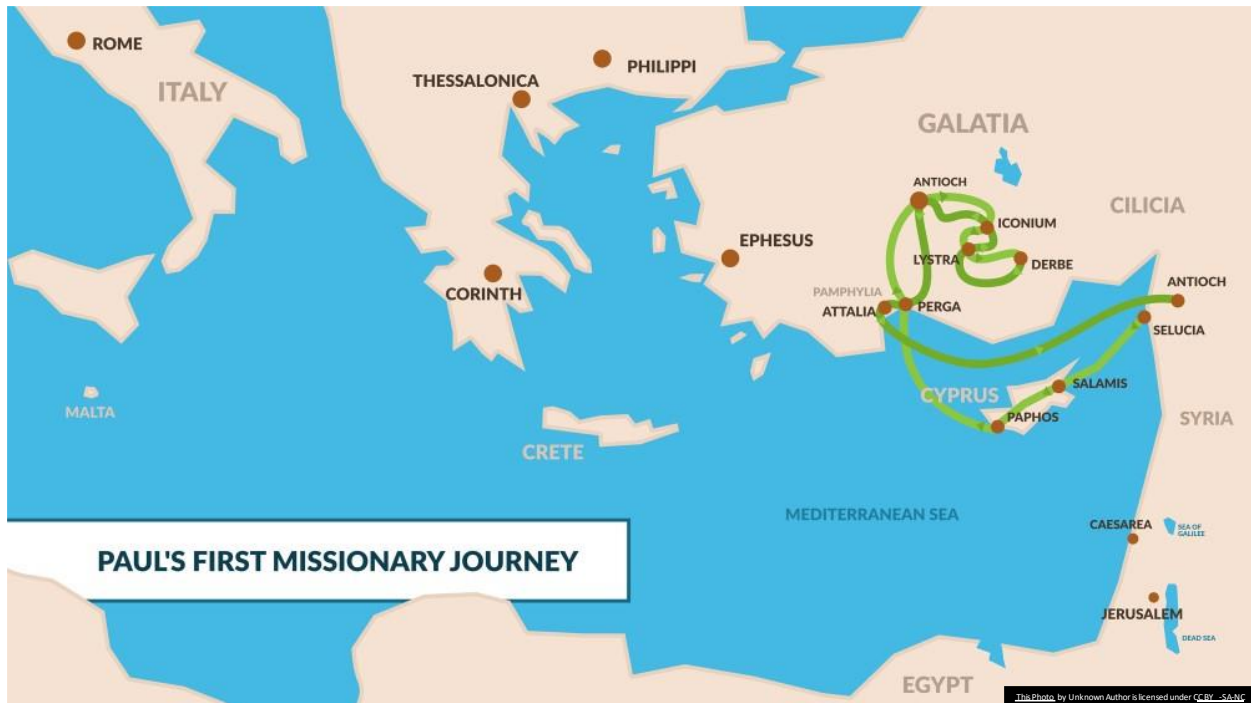
Galatians 1:1-2 – 1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) 2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:



The name for the region of Galatia was derived from the Gaul barbarians that settled in Asia Minor. After being conquered by Julius Caesar, Galatia eventually became a Roman province in 25 BC. The province stretched some 250 miles (N->S) by 175 miles (E->W). (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 154)

From the book of Acts we know that on their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabus established four churches in the southern part of the Galatian province: Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (Acts 13:14-14:23). These four churches likely encompass the regional body of churches that the letter of Galatians was addressed to, and the planting of these churches is described in Acts 13:14-14:23. (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 158)





- Antioch in Pisidia (13:14-50)
  - o Paul preached the gospel in the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath
  - o A summary of the sermon he preached is given in verses 16-41. He concludes that sermon by saying in verses 38-39, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of

sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

- Some Jews and Gentiles responded to the message.
- The next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear Paul preach.
  - But, filled with envy, the Jews spoke against Paul, contradicting and blaspheming his words. To which Paul and Barnabas replied boldly in saying, “It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”
  - Many Gentiles were saved. The Word of God spread throughout the region until the Jews expelled them from city.
- Iconium (13:51-14:5)
  - Paul and Barnabas preached in the synagogue and a large number of Jews and Gentiles believed.
  - Opposition followed, and it led to this massive division of the city between those who stood with and against the missionaries.
  - Those who stood against Paul and Barnabas concocted a plan to murder them and so Paul and Barnabas fled the city.
- Lystra (14:6-20)
  - In Lystra, Paul healed a crippled man, and the pagans in the city started worshipping Paul and Barnabas as gods.
  - They responded by telling them to stop and by sharing the gospel with them.
  - But some of the Jews from Antioch and Iconium made their way to Lystra. They stirred up opposition to the missionaries to the point where the people stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, assuming that he was dead.
  - They left, and Paul wasn't dead. He was only half dead. He stood up, went back to the city, and the next day he went to Derbe.
- Derbe (14:20-23)
  - They preached the gospel, people responded, and then they returned back through Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch discipling the believers and ordaining elders in the churches.

For much of church history, the typical assumption was the Galatians was written to churches in northern Galatia. Proponents of this view would argue that Acts 16:6 and 18:23 refer to these northern Galatian churches, even though the texts are ambiguous at best. However, in the last hundred years or so, the consensus has shifted to support the view that Galatians was written to the southern Galatian churches that Paul and Barnabas founded on their first missionary journey. This view has become preferable because it provides concrete recipients of the letter of Galatians (the four churches of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe) and because the content of Galatians meshes well with Luke's descriptions in Acts of these churches and Paul's ministry within them (e.g. in message, miracles, ministry of the Spirit, persecution of Paul, fervent Jewish opposition, etc.). (George, 2020, pp. 55-56)

Who was Galatians written to? The churches at Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

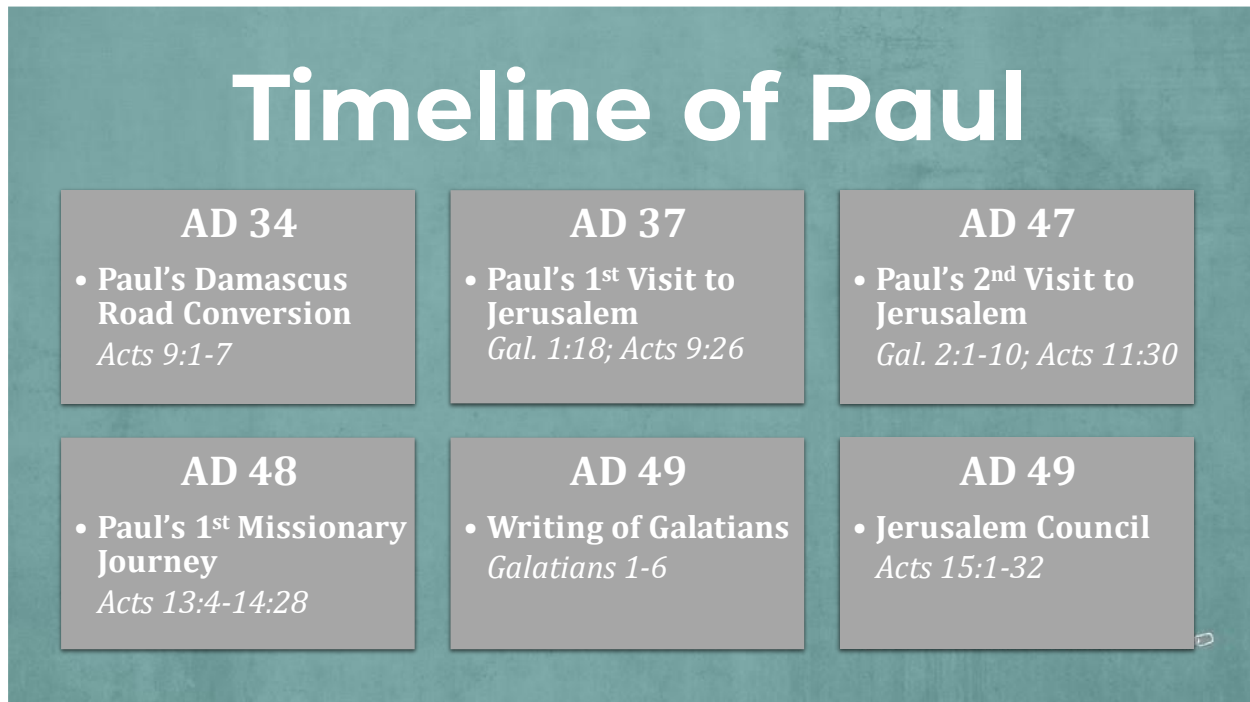
### 3.) When was Galatians Written?

Soon after Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey was over, Paul's home church of Antioch in Syria had been visited by a team of "Christian" missionaries from Jerusalem claiming that in order to be saved, one needed not only to believe in Jesus but also to keep the Jewish law. (George, 2020, p. 59)

"So great was this disturbance at Antioch that Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem to discuss the whole matter with Peter and the other apostles there. In the meantime, I believe that Paul had received word that these false brothers or their emissaries had also spread this perverted gospel among the newly planted churches of Galatia. Unable to visit these founding congregations in person, he wrote this letter to the Galatians as a way of restoring order and reestablishing the doctrinal integrity of his dear children in Christ prior to the Jerusalem council. One of the primary pieces of evidence for this timing is that Paul never refers to the ruling of the Jerusalem council regarding legalism in his letter to the Galatian churches. I believe that the reason he does not refer to it is because it hadn't happened yet. Thus, it is likely that Galatians was written from Antioch (Paul's sending church) right before the Council of Jerusalem, which usually is dated around AD 49 – 50." (George, 2020, p. 60)

This would explain why Paul only mentions two visits to Jerusalem in Galatians (1:18; 2:1-10), when Acts describes three (9:26; 11:30; 15:4). When Paul wrote Galatians, his visit to Jerusalem for the Jerusalem council in which the early church decisively dealt with a lot of the issues in this letter had not happened yet. This explains why Paul does not refer to the decision of the Jerusalem council in this letter. Once again, it hadn't happened yet. (George, 2020, p. 60)

This would make Galatians the earliest letter that Paul wrote that we have recorded for us in the Scriptures today. (George, 2020, p. 58)



Paul was saved on the road to Damascus early on in the book of Acts. Paul's first visited Jerusalem three years after he was saved. He spent fifteen days there and met Peter and James (Gal. 1:18; Acts 9:26). He visited Jerusalem for the second time fourteen years after his conversion when he and Barnabas were sent by the church at Antioch to bring famine relief to the Christians in Judea (Gal. 2:1-10; Acts 11:30). During this visit, he confirmed with the apostles that the gospel he preached and the gospel they preached were one and the same. (George, 2020, p. 61) After that, Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the church at Antioch for their first missionary journey around AD 48. On that journey they planted the churches of Galatia. Following the conclusion of their first missionary journey, false teachers of legalism began making inroads at Paul's home church of Antioch as well as the churches he planted in Galatia. He wrote Galatians to combat what was happening in Galatia. He went to Jerusalem to address what had happened at his home church of Antioch. All of this happened around AD 49.

When was Galatians written? Early, probably around AD 49.

4.) Why was Galatians Written?

“Galatians is one of Paul’s most contextually oriented letters. For example, Romans and Ephesian, though addressed to Christian believers in specific places, tell us little about the development or problems faced by the churches in Rome and Ephesus . On the other hand, Galatians, in this respect much like Paul’s Corinthian correspondence, addresses specific issues and controversies arising at a particular place and time in his missionary activities.” (George, 2020, p. 50)

Galatians is six chapter and 149 verses of Paul pulling no punches in expressing his frustration, anger, and disappointment over the situation that had developed in the churches of Galatia. He let it rip. (George, 2020, p. 31) Galatians is the only letter Paul wrote to a church/group of churches that did not contain a word of commendation at the beginning. (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 110)

The overall tone of the book can be best expressed by Paul’s picture that he presents of himself as a distraught mother having to go through the pains of childbirth all over again with children on the verge of committing spiritual suicide. (George, 2020, p. 31)

In the Galatian churches, a very serious false gospel of grace plus works (the keeping of the law) was being taught to these Gentile Christians by outsiders. They taught that Gentiles had to become Jews through circumcision before they became Christians, and that all Christians (Jew & Gentile alike) had to keep the Mosaic regulations and ceremonies in order to be righteous before God. (MacArthur, 1987, p. 137) These false teachers sought to come behind and prey on Paul’s converts in Galatia, just as they had earlier sought to do with Paul’s home church at Antioch. They did so by challenging Paul’s apostolic authority and adding to his gospel message. (George, 2020, p. 69) And they were successful in the endeavors, for many of these new Galatians believers were thrown into serious confusion by what they were now being taught. (George, 2020, p. 72)

Paul wrote Galatians to defend his apostolic authority from the attacks of these false teachers and to combat the false gospel of grace plus works that these heretics were spreading.

In addition to that, in contrast with the doctrine of extreme legalism on one hand was the doctrine of extreme grace on the other. If we have been freed from the law through Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection then should we continue in sin so that grace might abound? Not at all. Paul exhorted them not to use their freedom as an opportunity for the flesh (Gal. 5:13). God had placed His Holy Spirit within them to help them to obey Him and to live their lives as the new creation that they were. They were to live as people of the day living in the night. They were to do so, not through human effort, but through the power of God’s Spirit within them.

Paul wrote Galatians to combat the ideas that we are saved and sanctified by human effort, and he also wrote it to combat the idea that grace means we are free to live however we please.

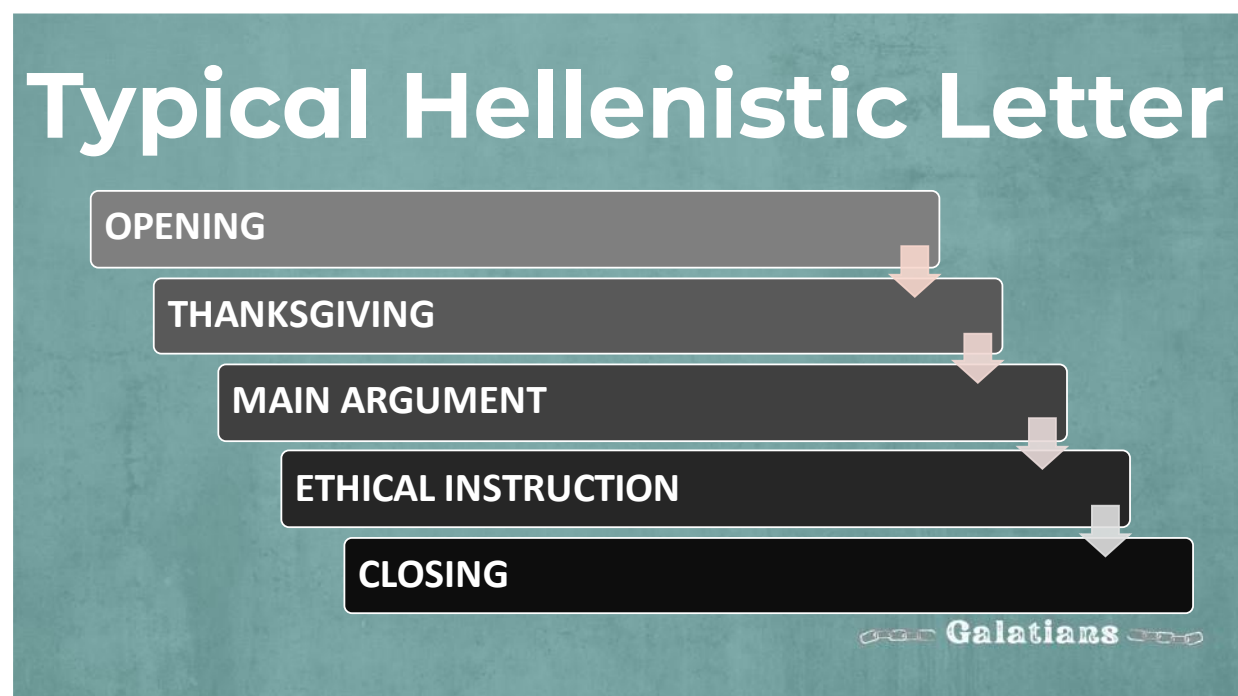
Paul wrote this book in response to a very negative situation that had developed in the churches of Galatia, but the situation does seem to have a happy ending. For, on his second missionary journey, following the writing of Galatians, and the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, Paul revisited the Galatian churches, confirming them in the faith, and sharing with them the decrees from the apostles and elders in the Jerusalem church. The end result was the churches were strengthened and increased in number daily. Thus, there seems to be a happy ending to this harsh letter.

Why was Galatians written? Legalism.

5.) What does Paul say in Galatians?

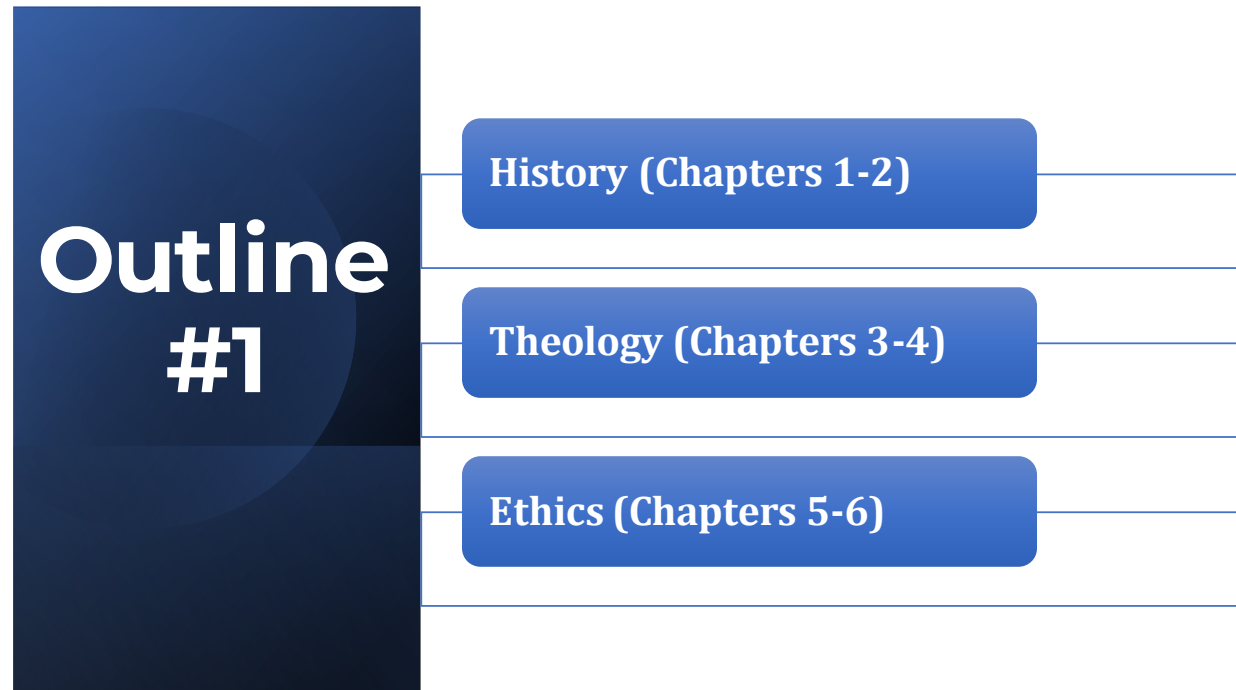
This is the question we will answer in detail as we work verse by verse through the book, but for now, I'll at least give you a general idea of where we're going.

Paul's letter was not some hastily written private discourse. He put a lot of thought into the letter. It was a public document written authoritatively by Paul as an apostle of Jesus Christ. It was written for the churches of Galatia with the expectation that it would be passed around and heeded. (George, 2020, p. 75) It was a formal pastoral letter.



Paul's structure of Galatians follows the form of a typical Hellenistic letter of this time period which consisted of 5 sections:

1. Opening
2. Thanksgiving/Blessing
3. Main Argument
4. Ethical Instruction
5. Closing (George, 2020, p. 76)



George's Outline

- 1.) History (1-2)
- 2.) Theology (3-4)
- 3.) Ethics (5-6)

In the historical section, Paul defends the historical origins of his apostleship and of the gospel message that he proclaimed. Having done that, in the theology section, Paul develops and defends the gospel message of salvation by faith from the life and example of Abraham. Having defended the gospel message, in the ethical section, Paul explains the practical implications of the gospel message for every day Christian living. (George, 2020, p. 78)

“Because of who God is and what He has done (history), we must believe what he has said (theology) in order to live as He commands (ethics).” (George, 2020, p. 78)

# Outline #2

## Personal (Chapters 1-2)

- **Salutation and Introduction**
- **Apostolic Credentials**
- **Apostolic Commendation**
- **Apostolic Confidence**

## Doctrinal (Chapters 3-4)

- **Confirmed by experience**
- **Affirmed by Scripture**

## Practical (Chapters 5-6)

### MacArthur's Outline

- 1.) Personal: Paul's apostolic authority (1 - 2)
  - (1) Salutation and introduction (1:1-9)
  - (2) Apostolic credentials (1:10-24)
  - (3) Apostolic commendation (2:1-10)
  - (4) Apostolic confidence (2:11-21)
- 2.) Doctrinal: Salvation only by grace through faith (3-4)
  - (1) Confirmed by experience (3:1-5)
  - (2) Affirmed by Scripture (3:6-4:31)
- 3.) Practical: Living in Christian freedom (5-6) (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 193)



# Outline #3

The Defense of Paul (Ch. 1-2)

The Doctrine of the Gospel (Ch. 3-4)

The Description of Sanctification (Ch. 5-6)

## My Outline

The Defense of Paul's Apostolic Authority (ch. 1-2)

The Doctrine of the Gospel (ch. 3-4) – salvation by faith, not human effort

The Description of Sanctification (ch. 5-6) – sanctification through the Spirit, not human effort

## Application

Who wrote Galatians? Paul, the legalist.

Who was Galatians written to? The churches Paul planted on his first missionary journey at Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

When was Galatians written? Around AD 49, after Paul's first missionary journey but before the Jerusalem council

Why was Galatians written? To combat the false gospel of legalism

What does Paul say in Galatians? Neither salvation nor sanctification take place by the keeping of the law through human effort. We are saved and sanctified by God's grace and the working of His Spirit within us.

# Galatians 1:1-9

## Review

Last week we began our study of Galatians by answering five important questions about the background of the book.

1. Who wrote Galatians? Paul the former legalist
2. Who was Galatians written to? The south Galatian churches of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe that Paul planted on his first missionary journey
3. When was Galatians written? After Paul's first missionary journey (AD 48), but before the Jerusalem council (AD 49). It was at the Jerusalem council in which the early church leadership dealt decisively with the issues of legalism at the heart of Paul's letter to the Galatians. I believe that the reason Paul does not refer to the decision of the Jerusalem council was that it had not happened yet.
4. Why was Galatians written? To combat a false gospel of faith plus the keeping of the law that was being spread to the churches of Galatia.
5. What does Paul say in Galatians?
  - a. The Defense of Paul (ch. 1-2)
  - b. The Doctrine of the Gospel (ch. 3-4)
  - c. The Description of Sanctification (ch. 5-6)

## Sermon

Today, as we dive into chapter 1 of Galatians, we're going to see that the letter begins as most letters of that time did: with an introduction. Last week I gave an introduction to the letter. This week we're going to look at the introduction of the letter.

### 1.) Introduction

## Paul's Typical Introduction

Author

Recipient

Greeting – "Grace & Peace"

Commendation – You're doing a great job

Galatians

Most letter introductions during the first century contained three essential elements: the name of the author, the name of the recipient, and a customary greeting. Paul often started his letters this way and utilized his own unique greeting of “grace and peace”. Beyond that, Paul would often begin his letters with a word of thanksgiving/commendation towards those he was writing to. (George, 2020, p. 96)

- Author
- Recipient
- Greeting
- Commendation

For the most part, this is how Paul began his letter to the Galatian churches. He began by referring to himself as the author.

#### A.) The Author

1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

Paul – The author identifies himself as Paul which means “small” or “little”. It was likely the apostle’s Roman name, but he also had a Jewish name as well. Does anyone know what that was? It was Saul which, as a member of the tribe of Benjamin, meant he was probably named after King Saul. (George, 2020, pp. 97-98)

- I’m going to burst a Bible myth about Paul for you tonight. How many of you have ever heard that Saul’s name was changed to Paul when he got saved on the road to Damascus? I grew up much of my life thinking that, but it’s not true.
- In Acts 9, when the Lord appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus, in every instance before and after his conversion, Jesus refers to Paul as Saul.
  - In Acts 11, 14 years after his conversion when Paul visited Jerusalem for the second time, he was still referred to as Saul.
  - In Acts 13, when Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the church of Antioch on their first missionary journey 15 years after his conversion, he was still referred to as Saul.
  - Such was the case up until their second stop on their first missionary journey in Acts 13:9 in which we are told, “Then Saul, (who is also called Paul)”. Luke indicated that Paul was referred to by both names, and then for the remainder of the book of Acts, Luke referred to him as Paul. What that means is that Paul likely had two names from birth: one Jewish (Saul) and one Roman (Paul). As Paul began engaging in missions work to the Gentile world it seems that he and others began primarily referring to himself by his Roman name: Paul. He does this in all of his letters that he wrote, and Luke does so from Acts 13 and beyond.

- It was quite common of dispersed Jews to have two names from birth. Paul's companions Silas and John both had second names (Silvanus and Marcus). (George, 2020, p. 97)
- Paul introduced himself as the author of this letter to the Galatian churches using his Roman name. He also introduced himself using his distinguished title.

An apostle – Paul introduces himself as an apostle in his letters about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the time. (George, 2020, p. 98)

- The apostles were the highest order in the early church with unique authority as channels of God's complete revelation (John 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:12-15; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Peter. 3:15-16). They were physical witnesses of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22; Acts 10:39-41; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:7-8) who had been personally appointed by the Lord (Mark 3:14; Luke 6:13; Acts 1:2, 24; 10:41; Gal. 1:1) and were able to authenticate their apostolic office through miraculous signs (Matt. 10:1-2; Acts 1:5-8; 2:43; 4:33; 5:12; 8:14; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4). The apostolic office was a foundational one unique to the first century church that is no longer in operation today (Eph. 2:19-22). In this primary sense, the term "apostle" was used to denote the 12.
- "The term 'apostle' is also used in a more general sense to refer to those 'sent forth as representatives of a particular congregation'. Thus, Paul and Barnabas are so described by Luke in his account of their first missionary journey (Acts 14:14). Paul also referred to Andronicus and Junia, two otherwise unknown fellow workers, as 'noteworthy in the eyes of the apostles' (Rom 16:7). He also referred to Epaphroditus as the apostolos of the Philippians, 'your messenger and minister to my need' (Phil 2:25)." (George, 2020, p. 100)
- However, in the book of Galatians, when Paul referred to himself as an apostle, he did not use that term in the generic sense. He was referring to himself as one on equal footing with the twelve...a foundational leader of the early church with unique authority and calling on his life from God.
- Paul provides an important footnote regarding his apostleship in verse 1.

(Not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead) – "My apostleship did not come from man. It was a joint calling on my life from Jesus Christ and God the Father." This statement was not just some insignificant footnote. Right off the bat Paul is defending himself, and his statement here foreshadows the major theme of chapters 1 & 2 of Galatians: Paul's defense of his apostolic authority (that he was on equal footing with the twelve). (George, 2020, p. 96)

- Paul viewed his apostolic calling as not originating with man, but rather with God. He had been designated an apostle by the risen Jesus Christ Himself in partnership with God the Father. Based on that, Paul claimed equality with the twelve. Here at the outset of the letter, Paul sought to defend himself from the attacks of those who

likely painted him as a late coming, self appointed apostle that did not really know what he was talking about. (George, 2020, p. 100)

Galatians 1:11-12 - But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Acts 9:6 - And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

Acts 22:14-21 - And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

Acts 26:16-18 - But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

1 Timothy 1:11-14 - According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

Romans 10:9 - That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

And all the brethren which are with me – who is this in reference to? It could refer to those in Paul's sending church of Antioch or perhaps those who were partnered with Paul in his evangelistic endeavors. We do not know. Regardless of who exactly it refers to, what it

means is that Paul does not write to the churches of Galatia as a lone ranger, but as one of many possessing a heart for the gospel and for these baby Christians in Galatia.

Who was the author of Galatians? Paul, also known as Saul, a man whose unique authoritative apostolic calling had come from God Himself.

## B.) The Recipients

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

Unto the churches of Galatia – Paul wrote this letter to a collection of local churches (assemblies of baptized believers) in Galatia

- Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe
- The fact that this letter was preserved and eventually received into the canon of Scripture provides evidence for a positive response by the churches of Galatia...that they didn't just take it and throw it away. Beyond that, assuming that Galatians was written inbetween Paul's first and second missionary journeys, Luke's record of that second missionary journey through the region provides an indication of a positive response by the Galatian churches as well (Acts 16:1-5).

Acts 16:1-5 - Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: 2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. 4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. 5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Acts 18:23 - And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

1 Corinthians 16:1 - Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

## C.) The Greeting

3 Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,

Grace be to you – this is how the book of Galatians both begins and ends (Gal. 6:18)

- Gal. 6:18 - Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Grace be to you and peace – grace and peace are fundamental aspects of the Christian message. It is only through God's grace manifested through Jesus Christ's death on the cross that we can have peace with God. Grace is the source of salvation and peace is the result. (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 308)

2 John 1:3 - Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

From God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ – just as the Father and Son were both the agents of Paul’s apostolic calling, so too here they are both the source of grace and peace

4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

Just as Paul gave an important footnote in verse 1 regarding his apostleship, so too he does so here regarding the saving work of Jesus Christ. Once again, Paul’s words here were no accident and would foreshadow another major theme in Paul’s letter to the Galatians: his defense of the gospel in chapters 3-4. (George, 2020, p. 96)

- Both footnotes are introductory jabs from Paul that give us an indication of where Paul is going in this letter. He is going to defend his apostleship, and he is going to defend the gospel.

Who gave himself for our sins – Jesus Christ willingly offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins

- This is a fundament aspect of the gospel message:
  - o 1 Cor. 15:1-4 - Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

That he might deliver us from this present evil world – “Christ has rescued us from this present evil age through justifying us by faith and pouring out his Spirit in our lives. This is an accomplished fact, and we must not be drawn back into ‘a yoke of slavery’ (Gal 5:1). But while Christ has rescued us from this evil age, he has not taken us out of it.” (George, 2020, p. 109)

- Christ’s death on the cross is the one means of rescue by which we can be saved from this evil, doomed world system ruled by Satan. That is why He died. He died to save us from our sin, and He died to save us from this world that is destined for destruction. Those who are saved from this world remain in the world, but are no longer of the world. (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 346)

According to the will of God and our Father – He did not do so independently of the plans and will of the Father, but rather in accordance with them.

Galatians 2:20 - I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

1 Timothy 2:6 - Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Titus 2:14 - Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Galatians 6:14 - But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Ephesians 6:12 - For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Luke 22:42 - Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

5 To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen – the only appropriate response to the redemptive plan of God carried out in the voluntary death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is praise, eternal praise. To Him belongs all the glory, honor, and praise for ever and ever. That should have been the perpetual response of the Galatian churches to the true gospel message that Paul had preached to them and wherein they were saved. Unfortunately, it was not.

- The gospel is not about what we can do to save ourselves from our sin and deliver ourselves from the world so that we might have the praise. Rather it is about what Christ did to save us from our sin so that He could deliver us from this world so that God might receive the praise.

Matthew 6:13 - And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

1 Timothy 1:17 - Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Recall that Paul's typical introduction followed the pattern of:

- The author
- The recipient
- The greeting
- The commendation
  - o Romans 1:8 - First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. (1:8-15)
  - o 1 Cor. 1:4-5 - 4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; 5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; (1:4-9)
  - o Phil. 1:3 - 3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, (1:3-11)



- 1 Thess. 1:1-3 – 1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, (*author*) unto the church of the Thessalonians (*recipient*) which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ (*Greeting*). 2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father (*Commendation*); (1:2-3)

Paul's introduction in Galatians is unique because it does not contain the typical word of commendation that accompanies the introduction of many of his other letters (Rom. 1:8-15; 1 Cor. 1:4-9; Phil. 3:11; 1 Thess. 1:2-3). In the part of the letter where we would expect to find this commendation, we find instead Paul's condemnation of the Galatians.

#### D.) The Condemnation

The radical shift from praise to God in verse 5 to rebuke of the Galatians in verse 6 is striking.

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed – I am literally shocked over what is happening in your churches

- Illustration: parents – I can't believe you would do this...
  - Telling my teacher in preschool that I had an earache so that I could come home to get my ball
  - Grand Canyon story
- Paul was not only shocked over what was happening in the Galatian churches. He was also shocked over how quickly it was happening.
  - Paul's wording here is another piece of supporting evidence that Paul wrote this letter early on soon after his first missionary journey. (George, 2020, p. 112)
    - "I just left!"
- What was happening that Paul was so shocked about?

Removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ – I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting God like a traitor...I am amazed that you are so quickly in the process of switching sides from God to this false gospel



- Illustration – Benedict Arnold
  - “Benedict Arnold (1741-1801) was an early American hero of the Revolutionary War (1775-83) who later became one of the most infamous traitors in U.S. history after he switched sides and fought for the British. At the outbreak of the war, Arnold participated in the capture of the British garrison of Fort Ticonderoga in 1775. In 1776, he hindered a British invasion of New York at the Battle of Lake Champlain. The following year, he played a crucial role in bringing about the surrender of British General John Burgoyne’s (1722-92) army at Saratoga. Yet Arnold never received the recognition he thought he deserved. In 1779, he entered into secret negotiations with the British, agreeing to turn over the U.S. post at West Point in return for money and a command in the British army. The plot was discovered, but Arnold escaped to British lines. His name has since become synonymous with the word ‘traitor.’” (History.com, 2020)
- “I am amazed that you have so quickly begun the process of committing treason against God.”
- Their apostasy was not yet complete, but Paul was writing to them as people on the verge of committing this treasonous, suicidal act. He begged them not to go through with it.
- Who were they committing treason against? According to Paul, it was God Himself who had called them into the grace of Christ (Gal. 1:15; 5:8).
  - “You’re not deserting me. You’re deserting Him.”
  - “You were undeserving. You were hopeless in sin. You were the enemy of God, but then God in His love called you to salvation in the midst of your undeservedness, and He did so by grace through faith in Christ. And how do

you respond? By beginning the treasonous process of deserting Him, of turning from Him to...

Unto another gospel which is not another – another gospel of a different kind (*heteron*) which is not another gospel of the same kind (*allos*)

- *heteron* – This fish is disgusting. Can I have another entree off your menu?
- *Allos* – This fish is not cooked right. Can I have another fish?
- “This gospel that these false teachers have sold you is not the same as the true gospel. It is of a different kind altogether.”
- “Make no mistake about it. You are in the process of committing treason against God Himself by defecting to this different gospel (‘good news’ – Paul so calls it not because it is good news, but these false teachers claim it to be)  
Galatians 3:1-5 - O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Galatians 4:9-15 - But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

Galatians 5:4 - Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

Galatians 5:7-8 -Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.

Romans 10:3 - For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 11:4 - For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

But there be some that trouble you – from this we know that there were multiple false teachers instructing the Galatians in the way of their “other” gospel.

- Trouble – shake up so as to agitate (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 541)
- Illustration – shaking a baby
- These false teachers were guilty of disturbing and troubling the Galatians. Why?

And would pervert the gospel of Christ- they desired to corrupt/transmute the gospel of Christ

- Transmute – change in form, nature, or substance
- The Galatians were being troubled because the gospel was being corrupted, and a corrupting of the gospel always means trouble for the church.
- “To Christ’s completed work they wanted to add something of their own. But the gospel of Christ is like a chemical compound to which no mixture can be added. It stands on its own. It needs no props or helps. It only asks to be its own free, unhindered, disarming self. For only then can it be good news to lost men and women imprisoned in the tyranny of sin and self.” (George, 2020, p. 117)
- “Satan’s primary target for false teaching is the doctrine of salvation, because if people are confused about that they have no way of coming to God in the first place and thus remain under Satan’s influence and control.” (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 440)
- Illustration – the most dangerous threats Christianity faces are not from without (paganism, atheism, liberalism) but from within (Catholicism, Mormonism, Prosperity)

What did these false teachers say to the Galatian churches? If their message was anything like that of the Judean Christians who spread a similar message to the church at Antioch (Acts 15:1-4), it might have gone something like this:

“Dear brothers of Galatia, we greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! We have heard how through the ministry of Brother Paul you have been converted from the worship of dumb idols to serve the true and living God of Israel. We are glad you have made such a good beginning, but we are afraid Paul has omitted to tell you some important things about the gospel. We ourselves come from the church at Jerusalem, which is directed by the apostles Jesus called and ordained. Paul though is an upstart. Why, he never even knew Jesus while he was on earth and was certainly never commissioned by him as an apostle. True, Paul did visit Jerusalem just after he stopped persecuting us, and there he learned the ABCs of the Christian faith from the true apostles. But the message he now preaches bears no resemblance to theirs. I don’t imagine he even told you about circumcision! Why, this is the way God has made it possible for you Gentiles to become a part of the New Israel. Jesus did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. Circumcision is just as important as baptism—nay, more important, for it will introduce you to a higher plane of Christian living. If you will observe this holy ordinance of the law, God will be pleased with you. We

are just now forming a new association of law-observant churches, and we would love for Galatia to be represented! We are the true Christians. Jesus, our great example, pleased the Father by fulfilling the law, and so can you!" (George, 2020, p. 118)

- False teaching is that simple, that sneaky, and that dangerous.
- Paul took it very seriously. "I am shocked that you have so quickly begun the process of committing treason against God by listening to these false teachers."
- In response to what was happening, Paul issued one of the harshest statements in all the Scripture in verse 8, and then he repeated it in verse 9.

Galatians 2:4 - And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

Galatians 4:17 - They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

Galatians 5:10 - I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

Galatians 5:12 - I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

Galatians 6:12-13 - As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

Acts 15:1-5 - And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

Verse 8 - hypothetical

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you – by including himself in the statement, Paul clearly communicates that the issue is not with the messengers, but the message. He was not

asking the Galatians to pledge fidelity to him as a person, but rather to the true gospel message of Jesus Christ.

- Paul also included angels in this statement. Why? Maybe these false teachers had referenced the role of angels delivering the law in the Old Testament (Gal. 3:19) in order to bolster the case for their legalism. In such a situation, Paul wanted to make it clear that even if it were an angel that delivered a false gospel, it would make no difference. (George, 2020, p. 120)

Let him be accursed – unto anyone that proclaims a gospel other than the gospel of Christ may the curse of God be upon him. May he suffer the eternal flaming judgment of God. May he suffer the condemnation of the fires of Hell.

2 Corinthians 11:13-14 - For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

1 Timothy 1:19-20 - Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Titus 3:10 - A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

Galatians 3:10 - For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Galatians 3:13 - Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

Romans 9:3 - For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Verse 9 – Applicable (Paul speaks directly into the situation in Galatia)

9 As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

As we said before, so say I now again – Paul had obviously just said this in verse 8, but he may have also said something similar to this on his first missionary journey when he planted the churches.

If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed – if any man is preaching any other gospel unto you than the one you received when we shared it with you, may he suffer the eternal, fiery, flaming judgment of God. May he suffer the fires of Hell.

- What a way to end the introduction of his letter.
  - o The author

- The recipient
- The greeting
- The condemnation

### **Application**

What's our takeaway? The gospel message is important. You can't add to it or subtract from it without fundamentally changing it. It is non negotiable, and it must be defended at all costs. For it is the difference between life and death. As Christians, it is at the heart of everything we believe and teach.

# Galatians 1:10-17

## Review

Last week we looked at Paul's introduction of his letter to the churches of Galatia. Paul, for the most part, used the same format as he typically would with his letters. He introduced himself as the author. He addressed the letter to them as the recipients. He gave his typical greeting: "grace and peace". However, where he would usually give some kind of commendation to the recipient of the letter, Paul instead offered a condemnation.

He said, "I am amazed that you are so quickly committing treason against God by deserting to this different gospel of legalism that is not the same as the one I shared with you. If anyone shares any other gospel with you than the true one, may that person suffer the fiery condemnation of God's judgment in hell."

That was how Paul concluded His introduction, and that was where we left off last week.

## Sermon

Tonight, as we dive into the body of Paul's letter, we're going to discover that the remainder of chapter 1 and all of chapter 2 consists of Paul defending himself and his calling to the Galatians churches.

Galatians 1:11-2:21 presents the longest autobiographical record of Paul anywhere in the Scripture.

- Part 1 – Paul's conversion and calling by God (1:11-17)
- Part 2 – Paul's first visit to Jerusalem and acceptance by the church (1:18-24)
- Part 3 – Paul's second visit to Jerusalem and the apostles' approval of his missions work (2:1-10)
- Part 4 – Paul's confrontation with and rebuke of Peter (2:11-21)
  - o These two chapters are written by Paul to defend himself and his ministry against the derogatory claims of these false teachers. (George, 2020, p. 137)

That defense begins initially with his motives.

### 1.) The Defense of His Motives

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Paul's words here seem to indicate that these false teachers had questioned not only his apostolic authority, but also his motivation for ministry.

Illustration – Have you ever had someone question your credentials? That's tough. That hurts. But it's even worse when someone questions not only your credentials but your character as well. "This person is not only unqualified. He's also unfit."



- Paul seems to defend himself here against this sort of an attack.

For do I now persuade men, or God? – For now am I trying to persuade men or God?

- Oh, I'm a people pleaser, am I? I'm a flatterer, am I? I'm one who uses smooth subtle words to persuade people? Well, let me ask you this: in the condemnation of hell I just proclaimed on these false teachers, am I seeking to win over God or man with those words?
- Is that the kind of thing a people pleaser would say?

Or do I seek to please men? – Am I still striving to please people as I used to before I was saved?

For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ – that's who I used to be. I used to live for the approval of people, but who I was collided with who I am when Jesus Christ met me on the road to Damascus. From that day forward, I no longer live for the approval of man, but for the approval of my master Jesus Christ. For I am His servant. (George, 2020)

- I don't care what anyone tells you about me. I do not do what I do to gain any other person's approval other than that of my master Jesus Christ.
- Application
  - o That ought to be our heart as well.
  - o My motivation in life shouldn't be "what do I want to do" or "what do others want me to do" but rather "what does God want me to do".
  - o We don't look outward or inward for approval and purpose in life. We look upward.

Jesus Christ is why I do what I do, and Jesus Christ is where I directly received my calling from.

He is both my motivation for ministry and the source of my gospel.

Acts 5:29 - Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

1 Thessalonians 2:4 - But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

James 4:4 - Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Romans 1:1 - Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

2.) The Source of His Gospel

A.) It was not from man

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

But I certify you, brethren – brothers, I boldly declare to you

That the gospel which was preached of me is not after man – “I didn’t make this stuff up. I didn’t find it somewhere. The gospel is not some man-made idea. It came from God!”

- There is no higher authority than God. That is the ultimate trump card. Why? Because if it came from God, it’s true.
- Application – we as Christians today look to the Scripture for guidance because we believe that it is from God and thus it is authoritative in a way that people’s opinions are not.
- Paul said, “The gospel I preached to you was not some man made idea. It was from God.”
- Galatians 1:1 – 1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

B.) It was from God

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it – The gospel was not some man made idea. Nor was I taught it, nor did I receive it from some person.

- Paul was not saying that his gospel was different than the one the other apostles preached. Rather, he was saying that he had received it independently of them...directly from Jesus Christ. (George, 2020, p. 134)
- “Through his contacts with Ananias and other believers in Damascus, not to mention his later visit to Peter and James in Jerusalem, Paul would have had ample opportunity to absorb the early Christian tradition as it was crystallizing in confessional statements (1 Cor 15:1–3), liturgical formulas (1 Cor 11:23–26), and hymns of praise to Christ (Phil 2:5–11). Paul’s point in Galatians is not that he was opposed to or ignorant of this developing Christian tradition but that he was not dependent on it for his knowledge of Christ.” (George, 2020, p. 135)
- Illustration – confessions that express biblical truth in an easily rememberable form
  - o Early Church – gospel (1 Cor. 15), the Lord’s table (1 Cor. 11), the kenosis hymn (Philippians 2)
  - o Modern Church –
    - God is good all the time, and all the time God is good.
    - Obedience is doing what you’re told to do, when you’re told to do it, with the right heart attitude
    - Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I’m found. Twas blind, but now I see.

But by the revelation of Jesus Christ – Is Jesus the one doing the revealing, or is He the one being revealed? Probably both. This verse seems to point to Jesus as the one imparting the revelation whereas verse 16 seems to point to Jesus as the object of the revelation Paul received. (Plummer, 1902)

- Illustration – I came on Sunday and listened to the teaching of the church
  - o What does that mean?
  - o Did I listen to teaching from the church?
  - o Did I listen to teaching about the church?
- Ephesians 3:3-8 - How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

### 3.) The Defense of His Source

Here Paul provided three reasons to back up His claim that God Himself was the source of the gospel he received and preached.

#### A.) I would not have received it otherwise

If the gospel had come from anyone other than God himself, I would not have received it.

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

For – because

- What follows in verses 13-14 is the reason of explanation for the claim that preceded it in verses 11-12
- “Here’s how you can know that the gospel I received and preach today came from God Himself. To go from where I was to where I am today could not have happened outside of a miraculous intervention by God Himself. I was an antichristian as you could possibly be. Everything that happened in my life up to the point of my conversion would not have prepared me to receive the gospel, but to reject it.” (Ellicott, 1905)

Ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion – you know of my former way of life in Judaism (i.e. what I used to do back in the day)

- They may have heard this from Paul himself who likely shared this as part of his testimony in his evangelistic endeavors. They may have heard this from the false teachers that were trying to throw Paul under the bus.

How that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it – how that more so than anyone else I was persecuting and destroying the church of God (universal church; people of God – 1 Cor. 15:9)

- Although Paul had a shameful past, he was not one to conceal that past from others. Rather, he shared it, not because he was proud of what he had done, but because he wanted to point others to the God that saved him and brought him from the person he used to be to the person he was in Christ.
- Illustration – salvation testimonies from men’s fellowships
- Acts 8:1, 3 – 1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. 3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.
  - o Paul didn’t go door to door soulwinning. He went door to door soul snatching.
- Acts 9:1-2 - And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.
  - o Paul sought permission to embark on a missionary journey to Damascus, not to convert people, but to imprison Christians.
- Acts 22:3-5 - I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.
- Acts 26:4-5 - My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

Not only was I just about as antichristian as you can be. I was also just about as pro Judaism/legalism as you could be.

14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation – and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my fellow Jews who were around my age

- “As the protégé of the famous Jewish theologian Gamaliel, Paul was the young, rising star in Judaism.” (George, 2020, p. 139)
- Philippians 3:4-6 - Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.
  - o From verse 7, we know that at the time, Paul saw all of these things as positives. He was not guilty about the persecution he wrought. Before his conversion, he was proud of it. He saw these things as notches on his belt.
- Acts 22:3 - I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.
- Acts 26:4-5 - My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

Being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers – I was superabundantly zealous of/passionate about the Jewish traditionary laws that had been passed down from my ancestors

- This likely included both the written Mosaic law as well as the oral traditions of the Pharisees that Jesus so often spoke against. (Spence & Exell, 1883)
- Why was Paul so antichristian? It was likely rooted in his incredible zeal for Judaism. As a strict Pharisee, the claim that Jesus was the Messiah, and that the Messiah had died, risen, and ascended to heaven as God would have been deeply disturbing.
  - o Illustration – The way that we look at the Mormon claims about Jesus (which are false) was likely the way that Paul looked at the Christian claims about Jesus (which are true)
- Further, the Christian claim that only Christ has kept the law, and that we can only be right with God through faith in Him would have been disturbing.
  - o Paul's antichristian sentiment would have been rooted in his remarkable zeal for Judaism.

Matthew 15:2-3 - Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

Matthew 15:6 - And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

Mark 7:3-13 - For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

Romans 10:2 - 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

Colossians 2:8 - Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Paul said, "The gospel that I received and preach came straight from God. Here's how you can know that it true: because I was so antichristian that I would not have received it any other way."

But that's not all. The second reason you can know that my gospel came straight from God is that when I received it, at that time, I did not go consult with any person. I didn't have some experience and then go get the gospel from the apostles. I got it straight from Jesus and didn't need to consult with any person.

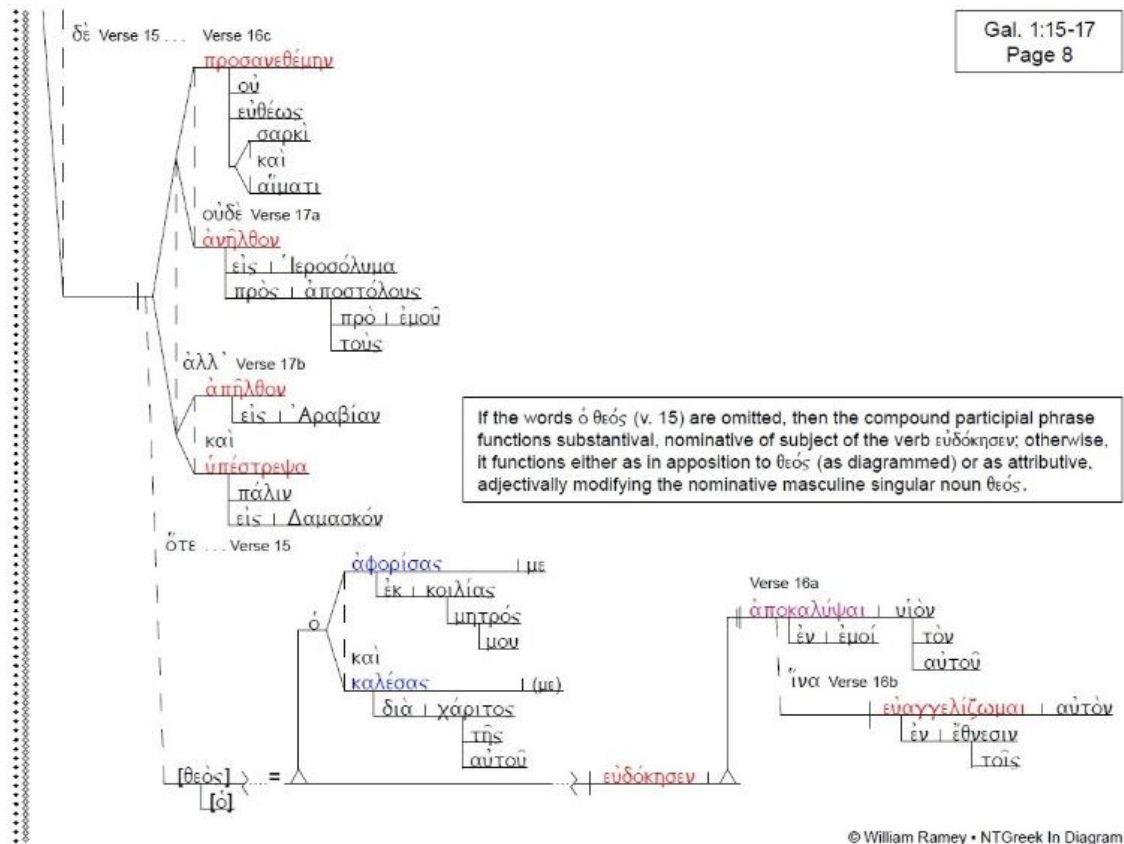
B.) When I received it, I did not consult with man

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

- This is a super complex, seemingly never-ending Greek sentence.



(Ramey, 2018)

When God did this -> I did this

- When God revealed His Son in me
  - o I did not
    - Consult with any person
    - Go to Jerusalem
  - o Instead, I
    - Went to Arabia
    - Returned to Damascus

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

But when it pleased God – However, at the time it pleased God/God thought it good to reveal His Son in me

- Paul says this and then pauses to provide a parenthetical description of God.
- Who is this God that I'm talking about?

- The God who set me apart from the womb

Who separated me from my mother's womb – Going back to the time in which Paul was in his mother's womb, God had planned for him to serve Him in a unique way in ministry.

- The language Paul uses here in reference to himself is very similar to the language used into the Old Testament of God's ministry plans for the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah.
  - Isaiah 49:1 - Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.
    - Ministry calling from the womb
  - Jeremiah 1:5 - Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.
    - Set apart from the womb for ministry
  - For all three of these men, God had planned for them to serve Him in a unique way before they were ever even born.

Who is this God that Paul is talking about?

- It's the God who set him apart from the womb
- It's the God who called him by his grace

And called me by his grace – this is in reference to Paul's vocational calling to be an apostle (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1).

- God's ministry calling on his life was an act of grace in accordance with His will.
  - Compare with 1 Cor. 9:16-17; 15:10; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Eph. 3:7-8; Phil. 1:16-17; Col. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:3; 1 Tim. 1:12; 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:1

1 Corinthians 1:1 - Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

Luke 1:15-16 - For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 - But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 1:12-14 - And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a



blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

When God, the one that I just described, thought it good...

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

To reveal his Son in me – How did God reveal His Son in Paul? By revealing His Son to Paul. The physical appearance of Jesus to Paul on the road to Damascus had a transformative effect on who Paul was on the inside (Acts 9:1-8; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8). It was through this appearance that Paul was converted. (Moo, 2013, p. 104) Why did God do this? Why did He reveal Christ to Paul?

So that I might preach him among the heathen – He revealed Christ to Paul in order that He might reveal Christ through Paul

- Paul is unique in that his conversion and call to ministry came at the same time.
- Paul would be God's apostle to the Gentiles.
  - o Acts 9:15 - But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:
  - o Galatians 2:7-9 - But contrariwise, **when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;** (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.
  - o Romans 11:13 - For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:
  - o 1 Timothy 2:7 - Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

“Pastor, these verses seem to strongly reference God's sovereignty in Paul's life. What do you make of that?” First off, I believe that the primary emphasis here in these verses is Paul's ministry calling, not his salvation. He was set apart for ministry. He was called to ministry. God revealed Christ in him so that he would be his apostle to the Gentiles. That's the primary emphasis. Nevertheless, beyond that, I have no problem affirming God's sovereignty, and you shouldn't either. God's sovereignty is a biblical idea. The problem comes when people teach that the doctrine of God's sovereignty means that He has not given humanity legitimate free will.

- I believe in both because all throughout the pages of Scripture, both are affirmed.

- “How can God be sovereign if man has free will?”

#### Illustration – Two Chess Players in the Park

- Player 1
  - o Plays against himself
  - o He always wins. He always accomplishes his purposes because he directly causes all of the moves on the board.
- Player 2
  - o Plays against anyone and everyone
  - o There’s a line as far as you can see of people waiting to play him.
  - o His opponents have free will over the moves, but he always wins because he’s that good.
- Both player 1 and player 2 always accomplish their purposes on that board. They are both sovereign, but which player is greater? I’d say it’s player 2.
  - o I do not believe that we serve a God that directly causes everything that happens in the world, particularly the evil within it. I believe that we serve a God that has given us free will with the consequences that accompany it, and yet despite that, due to His greatness, His omnipotence, His omniscience, He always accomplishes His purposes in the world. He works all things together for good. For, He is that great.

At the end of verse 16, Paul finally arrives at his main point.

- When God converted me and called me in the gospel...

Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood – I did not right away consult with any person

- I didn’t have some experience with Jesus and then go and receive the gospel from someone else second hand. I got it firsthand from Jesus and didn’t need to get it from anyone else.

Matthew 16:17 - And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Ephesians 3:5-10 - Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the

principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

Not only did I not consult with any person...

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me – nor did I right away go up to Jerusalem and consult with the apostles there (who had been apostles prior to me)

- “I did not feel the need to consult with any person so as to receive the gospel second hand, to understand the significance of my calling, nor to receive approval for my calling. Why? Because there is no higher authority than God. He Himself gave me the gospel, and He Himself called me to preach it.”

“The gospel that I received and preach to this day came straight from God. You can know that is true because...

- I would have not received it otherwise
- When I received it, I did not consult with any person
- When I received it, I went straight to work. I began to minister.

3.) When I received it, I began to minister

“He was countering the charge of his Galatian opponents that whatever gospel he possessed, he received secondhand from those who were apostles before him. Paul wanted to show that not only was he called and commissioned by Christ himself apart from any human mediation but also that he was engaged in the ministry of preaching prior to his first meeting with the Jerusalem authorities.” (George, 2020, p. 149)

Paul said, “when I received the gospel, I didn’t go to Jerusalem to receive validation, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus to begin ministering.”

But I went into Arabia – no other place in Scriptures mention this trip into Arabia, and as a result we don’t know much about what happened there or why he went.

- “Arabia was likely a political designation, referring to the Nabatean Kingdom, a Romanized nation whose capital was in Petra and whose influence extended as far as Damascus to the north and the Sinai Peninsula to the south.” (Moo, 2013, p. 106)
- There are basically two thoughts regarding what Paul did in Arabia:
  - o Some think he went there to receive further revelation from God or at the very least to spend time with God in prayer and the Scriptures as he reflected on the calling God had just given him
  - o Others think that He went there to preach the gospel that had been revealed to him.

- His persecution by the Arabian/Nabatean King Aretas (2 Cor. 11:32) may provide evidence that Paul did indeed preach in Arabia. (Moo, 2013, pp. 106-107)
- Regardless of what exactly Paul did in Arabia, we know that when he was in Damascus, he preached.

And returned again unto Damascus – From Acts 9 we know that After Paul was converted and called on the road to Damascus, he got connected with the Christian community in Damascus and began preaching the gospel there right away. From Paul’s words here in Galatians, it seems that at some point during this time in Damascus, Paul took an extended trip to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. Upon his return, he ministered there for a period of time until the Jews tried to kill him and he departed to Jerusalem.

- Damascus (Acts 9:8-22)
- Arabia (Gal. 1:17)
- Damascus (Acts 9:23-25; 2 Cor. 11:32-33; Gal. 1:17)
- Acts 9:20-25 - And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.
- 2 Corinthians 11:32-33 - In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

Here’s Paul’s main point: the source of the gospel that I was saved by and called to preach was not some person that I got it from second hand. I received it firsthand from God Himself.

You can know that as a fact because...

- if it had come from anyone other than God, I wouldn’t have received it
- when I did receive it from God, I didn’t need to go to some person to validate what God had told me
- when I received it, I went straight to work ministering because God had told me to and there is no higher authority than God Himself

## **Application**

That attitude that Paul had towards God's speaking to Him is the same attitude that we should have towards God's spoken Word to us in the Holy Scriptures.

If God said it, I believe it, and I'm going to obey it.

Illustration - Continue book decision to obey whatever the Scripture says

You don't need to receive some word from God secondhand because you have the Word of God firsthand for yourself in the pages of Scripture, and everything we need for Christian faith and practice can be found therein.

# Galatians 1:18-24

## Review

Last week we began looking at the first major theme of Paul's letter to the churches of Galatia: his defense of himself as an apostle. It seems that these false teachers that had made inroads in the churches there were spreading lies that Paul was only an apostle in a secondary sense and that he had received the gospel from the other apostles, and then Paul had gotten off track.

Paul defended himself by clearly laying out the history of his life and ministry. We looked last week at Paul's record of his conversion and calling, and we saw very clearly that Paul made the case that he received the gospel and his calling not from some person but from the Lord Jesus Himself. He defended that claim with three arguments.

1. As antichristian as I was, if I hadn't received the gospel straight from the mouth of Jesus, I would not have received it at all.
2. When I did receive it I didn't go to Jerusalem to receive validation from the apostles. (why would I need the apostles to validate what Jesus himself had told me?)
3. When I received my gospel and calling, rather than going to Jerusalem, I went to work.
  - a. Paul spent three years between Arabia and Damascus. We don't know for sure whether Paul did ministry in Arabia, but we do know that he did in Damascus.

Paul defended his apostleship by sharing the story of his conversion and calling. However, Paul wanted to make it clear that although he was not dependent on the apostles or the Judaeen churches for his calling, he also wasn't at odds with them. In fact, his later contact with the early church confirmed the gospel and calling he had received from God. He showed this by telling the story of his first visit to Jerusalem three years after he got saved.

## Notes

### PAUL'S FIRST JERUSALEM VISIT

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

On his first Jerusalem visit, we see that Paul got acquainted with the apostles.

1.) Paul's Acquaintance with the Apostles



Then after three years – three years after his conversion, he went to Jerusalem

- “A commonly accepted practice among Jewish writers in Paul’s day was to use an inclusive reckoning of time. In other words, “after three years” might well mean “in the third year,” counting each segment in the measure of time as a full unit. The same rule would apply to the expression “fourteen years later,” which Paul used in 2:1. This is an important point in trying to fit the events Paul rehearsed in Galatians into a comprehensive chronological account of his life.” (George, 2020, p. 152)
- Up to this point
  - Paul was persecuting Christians in Jerusalem and went to Damascus to persecute them there
  - He was saved and called to preach on the road to Damascus
  - Over the next three years
    - He preached in Damascus
    - He went to Arabia (perhaps for training or ministry)
      - That empire’s reach would have extended from Damascus in the north to the Sinai peninsula in the south
    - He returned to Damascus to minister
      - Paul then went to Jerusalem to get acquainted with the apostles, but why did Paul leave Damascus?
- Acts 9:20-25 - 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. 21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving

that this is very Christ. 23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: 24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. 26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples (*Christians, not in reference to the apostles*): but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

- Why does Paul leave Damascus to go to Jerusalem?
  - He's fleeing for his life from the Jews in Damascus, and ...

I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter – I journeyed to Jerusalem to **get to know** Peter

And abode with him fifteen days – Paul got to know Peter pretty intimately as he stayed with him in his home for fifteen days

- Application: if you stayed with someone in their home for 15 days, you would get to know them pretty well
- Illustration: getting together the past couple of weeks with different pastors for different reasons
  - Tim Christoson (Bible Baptist in Michigan) – mentorship
  - Gary Jayne (Faith Baptist in Somis) – fellowship
  - Adam Batterson (Calvary Baptist in Simi) – acquaintanceship
    - This conversation was an hour at a Starbucks not 15 days with him staying in my home!
    - That is a long time to stay with someone
  - I can't imagine what those conversations must have been like

19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother – but during my time in Jerusalem I didn't see any of the other apostles (maybe they were out of the city), although I did see James, the brother of Jesus (or unless you count James the brother of Jesus)

- The Greek here is ambiguous, but it does seem to indicate that Paul thought of James as an apostle in some sense. I believe that would be further confirmed by the parallel description of Paul's visit in Acts 9.
- James, the son of Zebedee
  - Martyred by Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:1-4)
  - James the great
- James the son of Alphaeus (Mark 3:18)
  - James the Less (Mark 15:40) (George, 2020)
- James, the half brother of Jesus (Mark 6:33)
  - He was an unbeliever prior to Christ's resurrection. (John 7:1-5)
  - Following Christ's resurrection He appeared to James (1 Cor. 15:5-8)
  - James became a disciple (Acts 1:13-14) (AD 33)
  - James was referred to as an apostle/messenger (Gal. 1:18-19) (AD 37)



- James wrote the letter of James (AD 40s)
- James was referred to as a pillar of the church (Gal. 2:9) (AD 47)
- James was a spokesman in the church (Acts 15) (AD 49)
- James was a martyr for the Lord (Josephus) (AD 62)

Acts 9:26-30 - 26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27 But **Barnabas** took him, and brought him to the apostles (*Peter & James*), and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. 29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians...

- He's there for a short period of time getting to know Peter.
- He preaches while in Jerusalem.

20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

Now the things which I write unto you – In what I am now writing to you

- with particular reference to his initial visit to Jerusalem

Behold, before God, I lie not – with God as my witness, I am not lying

- “In an insightful study of this verse, J. P. Sampley has argued that Paul may have been using here the kind of voluntary oath (*iusiurandum voluntarium*) that was common in the Roman legal system of his day. By this device a party could settle a dispute out of court even prior to the beginning of the trial.” (George, 2020)
- Illustration - Do you solemnly state that the evidence you shall give in this issue (or matter) shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Romans 9:1 - I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

2 Corinthians 11:10-11 - As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.

2 Corinthians 11:31 - The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

2.) Paul's Return Home to Minister

21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

Paul is only in Jerusalem for a very short period of time. Why does he leave so quickly?

Acts 9:28-30 - 28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. 29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they

went about to slay him. 30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

Acts 22:17-21 - 17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. 19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: 20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. 21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

- Caesarea was a port town that Paul departed from to travel to Tarsus
  - o Jerusalem -> Caesarea (53 miles)
    - This is about the distance between Camarillo and LAX.
    - They gave Paul a ride to the seaport.
  - o Caesarea -> Tarsus (305 miles)
    - This is about the distance between Camarillo and Las Vegas.
    - Paul took a boat from Caesarea to Tarsus.

Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia – Paul went to Tarsus (his hometown and the capital of Cilicia) and ministered there and in the surrounding region of Cilicia for a period of time.

- Illustration – student from the Middle East that I went to Bible college with. He came to the states to train for ministry so that he could back to his home country (which is closed) to spread the gospel.
- We don't have much detail about the missionary endeavors of Paul in Cilicia, but we do know that God blessed Paul's ministry there with fruit.
  - o In Acts 15:23, following the Jerusalem council, letters were sent from the apostles and elders of the church of Jerusalem to the Gentile Christians in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.
    - Acts 15:23 - 23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia.
  - o In Acts 15:40-41 Paul began his second missionary journey with Silas traveling through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches.
    - Acts 15:40-41 - 40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.
- Paul is ministering in the region of Cilicia.
- Meanwhile, persecution in the early church was driving Christians from Jerusalem to the surrounding areas, including Antioch.
  - o Illustration – “persecution” in California versus real persecution

- Real persecution – as a Christian you will face prison, death, or departure



- 
- Acts 11:19-26 - 19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice (*Crete*), and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians (*Greeks/Gentiles*), preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. 22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth **Barnabas**, that he should go as far as Antioch. 23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. 25 Then departed **Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:** 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.
- Barnabas was sent by the church in Jerusalem to check out what was happening in Antioch (the capital of Syria) where Gentiles were getting saved. When he saw the hand of God on the Christians there, he went to Tarsus to find Paul and bring him back to Antioch to help him minister there.
  - Paul is describing this time period when he talks about departing into the regions of Cilicia (where Tarsus was) and Syria (where Antioch was).
  - Tarsus was about 86 miles from Antioch.
    - This is about the distance between Camarillo and Lancaster.

Acts 13:1 - Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Acts 21:39 - But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

Acts 22:3 - I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

Acts 23:34 - And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;

### 3.) Paul's Reputation Among the Churches

22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:

And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ – although there would have been some Christians who had actually seen Paul in Jerusalem when he visited with Peter and James and when he preached during that short 15 day trip, the vast majority of the churches in the province of Judaea knew Paul only by name, and not by face.

- Illustration – in the ancient world, before modern technology, if you didn't see someone in person, you usually didn't know what they looked like
  - o Today, most of us would know what people like Ron DeSantis, Nancy Pelosi, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden look like. Why? We've seen them on tv or the internet. However, back in the first century you didn't have either of those. So during that time it would have been quite common for some to know of people by word of mouth, but not by face.
- "The Roman province of Judea covered a geographical area roughly equivalent to the present state of Israel, including Galilee, Samaria, and Judea proper." (George, 2020)

Acts 9:31 - Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

But they had heard only – Rather, they kept on hearing...

That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which he once destroyed – they kept on hearing about the evangelistic missionary work of Paul who had formerly dedicated so much time and energy laying waste to the faith by persecuting Christians

Acts 9:26 - And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

24 And they glorified God in me.

And they glorified God in me – they praised God for it

- The early Christian churches praised God for what He was doing in and through Paul.
- Application – We ought to praise the Lord for everything He is doing even when it's not in our church. We ought to be glad when we see people getting baptized in other Christian churches. I'm so thankful for the other gospel preaching churches in our community. They are not our competition.
- "I received my gospel directly from Jesus Christ, not from any human sources. I only visited Jerusalem sometime after my conversion, and then only for a short time to get acquainted with Peter. Far from being a clone of the apostles, or a protégé of the churches they established in Judea, I was hardly even known to most Christians there. But when they did hear of what God was doing through me, they praised and glorified him on that account. I was no embarrassment to the church in Jerusalem or to the brothers and sisters in Judea. Rather, through the grace of God, I was the cause of their rejoicing." (George, 2020)

Galatians 1:5 - To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Acts 11:18 - When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

### **Application**

As we see God working in our church, our response should not be pride or boastfulness. It should be to praise Him. When we see God working in other Christian churches, our response should not be jealousy or criticism. It should be to praise Him. Jesus is working through His body across the world to seek and save the lost. What a tremendous blessing it is that we get to be a part of that. Let's pray.

# Galatians 2:1-10

## Review

We've spent the last several weeks studying the first major section of the book of Galatians: Paul's defense of himself as an apostle. Paul defended himself and his ministry by telling the story of his life and ministry as a Christian. He started off by telling about his conversion and calling. At the core of his defense was the claim that he was converted and called not by the Jerusalem apostles, but by Jesus Christ himself. Then, last week, we looked at Paul's account of his first visit to Jerusalem. Even though he was called and converted independently of the Jerusalem apostles, that didn't mean that he was at odds with them. He spent 15 days in Jerusalem getting to know Peter and James. Then he went home to minister in the regions of Cilicia and Syria. Meanwhile, the Judaeen churches were glorifying God for the praise reports they were hearing about the ministry of Paul the persecutor turned Paul the Christian.

Up to this point we have studied Paul's conversion and calling, and we have studied his first Jerusalem visit. Tonight, we are going to dive into Paul's second Jerusalem visit.

## PAUL'S SECOND JERUSALEM VISIT

### Sermon

#### 1.) The Purpose for the Visit

1 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

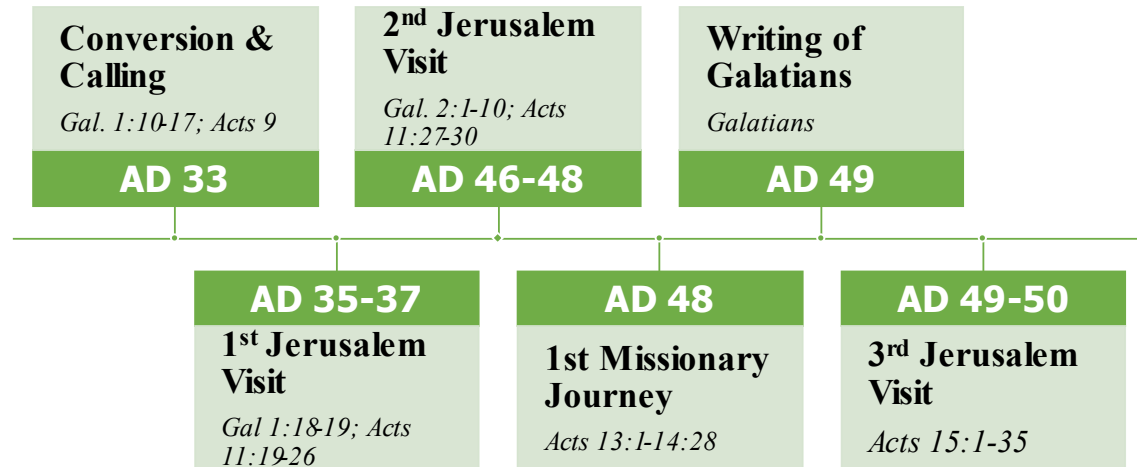
Then – this is the third “then” Paul uses (1:18; 1:21; 2:1)

- Conversion and calling (1:10-17)
- First Jerusalem visit (1:18-24)
- Then ...

Fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem – Paul is here describing another visit to Jerusalem he took fourteen years later

## Timeline of Paul

AD 33 – AD 62



- Question 1 – fourteen years after what?
  - o Just as his first visit to Jerusalem was described as occurring three years after his conversion, I believe that Paul here is also dating this event in terms of his conversion. Accordingly, this visit would not have taken place 14 years after his first Jerusalem visit, but rather fourteen years after his conversion.
- Question 2 – what year did this visit take place in?
  - o We don't know for sure because during this time period dating was done a little bit differently. They practiced an inclusive method of dating in which any period of a year could be reckoned as a whole year.
    - Illustration – 12/1/2020 – 1/1/2022 is technically 13 months, but under first century dating practices, it could be referred to as a 3 year period; Furthermore, 1/1/2020-12/31/2022 is technically 36 months, but under first century dating practices, it could be referred to as a 3 year period.

Example 1: 13 months (could be referred to as 3 years)



Example 2: 36 months (could be referred to as 3 years)



- - This means that the three years of Gal. 1:18 could have been slightly over 1, and the 14 years of Gal. 2:1 could have been only 12. (George, 2020)
  - Assuming that Paul was converted around AD 33, 14 years later, taking into account how they practiced dating in the first century, would place this visit around AD 46-48.
- Question 3 – what happened on this visit?
  - Assuming that this visit took place around AD 46-48, it lines up well with Paul’s second Jerusalem visit (i.e. the famine visit) described in Acts 11:25-30.
    - Acts 11:25-30 - 25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. 27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: 30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.
    - I believe that the visit Luke describes in Acts 11 is the same visit that Paul describes here in Galatians 2.
  - However, there are many theologians that equate Paul’s visit in Galatians 2 with his third Jerusalem visit on which the Jerusalem council took place and the issues of legalism were dealt with decisively by the church leadership. There are a lot of similarities between what happened at that council and Galatians 2. Why would we not view Galatians 2 as describing the Jerusalem council?



- On the Jerusalem council visit, Paul and Barnabas were sent by the church at Antioch to Jerusalem to resolve the heretical legalism that was being introduced into the church by “Jerusalem missionaries”.
  - In Galatians 2, Paul made the journey of his own initiative as a result of private revelation from God.
- On the Jerusalem council visit, the whole ordeal was a very public affair.
  - In Galatians 2, Paul’s interactions with the apostles took place in private.
- Nowhere in the book of Galatians does Paul reference the decisive decree regarding legalism issued by the apostles and elders of the early church at the Jerusalem council. This would have been the easiest way to combat the legalist false teachers making headway in the Galatian churches.
  - Acts 16:4 - 4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. (George, 2020)
  - Why didn’t Paul refer to the council or its decision? It hadn’t occurred yet. This visit is happening in AD 46-48, and the Jerusalem council wouldn’t happen for another three or four years.

With Barnabas, and took Titus with me also – Barnabas was a Jewish Christian. Titus was a Gentile convert (an uncircumcised one at that). Just as Timothy was a son in the faith to Paul that he personally mentored, so too was Titus.

- 2 Corinthians 8:23 - Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.
- Titus 1:4 - To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.
- The inclusion of the uncircumcised Christian Gentile, Titus, is going to be a sort of litmus test for the Jerusalem apostles on the question on how the law (in particular, circumcision) related to Gentile Christians.

Acts 4:36-37 - And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 11:25 - Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

Acts 11:30 - Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Acts 12:25 - And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Galatians 2:3 - But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

2 Corinthians 8:16 - But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

And I went up by revelation – I went on this trip because Jesus told me to

- Christ appeared and spoke to Paul on multiple occasions (Acts 22:17-21; 2 Cor. 12:1-10)
- Paul also took this trip to...

And communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles – He laid out before the apostles his gospel that he preached to the Gentiles (perhaps because some were already attacking him and distorting the message that he preached)

- We will see that Paul's gospel and the apostles' gospel were one and the same, but these early church leaders were wrestling the ramifications of the gospel in a new cultural context: a non Jewish one.

But privately to them which were of reputation. – Paul requested this meeting, not the apostles. He was not being summoned by the early church leaders to appear before some sort of tribunal. Rather, he sought out this meeting with the Jerusalem leadership to make sure that they were all on the same page and to prevent a major split in early Christianity.

lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain – Paul is not saying here, “I went up to Jerusalem after fourteen years of preaching to check with the apostles and to make sure I wasn't preaching the wrong gospel.” Rather what he's saying is, “I went up to Jerusalem after fourteen years of preaching to make sure that I and the apostles were on the same page and to prevent a major rift within Christianity between Gentiles and Jews that would have had cataclysmic effects on my converts and ministry.”

- Does this mean that Paul needed the Jerusalem leaders to validate what God had told him? That would seem to run counter to everything that Paul has said in this letter up to this point. Did Paul have a period of self doubt about his calling and gospel? Once again, this seems to run counter to everything that we know about Paul from Acts and his letters. Rather, it seems that Paul was more concerned about the effects that a rift with the Jerusalem church would have on his converts and ministry.

## 2.) The Controversy on the Visit

3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

The grammar here in these verses is difficult, and the timing of this event that Paul describes here is difficult to nail down. However, it seems that there was an incident involving Titus that occurred during this visit. Once again, Titus was a Gentile Christian that had not been circumcised, and it seems that on this very visit to get on the same page with the apostles, there were those in the church who were trying to pressure Titus to be circumcised as a Christian.

- In order to understand what's happening here, you have to understand the significance of circumcision to the Jews. For the Jews, circumcision originated in Genesis 17 in connection with the covenant that God made with Abraham. All Jewish males were to be circumcised eight days after their birth as a sign of their inclusion in Israel. It was a significant cultural and religious identity marker. The Old Testament prophets also spoke of circumcision of the heart in reference to repentance and devotion to God (Jer. 4:4). (George, 2020, p. 169)
- Further, several hundred years prior to the first century, the Jews faced major persecution under the reign of the Greek ruler Antiochus IV (175-163 BC). Part of that tyrannical reign included a prohibition on circumcision and the consequence for violating that prohibition was death for the baby and the mother (illustration – imagine a prohibition on baptism in America). As a result of this prohibition, circumcision became even more important to the Jews as an identity marker. (George, 2020, p. 170)
  - o In the same way that Americans fought for the right to live in freedom, the Jews fought Antiochus for the right to circumcise their children.
  - o For the Jews during the first century, circumcision was important culturally and religiously. Their forefathers fought and shed their blood for that right. Just like we have July 4th, the Jews had a holiday to celebrate their liberation from Antiochus: the Feast of Dedication aka Hannukah.
- Throughout his writings, Paul had no issues with Jews being circumcised. He himself was circumcised. He also didn't have issues with Gentiles that were circumcised, for instance, for the purpose of opening up doors of ministry to more strict, conservative Jewish Christians. However, the major issue before the church was whether or not circumcision was necessary for someone to be saved (cf. Acts 15:1).
- Titus set the parameters for this discussion. He was there on this trip, and he had been saved, but he had not been circumcised.

- Paul, Titus, and Barnabas are in Jerusalem with the apostles trying to have a conversation, and there are those in the church trying to force Titus to be circumcised.

Galatians 5:2-6 - Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Acts 16:3 - Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

Whereas verse 3 describes the person who was being pressured (Titus), verse 4 describes those who were doing the pressuring.

4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

And that because of – this controversy over Titus’ circumcision came about why? (likely during this trip)

Because of false brethren – pretend brothers/fake Christians in the Jerusalem church

- These would have been members of the “Christian” community in Jerusalem that were hyper zealous of the law and Jewish traditions.
- In truth, they were not Christians. They were false believers that trusted in the law to save them and added Jesus on as a complement to their religion.
  - Illustration – polytheists from other parts of the world that will happily add Jesus into their life alongside their other gods.

Unaware brought in – secretly smuggled into the church.

Who came in privily – who came in by stealth. Why?

To spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus – to spy on our Christian freedom which we have in Jesus in order that...

That they might bring us into bondage – They engaged in such espionage in order that they might enslave us.

- These false believers infiltrated the church so that they might spy out the freedoms of Gentile Christians and enslave them to the law.
- These false believers may have been a part of the same Judaizers that stirred up trouble in Antioch and were causing the issues in Galatia that Paul was writing this letter against.

“During Paul’s visit to Jerusalem, perhaps even during the course of his private meeting with the church leaders, certain “false brothers” made a big deal over the fact that he had brought with him an uncircumcised Gentile Christian, Titus, whom they insisted should undergo this sacred Jewish rite. Paul resisted, and their scheme came to naught: Titus was not compelled to be circumcised.” (George, 2020, p. 174)

Paul fought tooth and nail against this scheme for a reason. Look at verse 5.

Galatians 5:10 - I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

Galatians 5:12 - I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

2 Timothy 3:6 - For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

2 Peter 2:1-2 - But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

Jude 1:4 - For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:1 - Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Galatians 5:13 - For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Galatians 4:9-10 - But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour – to these false brothers we did not yield to their attempts at enslavement, not even for an hour

- We stood firm on the freedom that we have through the cross of Jesus Christ. We refused to accommodate those who hold that “works” are necessary for salvation.
  - o Today, we might not deal with “Christians” who claim that you have to be circumcised to be saved, but we do deal with “Christians” who claim that you have to go to confession to be saved....who claim that you have to be baptized

in order to be saved...who claim that you must partake of the sacraments in order to be saved...and to those who would add to the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, we must never accommodate them.

- Why didn't Paul accommodate them?

That the truth of the gospel might continue with you – in order that the truth of the gospel might remain with you

- The doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone was THAT important.
- At the heart of the doctrine of Christian freedom is the defense of the gospel
  - o Christian liberty is not a shield for carnal Christian living. It is a shield for the gospel itself.
  - o Christian liberty does not mean that we are free to sin. It means that we are free from sin based entirely on what Christ has done for us on the cross.

“For the issue before us is grave and vital; it involves the death of the Son of God, who, by the will and command of the Father, became flesh, was crucified, and died for the sins of the world. If faith yields on this point, the death of the Son of God will be in vain. Then it is only a fable that Christ is the Savior of the world. Then God is a liar, for he has not lived up to his promises. Therefore, our stubbornness on this issue is pious and holy; for by it we are striving to preserve the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to keep the truth of the gospel. If we lose this, we lose God, Christ, all the promises, faith, righteousness, and eternal life.” – Luther (Luther, pp. 90-91)

Why did Paul make such a big deal about not circumcising Titus when he did circumcise Timothy (Acts 16:3)? Timothy's mother was a Jew. Thus, Timothy was half Jewish and could submit to the act as an identifier of his cultural heritage. He could do so without compromising it being a gospel issue and in addition open up doors of ministry for Timothy with Jews. Titus was a full on Gentile. There was no reason for him to be circumcised. To submit to circumcision as a means of placating those who saw it as a part of salvation for the Gentiles would have been to compromise the gospel.

### 3.) The Result of the Visit

Verses 6-10 are one sentence.

6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

But of those who seemed to be somewhat – but of those in the Jerusalem church who were of high reputation

- “Had Paul meant this term in a decidedly negative way, he would have undercut his own argument, namely, that he and the Jerusalem “pillars” were, after all, on the same team.” (George, 2020, p. 183)

Whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me – not that their reputation mattered/matters to me

- Paul wasn’t concerned about being recognized by these leaders. He was concerned about being on the same page with these leaders.

God accepteth no man’s person – reputation doesn’t matter to God either

- God’s workings with man are not influenced by how reputable they are (Barnes, 1834)

For they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me – when we met and I laid out the gospel that I preached, these highly respected leaders did not add anything to my gospel. Our gospels were the same.

Acts 10:34 - Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

Romans 2:11 - For there is no respect of persons with God.

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

But contrariwise – in contrast

When they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision – having seen that the gospel of/to the Gentiles

Was committed unto me – perfect tense: completed action

- The apostles did not commission me to take the gospel to the Gentiles. Rather, they recognized that someone else had commissioned me to take the gospel to the Gentiles. Who? Jesus.

As the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter – what does this mean? Were there two different gospels? A gospel of the Gentiles and a gospel of the Jews? No. This would

contradict Paul's contention in Galatians 1 that there was one gospel. Paul's expression here denotes a difference not in the content of the gospel, but in the audiences that the message would be delivered to.

- The apostles recognized that just as Peter had received from Christ a commission to take the gospel **to** the Jews, so too Paul had received from Christ a commission to take the gospel **to** the Gentiles. (George, 2020)

Acts 13:46-48 - Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Romans 11:13 - For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

2 Timothy 1:11 - Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision – Because the same God that called and empowered Peter in his ministry to the Jews

The same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles – that same God had called and empowered me in my ministry to the Gentiles (MacArthur, 1987)

Acts 13:2-11 - As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister. And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind,



not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

And – this connects verse 7 with verse 9

- When they saw that the gospel to the Gentiles was committed to me by God and...

When James, Cephas, and John – the Jerusalem church leaders that Paul was meeting with privately...men who

Who seemed to be pillars – who were recognized as pillars

Perceived the grace that was given unto me – recognized God's grace working in and through me and my ministry

They gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship – In this gesture, the apostles not only recognized these men as fellow believers, but they recognized them as fellow partners in the ministry

That we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision – with the apostles' primary ministry field being the Jews, and Paul and Barnabas' primary ministry field being the Gentiles

Ephesians 2:20 - And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

Romans 1:5 - By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

Romans 12:3 - For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Ephesians 3:8 - Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

Only they would that we should remember the poor – they made but one request of us: that we in our ministry to the Gentiles would remember and be mindful of the poor Christians in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25-27).

- The Jerusalem leadership shared a great need with Paul and requested that they help meet this need.

- The Jerusalem church faced the issue of poverty from its very conception.
  - o Pilgrims from other regions would travel to Jerusalem, get saved, become a part of the church, and stay in Jerusalem. This led to the need for the sharing of possessions to care for the needy that we read about in Acts 2 and Acts 4.
  - o In Acts 6, we read about widows not receiving proper care.
  - o In Acts 7-8, we read about major persecution and imprisonments brought on Jewish Christians by Paul himself.
  - o Beyond that, during this time period, the region dealt with major famine and overpopulation issues.
  - o All of these aspects combined created such harsh conditions for Christians in Jerusalem that they collectively came to be known as “the Poor”. (George, 2020)
- In this meeting that the Jerusalem leadership had with Paul, they recognized his calling and commissioning by God to take the gospel to the Gentiles. They just asked one thing of him. Paul, on your endeavors, don’t forget about the financial need of the Christians here in Jerusalem, and if there’s anything you and the Gentiles you reach can do to help, it would be greatly appreciated.

The same which I also was forward to do – that one thing they asked of us (helping to financially minister to the poor in Jerusalem) was something that I was already eager to help with.

- From Acts 11 we know that on the visit, Paul and Barnabas were already delivering financial funds from the Gentile church at Antioch to the Jewish poor in Jerusalem.
- Acts 11:29-30 - Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.
- Romans 15:25-27 - But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.
- 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 - Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.
- 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 - Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will

of God. Inasmuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

“He told of a private meeting he held on his second post conversion visit to Jerusalem with the church leaders there. The purpose of the meeting was to set before these “pillars” the gospel he had been proclaiming for some years among the Gentiles. Upon hearing his testimony they fully endorsed his message and him. From Paul’s perspective this meeting was a smashing success. Not only were the false brothers unsuccessful in their efforts to compel Titus to be circumcised, a move fiercely resisted by Paul, but, equally important, he and the Jerusalem authorities arrived at a common missionary strategy to enhance the task of world evangelization. Paul eagerly agreed with the request that this practical division of labor might not result in a loss of love between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Their unity in the faith and mutual care would be demonstrated by a love offering collected on behalf of the poor saints in Jerusalem.” (George, 2020)

Once again, Paul told this story to defend his ministry as an apostle of Jesus Christ.

- He was called and converted by Jesus Himself.
- On His first Jerusalem visit, he made acquaintance with the apostles.
- On His second Jerusalem visit, he was recognized by the apostles as one specifically commissioned by Jesus to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

### **Application**

There are a lot of things that we should be willing to be gracious with in accommodating brothers and sisters in Christ. We should not be overly zealous to sever relationships with fellow members of the body. But when it comes to those who water down or add to the gospel message, we do not accommodate them ever. We do not do so for two reasons. First, because those who water down or add to the gospel are not Christians. Second, because clarity on the gospel is that important.

# Galatians 2:11-14

## Review

Over the course of the first two chapters of Galatians, Paul has been defending himself as an apostle of Jesus on par with the likes of Peter, James, and John. He's defended himself by showing that he was called by Jesus (1:10-17), friendly with the apostles (1:18-24), and recognized by the apostles as a partner in the ministry (2:1-10). Here, in Galatians 2:11-14, Paul is going to wrap up his defense of himself by showing that he was not only recognized as a partner by the apostles, but also that at one time he rebuked to the face one of the chief apostles, Peter himself.

Galatians 2:11-14 - 11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

- In Antioch, there was an integrated church of Jews and Gentiles.
- Peter visited and fellowshiped with Jewish and Gentile Christians together at meals.
- A group of far right Jews from the Jerusalem church arrived in Antioch, and Peter became fearful.
- He stopped eating meals with Jewish and Gentile Christians together. His actions led to every other Jewish Christian in the church, including Barnabas, doing the same.
- Paul came back, discovered the division now present in his church, and confronted Peter to his face publicly over what he had done. He called him out as a hypocrite.
- That's basically the story, but if you're listening to this story and you're anything like me, it doesn't really make sense.
  - o Why was it such a big deal for Jewish and Gentile Christians to eat meals together? Why did Jewish Christians from the Jerusalem get upset about it? Why was Peter so afraid of them that he stopped? Why was Peter's withdrawal such a big deal that Paul confronted him publicly as a hypocrite in front of the whole church?

In order to understand the significance of what really happened in Antioch, you have to understand the history of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles (non Jews) in the early church and the unique challenges that came with integration.

## Context

The early church of Acts 1-9 was almost exclusively Jewish (racially) with some proselytes mixed in. Proselytes were non Jews (Gentiles) that converted to Judaism (consequently

they kept the Jewish law: they were circumcised, they ate kosher, they worshipped in the synagogues and at the temple). Old Testament examples would include, for instance, Rahab the harlot from Jericho and Ruth the Moabitess, who married Boaz and became David's great grandmother. In Acts 1-9, these were predominately the people that the gospel was being presented to and that were accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior: Jews and Gentiles that had previously converted to Judaism and kept the Jewish law (people like Ruth and Rahab).

- Acts 2 (Pentecost)
  - o Acts 2:5, 9-11a – 5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and **proselytes**, 11 Cretes and Arabians
  - o At Pentecost, those who got saved were devout Jews or Gentiles that had previously converted to Judaism (including the keeping of the law)
- Acts 6 (Deacons)
  - o There was a problem with widows being neglected in the early church.
  - o 7 men were selected to help care for this need, and at least one of them Nicolas is specifically named as a proselyte of Antioch (Acts 6:7).
  - o At least one of them Nicolas is specifically named as a proselyte of Antioch
- Acts 8 (Ethiopian Eunuch)
  - o He had come to Jerusalem to worship (Acts 8:27). This means he was probably a proselyte.
  - o He was likely a Gentile that had converted to Judaism and was on his way to Jerusalem to worship. He met Philip. Philip shared the gospel, and he got saved.

Here's my point. Up through Acts 10, every Gentile that we have record of getting saved was a proselyte, someone who had already converted to Judaism in the past. Thus, they had already been circumcised and kept the law.

Here was the million dollar question that would be answered in Acts 10. Could Gentiles that weren't proselytes be saved? Could a Gentile that hadn't already converted to Judaism just become a Christian? Did a Gentile need to become a Jew (through circumcision and a commitment to the law) in order to become a 'Christian'?

This question was answered in Acts 10 where we see the first Gentile convert that had not already converted to Judaism...the first Gentile convert that hadn't been circumcised...the first Gentile convert that did not keep the Jewish law: a man by the name of Cornelius.

Acts 10-11 – first Gentile convert (Cornelius)

Acts 10:1-6 - There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, 2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. 3 He saw in a vision evidently

about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. 5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: 6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

- What did Cornelius do? He sent two of his servants and one of his soldiers to Joppa to fetch Peter.
- Meanwhile, the next day as the men were on their journey to find Peter, it was lunch time and Peter was hungry. While they were preparing the food, Peter was on the rooftop and had a vision. There was a sheet coming down from heaven with all sorts of non kosher, unclean animals on it.
- God said to Peter, "It's lunch time. You're hungry. Go ahead and eat." Peter said, "No way. I've never eaten anything non kosher, anything unclean." God said, "Don't call that which I have cleansed, unclean."
- After the vision, Peter was confused trying to figure out what the vision meant. Guess who showed up? The two servants and the soldier from the Gentile Cornelius. They showed up asking for Peter by name.
- Peter asked them, "What do you want with me?" They told him the story about the vision God had given to Cornelius about sending for him (Peter) and that Peter would tell Cornelius what to do.
- The next day Peter returned with the men to see Cornelius, and Cornelius had gathered his friends and family to hear the message from God through Peter. Listen to what happened when Peter arrived.

Acts 10:27-29a – 27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. (*uncircumcised, unclean* Gentile) 28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. 29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for:

- Cornelius told Peter the story of his vision from God, and then Peter responded by saying that God was no respecter of persons and that anyone from any background could be saved through Jesus Christ. He shared the gospel saying:

Acts 10:39-43 -39 And we are witnesses of all things which he (*Jesus*) did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; 41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

- You know what happened? Those uncircumcised, unclean, non law observing Gentiles believed the gospel and the Holy Spirit fell down on them. They started speaking in

tongues and praising God. And the Jewish Christians that were there were shocked that the Holy Spirit would indwell these uncircumcised Gentiles, non law observing Gentiles.

Acts 10:46b-48 - Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

- Wow, what a revelation in the early church. Gentiles can be saved and filled with the Holy Ghost through faith in Jesus too.

Acts 11:1-4 – 1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, 3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them (*take note – this ties in directly with what is happening in Galatians 2*). 4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them

- “Traditional Jewish strictures against the eating of unclean food covered a variety of culinary practices, such as the consumption of pork, eating food offered to idols, and partaking of meat from which the blood had not been properly drained in accordance with the law of Moses (cf. Lev 3:17; 7:26–27; 17:10–14), as well as partaking of food not properly tithed or eating a meal without observing the ritual cleansing of the hands.” (George, 2020, p. 202)
- “These traditions were pressed into even stricter requirements by the Pharisaic teachers who forbade any observant Jew from having table fellowship with anyone outside of the covenant of Israel.” (George, 2020, p. 202)
- Acts 11:18 - 18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.
- Peter was the first one to lead an uncircumcised, non law observing Gentile to the Lord, and afterwards he ate with them. He fellowshiped with them in their home. Why? Because they were saved, and how could he consider a Gentile Christian unclean that had been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ? How could refuse to fellowship with one that the Holy Spirit Himself had indwelled?

In Acts 10, we see the first Gentile convert, but in Acts 11, we see the first integrated Jewish and Gentile church: Antioch.

Acts 11 – first Jewish Gentile church (Antioch)

Acts 11:19-21 - 19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

- What does the Jerusalem church do about reports of this integrated church of Jews and non law observing Gentiles? They send Barnabas to investigate and when he got there, he was so excited over what God was doing. Shortly after he arrived, Barnabas went and got Paul from Tarsus and they went and ministered together at the church of Antioch.
- Acts 11:26 - And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.
  - o Why? Because this growing group of Jewish and Gentile believers in Antioch had integrated. You couldn't just call them Jews. You couldn't just call them Gentiles. You had to call this united group of believers something, and they came to be known by that which united them: Christ.

Shortly thereafter, Paul, Barnabas, and Titus made their visit to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) to talk with Peter, James, and John about the gospel and to make sure they were all on the same page about the gospel and about the practical implication of the gospel to Jews and Gentiles.

- During the course of that meeting it was very clearly agreed upon that Jews and Gentiles were both saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and that Gentile converts to Christianity (like Titus) did not also have to convert to Judaism. They did not need to be circumcised or observe the other Jewish laws in order to be saved, even if their fellow Jewish brothers and sisters in Christ of their own volition continued to do so.
  - o And even though through Christ they were no longer obligated to, many of those early Jewish Christians continued to observe the law as a part of their lifelong culture...and as a means of opening up doors of opportunity for sharing the gospel with their fellow unbelieving Jews.

Nevertheless, at some point after this meeting in Jerusalem, Peter made a trip up to Antioch to see this incredible Christian church composed of Jews and uncircumcised (non law observant) Gentiles. This is the trip that Galatians 2:11-14 is describing.

So we've seen the context. Peter was the one who led the first uncircumcised Gentile to the Lord and afterwards he fellowshiped with that Gentile in his own home because he had cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ...and when he caught flack back in Jerusalem for fellowshiping with this Gentile, he stood firm in his conviction that he would not consider unclean a Gentile brother that had been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

That context sets the stage for the confrontation in Galatians 2.

## **Sermon**

### 1.) The Confrontation

11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

But when Peter was come to Antioch – on the trip he made to the see the first integrated Christian church



I withstood him to the face – I publicly confronted and opposed him to his face. Why?

Because he was to be blamed – because he was in the wrong, because he stood squarely in the wrong before God for what he had done

- This is a reminder for us today that even the apostles were not perfect. Only Jesus was perfect. Peter was in the wrong, and Paul called him out for it.
- Why would Paul tell this story to the church at Galatia? It was the perfect story to transition from the defense of himself to the defense of the gospel.
  - o On one hand, Paul's rebuke of Peter showed that he was not an inferior apostle.
  - o On the other hand, the issue that Paul rebuked Peter for was directly related to the gospel itself which is where Paul is going in chapters 3-4.

What was the cause of the confrontation? Paul backtracks to explain himself and tell the story of what Peter had done.

## 2.) The Cause

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles – when Peter first arrived in Antioch, he found Jewish and Gentile Christians eating together in Christian fellowship, and he joined them. This table fellowship likely included the Christian love feast of which communion (which we are partaking in tonight) was an important part (1 Cor. 11:20-21). Peter ate and fellowshiped with these Gentile Christians just like he ate with Cornelius and the other Gentile Christians that he himself had led to the Lord in Acts 10 in Caesarea.

- “After the Cornelius incident apparently nearly everyone agreed that Gentiles could indeed be saved. But on what basis salvation was to be extended to them and under what conditions table fellowship was to be shared with them, remained matters of deep division and controversy. However, the crucial point for understanding Peter's action at Antioch is the fact that he himself had pioneered the sharing of the gospel with the Gentiles and had already worked through to a position of Christian liberty concerning unbroken table fellowship within the body of Christ.” (George, 2020, p. 204)

But when they were come He withdrew and separated himself fearing them which were of the circumcision – Just as was the case in Acts 11, there were those from the Jerusalem church that did not think that Peter had any business fellowshiping with unclean, uncircumcised Gentiles and that in so doing he was violating God's law. Rather than standing firm as he had in Acts 11, Peter went a different route this time. What did he do?

He withdrew and separated himself – he cowered and excluded himself from table fellowship with the Gentile Christians. He stopped attending these joint meals. Why? Fear.

- Illustration – strategic withdrawal of troops

Fearing them which were of the circumcision – he was afraid of the delegation of Jewish Christians from Jerusalem

- Throughout the New Testament, Peter vacillates between being fearless and fearful.
- Here, the same fearful Peter that denied Christ three times on the eve of His crucifixion shows up again.
- Why was Peter afraid? What was there to be afraid of? There was a lot to be afraid of.
- Peter was called to be the apostle to the Jews. Reports of him eating with Gentiles could have impacted his ability to minister to Jews both within and without the church, many of which would have been appalled at even the thought of eating with an unclean Gentile.
- What did he do? For the sake of his reputation among the Jews, he disenfranchised his fellow Gentile brothers and sisters in Christ by withdrawing from fellowship with them.
  - o Application – Christians who refuse to share the Lord’s table with other believers because of fear and prejudice make the same mistake that Peter did (MacArthur, 1987)

Acts 21:18-25 - And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

Ephesians 2:19-22 - Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Luke 15:2 - And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

Matthew 26:69-75 - Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

But that's not even the worst part. Peter's fear based actions had ripple effects in the church at Antioch.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him – his withdrawal from eating together with Gentile believers caused all of the other Jewish Christians in the church at Antioch to withdraw as well.

- This makes sense. Peter is like “the apostle”. “If he’s not eating with Gentile Christians, I probably shouldn’t either.”
- The word for “dissembled” literally means “to act hypocritically together”.
- Peter was being a hypocrite because he was acting in contrast with his own convictions.
  - o Remember, he led the first Gentiles to the Lord, and then he ate with them, and when he got grief for it back in Jerusalem, he stood firm. “They’re just as much Christians as we are. Why would I refuse to fellowship with and call unclean those who have ben cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ?”
  - o That was what he believed, but because of fear he was acting in contrast with his convictions, and his actions led the other Jewish Christians to follow suit.
- The fracture was so great among the believers int that church that....

Insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation – the one who had introduced Paul to the apostles in Jerusalem and co-labored alongside him in Antioch and on their first missionary journey also withdrew!

- This may have influenced the tension between Paul and Barnabas that led to their ultimate separation prior to Paul’s second missionary journey (Acts 15:37-40). (MacArthur, 1987)

We’ve seen the context. Peter led the first Gentiles to Christ and then shared meals with them because through Christ they were just as clean as he was. We’ve seen the confrontation. Paul withstood Peter to the face. We’ve the seen the cause of the

confrontation: Peter, in contrast with his own convictions, withdrew from table fellowship with the Gentiles because of fear. Finally, we see the critique. What did Paul say to Peter when he confronted him publicly?

#### 4.) The Critique

14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel – when I discovered (this seems to indicate that Paul was away while this happened) that these Jewish Christians were not walking in accordance with the truth of the gospel (MacArthur, 1987)

- What's the truth of the gospel? The truth of the gospel is that whether you're Jewish, Gentile, white, black, Latino, Asian, tall, short, smart, dumb, rich, poor, male, female...if you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are clean, and there is no room for prejudice, disenfranchisement, or castes within the Body of Christ.

I said unto Peter before them all – in the midst of the whole assembly

- Peter sinned publicly so Paul rebuked him publicly. (MacArthur, 1987)
- “Earlier, in Jerusalem, Paul had sought a private conference with the pillar apostles to prevent the least appearance of disharmony among the leaders of the church. Here, however, he did not shrink from a public confrontation with the most prominent pillar of them all because to have done so would have involved the compromise of his own conscience and the approval by connivance of a deep and permanent rift within the body of Christ.” (George, 2020, p. 208)
- “The issue at Antioch was not what one ate, but rather with whom one ate. The principle of accommodation cannot be stretched to include solidarity with a practice or belief that stands in contradiction to the gospel itself.” (George, 2020, p. 209)

If thou, being a Jew, - by birth and education

livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews – since your vision from God and visit with Cornelius, you have freely and openly eaten with Gentiles. You have realized that we are free from the bondage of the law.

- He no longer separated from his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. (Plummer, 1902)

Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? – how is it now that you are forcing Gentile believers to live in accordance with the Jewish ceremonial law? Peter, you say that the Gentiles aren't saved by the keeping of the law, and you say that the Gentile believers aren't bound by the Jewish law, but by withdrawing from fellowship with them for the sake of your “testimony” among the Jews, you are, in essence, forcing them to live like Jews...why? Because apparently that's the only way you'll fellowship with them. (Spence & Exell, 1883)

- "Peter, if that person is clean enough to be God's Son, he's clean enough to be your brother. How can you withhold fellowship from one that God Himself in the person of the Holy Spirit indwells?"
  - Although Paul and the Jerusalem apostles were on the same page with regards to the gospel itself, the full implications of how Jews and Gentiles could practically be fellow members of the same church had not yet been fleshed out. The issue of table fellowship came to the forefront at the church of Antioch. "What does it mean when the people of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ and sealed by the Holy Spirit, cannot share together a common loaf at a single table?" (George, 2020, p. 201)
  - "From Peter's stance at the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 and, even more, from the content of the two letters he contributed to the NT canon, we have reason to believe that there was no permanent rupture with Pauline Christianity. Peter had fallen before and repented before, and we may assume that a similar pattern of remorse and renewal followed Paul's stern rebuke." (George, 2020, pp. 210-211)
- Galatians 2:5 - To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Proverbs 27:5-6 - Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

Acts 10:28 - And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

Acts 11:3-18 - Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who

believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Galatians 2:3 - But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

Acts 15:24 - Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:

Acts 15:28-29 - For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

2 Corinthians 11:5 - For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

1 Timothy 5:20 - Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

“Racism of any brand in any culture is incompatible with the truth of the gospel. Any religious system or theology that denies this truth stands in opposition to the “new creation” God is bringing into being, the body of Christ based not on caste, color, or social condition but on grace alone.” (George, 2020, p. 212)



(Conn, 2022)

Illustration – “In April 1836, Timothy Gilbert was a member of the Third Baptist Church in Boston. Seating was segregated in this church as was the case elsewhere, but Timothy determined to test the church’s racial segregation policy by inviting several African Americans to join him in his pew. The church immediately excommunicated Gilbert from the fellowship for this violation. As a result, he soon set out with several other members to form the First Free Baptist Church. Officially recognized in 1839, this church eventually became Tremont Temple Baptist Church, the first church in Boston to abolish pew rental fees. Considered ‘the first integrated church in America,’ Tremont Temple declared that ‘all who practice slavery or justify it shall be excluded from the church and its communion.’”

(National Park Service, 2022)

- Imagine that a well-known evangelist from the south named Peter comes to visit this church and spend some time there. Imagine that he fellowships with this integrated body of believers both during service times and outside of service times. Imagine that word travels of Peter’s actions, and, as a result, there is an uproar of those in the South, where Peter ministered, demanding that he not fellowship at the same table as African Americans... and imagine these churches from the south saying that if he didn’t back down, he would not be welcome to preach anymore in

the south, where God had called him to minister. Tremont Temple was in the north, and the north was where God had called Paul, not Peter. This was Paul's church. Peter was just visiting from the south. Imagine Peter contemplating all of this. I want you to imagine that, outside of church services, Peter stopped fellowshiping with the African Americans in that church...he began declining their dinner invitations, and imagine that every other white member of that church, including the elders followed suit...that is the situation that Paul came back to in Antioch. He had left that church a unified body of Christians, not defined by their differences, but by their commitment to Christ. He found it a divided mess because Peter was afraid of how his interactions with Gentiles in the north might affect his ability to minister in Jerusalem in the south.

### **Application**

God forbid that that should ever happen in our church. God forbid that we would ever call someone unclean that has been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

We do not look down on or treat as lesser fellow brothers and sisters in Christ because of

- Their race
- Their income
- Their culture
- Their education
- Their past

If they have put their faith in Jesus Christ, then through His blood they are just as clean as you are. We are all sinners saved by the blood of Jesus Christ.



# Galatians 2:15-21

## Review

In the first two chapters of Galatians, Paul defended himself as an apostle of the same status as men like Peter, James and John. He did so by showing that he was called by Jesus, was friendly with the apostles, was recognized by the apostles as a partner in the ministry, and at one point in time actually rebuked Peter to his face when he was clearly in the wrong.

Last week, we examined in detail that conflict between Peter and Paul. We saw the context of it. Peter led the first Gentiles to Christ and then shared meals with them because through Christ they were just as clean as he was. We saw the cause of the conflict. Peter, in contrast with his own convictions, withdrew from table fellowship with the Gentile Christians in Antioch because of fear of the perceptions of Jewish Christians from Jerusalem. We saw Paul's critique of Peter. "Peter, you say that the Gentiles aren't saved by the keeping of the law, and you say that the Gentile believers aren't bound by the Jewish law, but by withdrawing from fellowship with them for the sake of your 'testimony' among the Jews, you are, in essence, forcing them to live like Jews. Because apparently that's the only way you'll fellowship with them."

That's where we left off, and we're going to pick up tonight in Galatians 2:15.

## Sermon

Verses 15-21 are a continuation of Paul's comments directed at Peter. They link the incident that occurred in Antioch with meat of Paul's defense of the gospel that is found in chapters 3-4 of Galatians. These verses also reveal how Peter's beliefs were inconsistent his behavior in verses 11-14.

"Peter, your behavior in withdrawing from fellowship with Gentile Christians in Antioch is inconsistent with the beliefs that you and I share in common."

What were those beliefs?

1.) The Law is Not Our Savior. Jesus is.

15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles – When Paul says “we” here, he is referring to himself and Peter and other Jewish Christians. The point he is making is not that Gentiles were sinners and Jews were not. The point he is making is that Jews in their natural condition enjoyed many privileges that pagan Gentiles did not.

<b>Gentiles</b>	<b>Jews</b>
<b>1. Foreigners to the covenants of promise</b>	<b>1. God's chosen people</b>
<b>2. Without hope</b>	<b>2. Recipients of God's covenants</b>
<b>3. Without God in the world</b>	<b>3. Entrusted with God's Word</b>
	<b>4. Entrusted with God's service</b>
	<b>5. Entrusted with the Messiah</b>

- For instance, Gentiles in general **in their natural condition**, existed in a bad, hopeless, and sinful state. Paul described these pagans in Eph 2:12 as foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope, and without God in the world. They were hopelessly, wretchedly lost in their depravity and deserving of the just judgment of God. They were Gentile sinners.
- In contrast, the Jews, **in their natural condition**, enjoyed many advantages. They were God's chosen people. They were the recipients of God's covenants. They had been given the Word of God. They had been entrusted with God's service in the tabernacle and temple. They had been given the Messiah. They had been given all of these advantages. They were privileged.
  - o Romans 3:1-2 – 1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God (*they received the Word of God*).
  - o Romans 9:4-5 - Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption (*they were adopted as God's chosen people*), and the glory (*they've seen the Shekinah glory of God*), and the covenants (*Abrahamic, Davidic, Mosaic, Palestenian*), and the giving of the law, and the service of God (*they've been given the privilege of the service of God in the tabernacle and temple*), and the promises (*God's promises*); 5 Whose are the fathers (*the patriarchs were Jews*), and of

whom as concerning the flesh Christ came (*the Messiah was a Jew*), who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

- Illustration – Imagine if Stephen Isbell and I were both going to attempt to swim unabatted from California to Hawaii across the Pacific Ocean. Imagine that Stephen were given a privileged starting position relative to me. Rather than starting from Ventura Harbor, he was going to be dropped off from a helicopter two miles out. He has a two mile head start. He is privileged. He is in a better starting position relative to me to be able to swim to Hawaii.
- Just as Stephen Isbell is privileged relative to me, the Jews (including Paul, Peter, and others) were privileged relative to the Gentiles.
- Where is Paul going with this?
  - o “Even as privileged Jews with all of the blessings that God has given to us...”

John 8:39-41 - They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

Romans 4:16 - Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

Matthew 9:11 - And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

Romans 3:9 - What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

Ephesians 2:11-12 - Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, - despite all of the blessings and benefits of our privileged state as Jews, we understand as Jewish Christians that the keeping of the law is insufficient to justify us, to make us right before God. We have recognized that, even in our privileged state, we are unable to make ourselves right before God. We have realized that we need outside intervention and that the only way we can only be declared righteous before God is through faith in Jesus Christ.

- “Despite our privileged starting position, we know that it is impossible for us to save ourselves. We can only be saved through faith in what Jesus did for us.”
  - o Illustration – returning to the swimming illustration...even if Stephen had a two mile privileged starting position to swim to Hawaii from California, could he do it without outside intervention? No. It’s not possible. Myself and Stephen would both fall short in and of ourselves. That’s Paul’s point. Jews and Gentiles both fall short of God’s standard of perfection for heaven. They are both sinners in need of a Savior.
- Paul had realized not that the law was bad, but that he was and that because of his own sinfulness and inability to perfectly keep the law, the law could not produce for Paul a right standing before God. (George, 2020)

Knowing this...

Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law – knowing that we even as Jews are hopeless sinners in need of a Savior, we have put our faith and trust in Christ to save us...to make us righteous before God.

- Knowing that the law cannot save us, we, as Jews, have put our faith and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Why?

For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified – Because the law is savior to no one. Paul isn’t just saying this. He’s quoting from Psalm 143:1-2.

- Psalm 143:1-2 - 1 Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. 2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant: **for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.**
- Take note that Paul changes “no living man” to “no flesh”. He does this by design for when Paul takes about the flesh, he is referring to the part of man that “in its fallen state was subject to the debilitating forces of desire, decay, and death.” (George, 2020)
- Romans 8:3 - For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
- Because of the weakness of our flesh no one can keep God’s law, and because no one can keep God’s law, the law is savior to no one.

Paul says, “Peter, even as Jews, we understand that the law cannot save us. Whether one is Jewish or Gentile, we are all equally in need of Jesus to save us. If Jew and Gentile alike have both been cleansed of their sin through faith in Jesus, then why should a Jewish Christian refuse to fellowship with a Gentile Christian?”

- That behavior is inconsistent with our shared conviction that the law is not our savior. Jesus is.

Application – That ought to be a poignant reminder to each of us that whether you grew up in church your whole life or were saved out of the slums last Tuesday, we are all on equal ground as sinners saved by the grace of God.

Galatians 3:10-12 - For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

Acts 13:38-39 - Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Romans 3:19-20 - Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:21-26 - But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Romans 5:8-9 - But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Galatians 3:11 - But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

Psalms 143:2 - And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

But if, while we – as Jewish Christians, understanding our sinfulness before God and need for salvation

Seek to be justified by Christ – look to Jesus to save us, understanding that the law cannot

If in so doing...

We ourselves also are found sinners is Christ therefore the minister of sin – if looking to Jesus to save us from our sin means that we are on equal ground with the Gentiles as sinners in need of a Savior...

- Then does that mean that Jesus is somehow the minister of sin? Does that mean that Jesus has made us egregious sinners like the pagan Gentiles?

God forbid – no way!

- Illustration - Christ doesn't make people sinners any more than stepping on a scale makes you fat. You're fat whether or not you step on the scale, but it is only through stepping on the scale and facing the truth of your condition that you can be delivered from it.

Romans 9:30-33 - What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Romans 6:1-2 - What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Christ is no minister of sin.

However,

18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

For if I build again the things which I destroyed I make myself a transgressor – having put my faith in Jesus to save me from my sin/to cleanse me, if I were to return to the law seeking to be saved through it

- I would be essentially admitting that Christ had not fully saved me...I would be admitting that the cross of Christ was insufficient to fully cleanse me and that I am in need of further cleansing through the law.
- In so doing, I would essentially be declaring myself an uncleansed sinner.
- “Christ is no minister of sin, but if I look beyond the cross for something additional to save me, I am essentially making myself a sinner by declaring that there is still some part of me that the cross was insufficient to cleanse, and that is wrong.”

Galatians 2:4-5 - And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring

us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Galatians 4:9-12 - But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.

The law is not our Savior. Jesus is. If that's the case, then Jewish Christians should not refuse fellowship with Gentile Christians.

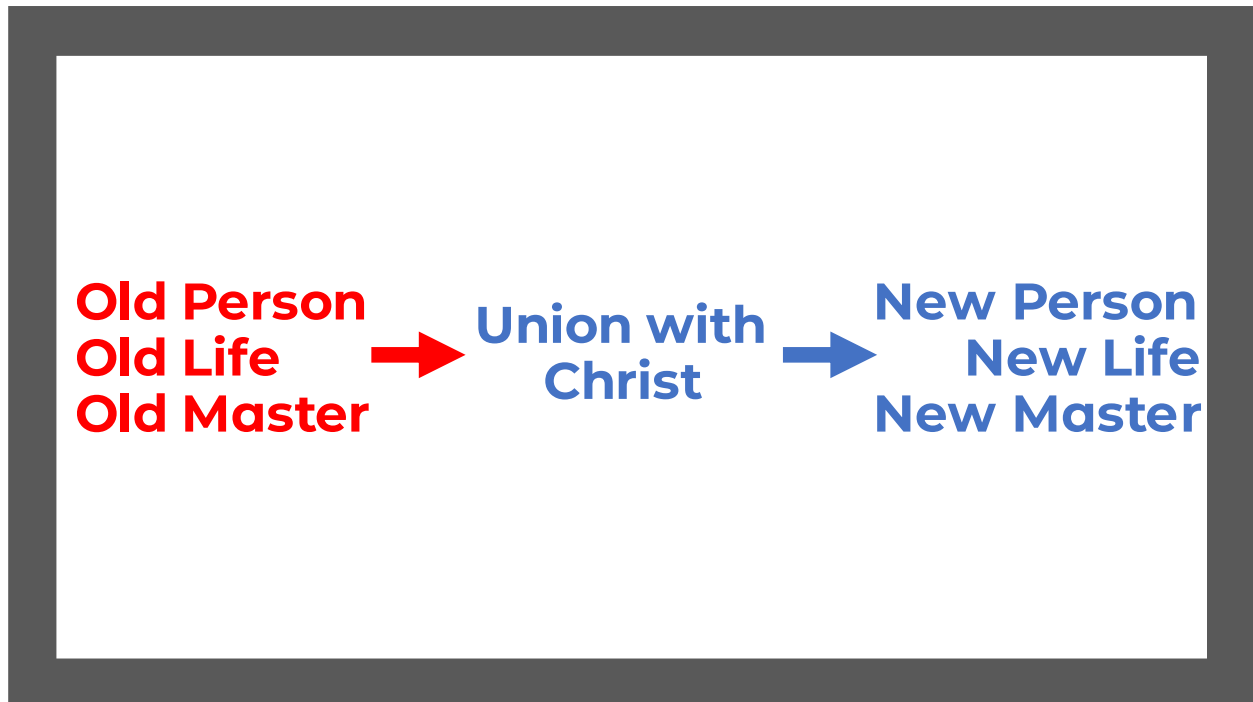
- That behavior is inconsistent with the belief that Jesus, not the law, is our Savior.

This was the first belief that was inconsistent with Peter's behavior, but it was not the only belief that was inconsistent with his behavior. For, in verse 19, Paul shared another.

2.) The Law is Not Our Master. Jesus is.

19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.



“In virtue of my union with Christ, I am a new person with a new master, and my old master no longer has dominion over me.”

The law is not our master. Jesus is.

“When Paul said he died to the law, he was referring to nothing less than the God-given commandments and decrees contained in OT Scriptures. However, he was not saying here that the law of God had lost all meaning or relevance for the Christian believer.” (George, 2020, p. 228)

- Romans 6:1-14

For I through the law am dead to the law – the law is no longer my master. It no longer has dominion over me. I am dead to it.

- How are we dead to the law through the law?
  - o The law reveals the depths of man’s sinfulness and points him to Christ

How does death release us from our old master?

Illustration – Death releases us from the obligations of this life. That is why people fake their own deaths when they’re having money problems or people are trying to kill them. Why? You can’t beat money out a dead man. You can’t kill a dead man.

- I’ll give you another example. When a spouse dies, the surviving spouse is freed from their marital obligation. They are free to remarry without being an adulterer.
- Romans 7:1-3 - 1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

“Ok, death releases us from the obligations of this life, but I don’t feel dead. How has death released me from my old master, the law?”

- Paul explains that in verse 4 of Romans 7.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

- We have died through our union with Christ. When Christ died on the cross, we died with Him and thus our obligation to the law was fulfilled and we were set free from our old master.
- “If a man is convicted of a capital crime and is put to death, the law obviously has no more claim on him. He has paid his debt to society. Therefore, even if he were to rise from the dead, he would still be guiltless before the law which would have no claim on his new life. So it is with the believer who dies in Christ to rise in new life. He is free forever from any claim of the law on him. He paid the law’s demand when he died in Christ.” (MacArthur, 1987)



We have been set free for a purpose.

That I might live unto God – we have not been set free so that we might voluntarily return to the bondage of our old master, but rather so that we can live for God, the one who freed us, the one who brought us into relationship with Himself, the one who is our new master.

Illustration – the one who has been freed from the bondage of his old master (the law) and then returns to it voluntarily is like the freed slave who returns to his slave master, or the addict that has been freed from his addiction and been sober for 10 years and then returns to the bondage of that drink. It makes no sense. We have been freed so that we might live unto God, so that we might serve another.

Our union with Christ has brought about radical transformation in our life, but what does “union with Christ” even mean?

Look at verse 20. Paul describes it.

Galatians 3:10 - For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Galatians 3:24 - Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Romans 3:19-20 - Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 4:15 - Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

Romans 5:20 - Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

Romans 7:7-11 - What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

Romans 6:11 - Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Peter 2:24 - Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Romans 14:7-8 - For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

I am crucified with Christ – through faith in Christ, I am brought into union with Him and have been crucified with Him

- In Christ, we died, and in Christ we are a new person with a new life and a new master.

Illustration – baptism is symbolic of this

- It is symbolic of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection
- It is symbolic of a Christian's union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection
- Romans 6:4 - Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Nevertheless I live. - though I have been crucified with Christ, I am more alive than I have ever been. I have new life.

- I'm dead to the law, but I am alive to God.
- I am free from my former master, but now I have a new master that I live for.

yet not I, but Christ liveth in me – but I'm not who I used to be. The old person is gone. I'm a new creation that has been clothed with Christ, and Christ dwells within me through the presence of the Holy Spirit

and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God – and the life that I am now living in this body, I live by faith in Jesus Christ.

- As Christians we are not just saved by faith, we live by faith. We live by faith in Jesus the one who...

Who loved me, and gave himself for me – through Christ's loving sacrifice for me on the cross, I have been forgiven, freed from the bondage of sin and the law, and given a new everlasting life. And now I live that life for and by faith in the one who gave Himself for me.

Colossians 2:11-14 - In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of

ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

2 Corinthians 4:11 - For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Galatians 1:4 - Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

Matthew 20:28 - Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

The law was our master, and we owed it our life. But through union in Christ's death, we were released from our obligation to the law, and given a new life and a new master.

The law is not our master. Jesus is. If that's the case, then Jewish Christians shouldn't separate from Gentile Christians who don't serve the old master, who don't keep the law.

- That behavior is inconsistent with the belief that Jesus, not the law, is our master.

Inconsistent belief 1: The law is not our Savior. Jesus is.

Inconsistent belief 2: The law is not our master. Jesus is.

3.) The Law is Not Sufficient. Jesus is.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

I do not frustrate the grace of God – It's not me that's laying aside God's grace through what I say. It's those who teach salvation through the law that are. Why?

For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain - if man could have a right standing before God through the keeping of the law, then Christ died for no reason. His death was unnecessary.

- To teach that the law is sufficient where Jesus is not is to lay aside the grace of God.

The law is not sufficient. Jesus is. If that's the case, then Jewish Christians shouldn't separate from fellowship with Gentile Christians.

- That behavior is inconsistent with the belief that Jesus, not the law, is sufficient.
- Jesus is enough.

Galatians 3:21 - Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

Romans 10:3 - For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

Romans 11:6 - And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

1 Corinthians 15:14 - And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

1 Corinthians 15:17 - And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

### **Application**

The law is not our Savior. Jesus is.

The law is not our Master. Jesus is.

The law is not sufficient. Jesus is.

If those things are true, then we have no business looking down upon or treating someone as unclean who has been just as much cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ as we have. That was Paul's point to Peter. Wrong doctrine leads to wrong behavior. As Christians, we must hold to right doctrine, and we must ensure that we are acting in accordance the doctrines we profess.

# Galatians 3:1-5

## Review

In Galatians 1-2, Paul defended himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ on the same level as men like Peter, James, and John. At the end of chapter 2, Paul transitioned from defending himself to defending the gospel which was also under attack by the false teachers making inroads in the Galatians churches. We saw last time that we met that Paul made three major contentions at the end of chapter 2:

1. The law is not our Savior. Jesus is.
2. The law is not our Master. Jesus is.
3. The law is not sufficient. Jesus is.

From those three contentions, Paul is going to launch into a full-blown defense of the gospel in chapters 3-4. We're going to look at verses 1-5 of chapter 3 this evening in which Paul defends the gospel on the basis of the Galatian's experience, but before we do, I think it's really important that we define some terms at the heart of Galatians.

## Introduction

Have you ever wondered how Catholics interpret Galatians and other books like it? It's not like the book of Galatians is missing from Catholic Bibles. If you talk to a well versed Catholic, they will affirm the same terminology that we do. They'll affirm the insufficiency of the works of the law. They'll affirm their belief in justification, and they'll affirm their belief in the necessity of faith. They'll affirm the same terms and verses, and yet when it comes to how one is saved, it's abundantly clear that Christians and Catholics arrive at very different conclusions.

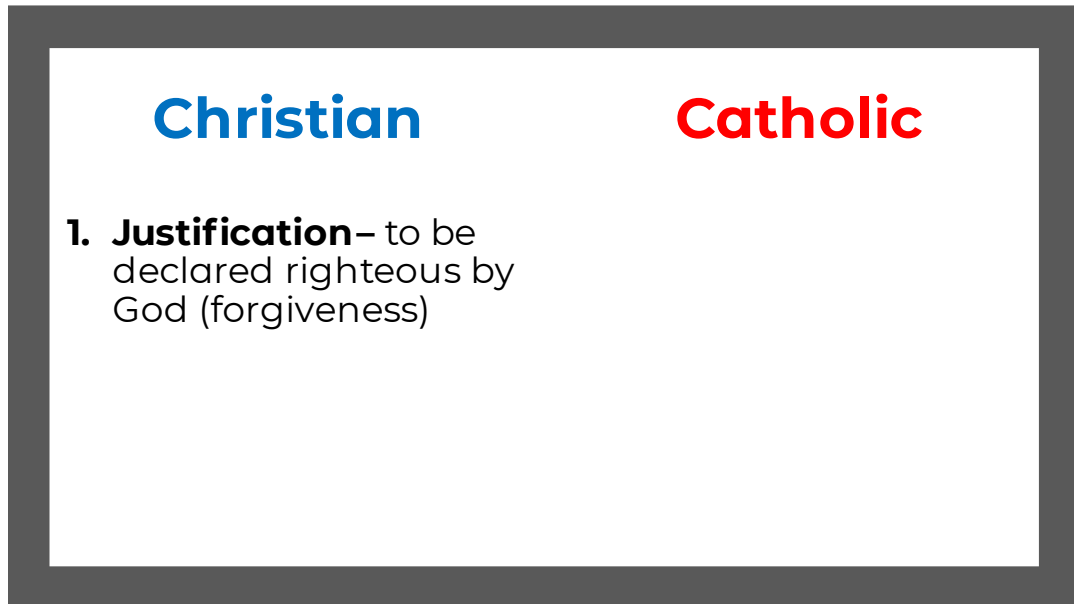
If they're looking at the same verses with the same terms, how do they come to such different conclusions about salvation? Here's the answer: different definitions of those terms. When you have different definitions of terms, you can look at the same evidence and arrive at wildly different conclusions.

Illustration – if you were to ask someone whether or not the US is in a recession right now, their answer to that question would be dependent upon what? How they define a recession. If they define it as two consecutive quarters of negative GDP, then they would say “yes”, we're in a recession. If they define it as something different, then they might say “no”. Despite looking at the same evidence, they arrive at very different conclusions. Why? Because they define things differently. The path to truth then becomes, “Which definition is correct?”

When it comes to the doctrine of salvation there are three primary terms that Catholics and Christians define differently. By way of introduction tonight, I want to share those terms with you, explain the different definitions, and then defend the Christian definition as correct.

- These three terms are justification, works of the law, and faith.

### ***Justification***



- 
- Christian definition – to be declared righteous by God (forgiveness)
  - “Justification has to do with God as Judge. It is the declaration that you are free from guilt and condemnation in the sight of God. To your astonishment, you are declared ‘not guilty,’” (DeVries, 2011)
  - “The basis of justification lies exclusively in Jesus the Messiah, who is our substitute and representative, whereby God’s verdict against us is transformed into God’s vindication of us.” (Bird, 2004)
  - On the one hand, we are forgiven of our sin, and on the other hand, we are declared to be righteous by God.
  - “The righteousness of Christ is reckoned to the sinners so that their standing before God is ‘as if’ they possessed the kind of standing before the Father that would allow him to say of them as he did of Christ, ‘This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.’” (George, 2020)

## Christian

**1. Justification** – to be declared righteous by God (forgiveness)

## Catholic

**1. Justification** – to be infused with righteousness by God (transformation)

- 
- Catholic definition – to be infused with righteousness by God (transformation)
  - God infuses you with righteousness and empowers you to live in such a way that you become increasingly righteous before Him.
  - “It is an event and a process. It begins with the first infusion of righteousness, and then you become more and more justified before Him as you increase in righteousness by receiving the church sacraments and performing good works.” (Craig, 2020)
    - By the way, that’s why purgatory is necessary because no matter how good you become over the course of your life, you’re probably not there yet, and there needs to be some process in place for bridging that gap and completing your transformation process.
    - In contrast, on the Christian view, justification is an event in which we are declared righteous by God, and then sanctification is the process of growing in holiness.
- Which definition is right?
  - Romans 4:3-8 - 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted (*reckoned*) unto him for righteousness.
    - Counted – accounting term; to credit to one’s account
    - God considered/reckoned Abraham as righteous before Him, not on account of works he was empowered to do, but on account of what? Faith.
      - It’s not that Abraham suddenly became this incredibly morally righteous person. Rather, on account of his faith, God considered him as righteous.
  - 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.
    - If you do work and are paid for it, that payment is not some kind of gracious gift. It is the payment of a debt that was owed to you because of the work you did.

- Illustration – when your employer issues your paystub, you don't respond by thanking them for the gracious gift they bestowed upon you. No. That paycheck was a debt they owed you for services rendered.
    - In contrast,
  - 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly (*judicial phrase*), his faith is counted for righteousness.
    - In the case of the one who does not try to earn God's grace, but believes on the one who declares the ungodly righteous, his faith in God (not works for God) are reckoned as righteousness.
  - 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,
  - 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.
    - Here we see a comparison between justification and forgiveness, not transformation.
    - To be reckoned/ declared righteous is to be forgiven of your sins. It is an event, not a process. The idea is not that David was transformed by God, but rather that he was forgiven by God.
    - Piper gives an illustration that brings to light how "his faith is counted for righteousness" in verse 5 could be interpreted within an imputed righteousness framework. He says to imagine that his son's room is dirty and that he tells his son that in order to go the game the following night, his son must clean up his room before he leaves for school the following day. Further imagine that his son goes to school without cleaning the room. Piper finds the room not clean and cleans it while his son is at school. When his son returns from school he tells him that because he did not clean his room he cannot go to the game. His son is very remorse, apologizes, and accepts the punishment. Consequently, Piper graciously responds to the apology by allowing his son to go to the game. He credits his son's sincere apology for a clean room. He counts/credits the apology as/for a clean room. This does not mean that the apology is the same thing as the clean room or that the son cleaned the room. It just means that Piper graciously imputes the clean room to his son for the sake of the apology. Furthermore, this is how we can understand "his faith is counted for righteousness" within an imputed righteousness framework. Paul does not mean that faith is righteousness or that the righteousness we are credited with is our own. Rather he just means that God graciously imputes his righteousness to us for the sake of our faith. (Piper, 2003)
- Four Arguments for Forensic Justification
  - "1.) The law court background of 'justify' is clear in Romans 8:33: 'Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.' On the last day some may bring charges before God's chosen at the divine tribunal, but



all charges will be dismissed because God has declared believers to be in the right before him. As the judge, he has declared that they are innocent of all accusations.

- 2.) Paul often says that human beings are righteous by faith (e.g., Rom. 1:17; 3:22, 26; 4:3, 5, 9, 13; 9:30; 10:4; Gal. 2:16; 3:6, 11; 5:5; Phil. 3:9). In such contexts Paul contrasts righteousness by faith with righteousness by works. Righteousness by faith refers to the gift of righteousness given to human beings by God. Human beings are not righteous by virtue of doing but of believing. The righteousness given to them, then, is alien since it is not based on anything they have done but on God's work in Christ. This suggests that righteousness as a gift is granted to those who believe.
- 3.) That righteousness is a forensic declaration is also supported by the link between righteousness and forgiveness. Paul slides easily from justification to forgiveness in Romans 4:1 – 8. David's forgiveness of sins is another way of speaking of his justification—his being in the right before God (4:6 – 8). The idea is not that David is transformed by God; the text calls attention to David's sin and his forgiveness by God, for he blots out his sins and declares him to be in the right.
- 4.) The idea that righteousness is counted (*logizomai*) to believers indicates that righteousness is not native to human beings, that it is granted to them by God (Rom. 3:28; 4:3 – 6, 8 – 11, 22 – 24; 9:8; Gal. 3:6). This argument is strengthened when we add that righteousness is counted to those who believe—not to those who work. God does not 'count' sins against those who have put their faith in Christ (2 Cor. 5:19). This is a strange reckoning or counting indeed when those who have done evil are considered to be righteous. This fits with the notion, however, that believers have received 'the free gift of righteousness' (Rom. 5:17)." (Schreiner, Johnson, Campbell, & Nanos, 2012, pp. 48-50) (50)

Thus, we see that justification is not a process of being made righteous before God through transformation. Rather, it is the event of God declaring you as righteous as He forgives your sins based on the cross.

### ***Works of the Law –***

- Works of the law

## Christian

1. **Justification** – to be declared righteous by God (forgiveness)
2. **Works of the law** – all of the OT Mosaic law

## Catholic

1. **Justification** – to be infused with righteousness by God (transformation)

- 
- Christian definition – the sum total of the OT Mosaic law (civil, ceremonial, and moral) (emphasis is on the inability of works and ceremonies of any kind to save us) (Westerholm, 1988)
  - The law is good
    - Romans 7:12, 14 - 12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.
  - The law was given to lead us to Christ, who is the end of the law.
    - Romans 10:4 - For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.
- Catholic definition – certain Jewish ceremonial laws like circumcision (emphasis is not on the inability of works of any kind to save but on the unnecessariness of certain ceremonies for someone to become a Christian)

## Christian

1. **Justification** – to be declared righteous by God (forgiveness)
2. **Works of the law** – all of the OT Mosaic law

## Catholic

1. **Justification** – to be infused with righteousness by God (transformation)
2. **Works of the law** – Jewish ceremonies

- 
- This is true, but incomplete. Paul's argument in the books of Galatians and Romans is not only that Gentiles don't need to be circumcised (i.e.

become Jews) to become Christians, but also that the keeping of the law as a whole is insufficient to make someone right before God.

- It's not just about the insufficiency of ceremonies. It's about the insufficiency of good works as well.
- Which definition is right?
  - There are two passages in Galatians that make it abundantly clear that "works of the law" is not just in reference to certain ceremonial parts of the law, but to the Mosaic law as a whole.
    - Gal. 5:3 - 3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a **debtor to do the whole law**.
    - Gal. 3:10 - 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one **that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law** to do them.
  - "The 'works of the law,' then, refer to the commandments given by God in the Old Testament in both its ceremonial and moral aspects, precepts commanded by God and thus holy and good in themselves. Because of the fallenness of human beings, however, 'no flesh' could ever be justified by observing the law." (George, 2020, p. 224)

When the Bible talks about the works of the law, it's not just the unnecessariness of Jewish ceremonies for Gentiles to become Christians. It is also about the inability of works of any kind to make a person righteous before God.

### ***Faith of Christ***

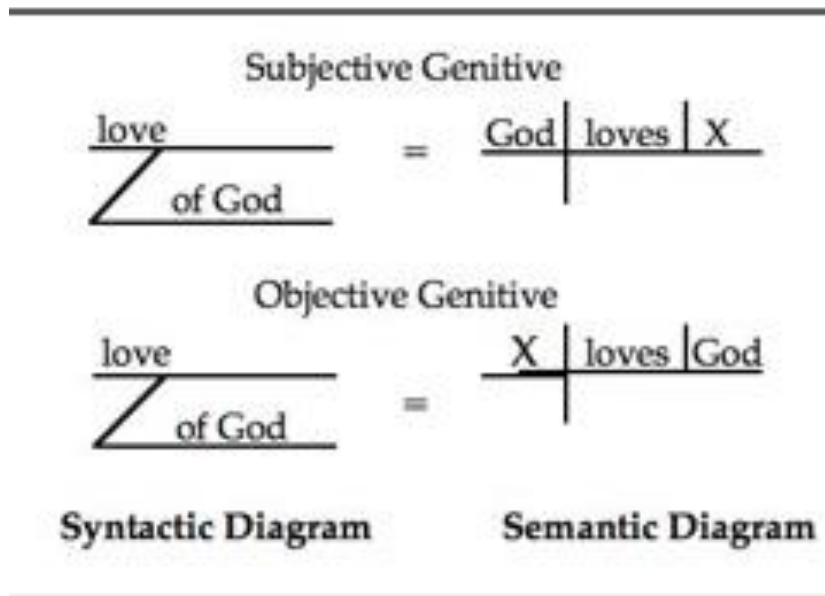
- The Bible repeatedly affirms that we are justified (declared righteous before God) on account of the faith of Christ. Once again, between Catholics and Christians, there is a difference of opinion between what that term means.
- Faith in Christ
  - Christian definition – our faith in Christ (objective genitive)

<b>Christian</b>	<b>Catholic</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Justification</b> – to be declared righteous by God (forgiveness)</li><li><b>2. Works of the law</b> – all of the OT Mosaic law</li><li><b>3. Faith of Christ</b> – my faith in Christ</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Justification</b> – to be infused with righteousness by God (transformation)</li><li><b>2. Works of the law</b> – Jewish ceremonies</li></ol>

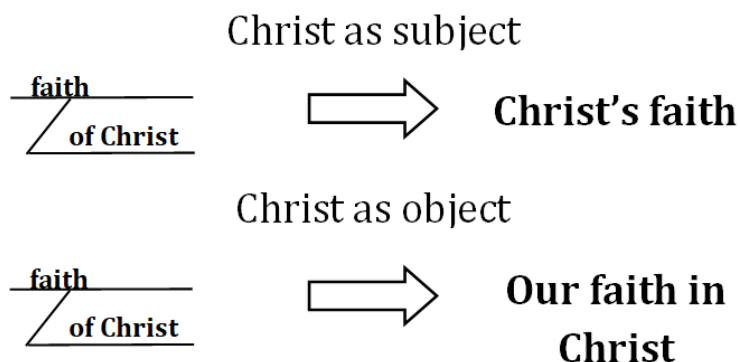
- From the Christian point of view, when the Bible contrasts faith and works, it is contrasting personal faith in Christ to save you from your sin with trying to merit favor with God through works. When the Bible says that we are saved by faith, it means that we are saved through personal faith in Jesus Christ, not through doing good things.
- Catholic definition – Christ’s faithfulness (subjective genitive)

Christian	Catholic
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Justification</b>– to be declared righteous by God (forgiveness)</li> <li>2. <b>Works of the law</b>– all of the OT Mosaic law</li> <li>3. <b>Faith of Christ</b>– my faith in Christ</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Justification</b>– to be infused with righteousness by God (transformation)</li> <li>2. <b>Works of the law</b>– Jewish ceremonies</li> <li>3. <b>Faith of Christ</b>– Christ’s faithfulness</li> </ol>

- 
- From the Catholic point of view, when the Bible contrasts faith and works, it is contrasting Christ’s faithfulness in His life and death with certain Jewish ceremonies. Thus, when the Bible says that we are saved by faith, it means that we are saved on account of Christ’s faithfulness apart from Jewish ceremonies. It’s contrasting Christ and ceremonies, not faith and works.
- Illustration – objective versus subjective genitive
  - Love of God
    - Subjective Genitive – God’s love for us
    - Objective Genitive – our love for God



## FAITH OF CHRIST



- Which definition is right?
  - Romans 3:22 - Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ **unto all and upon all them that believe**: for there is no difference:
    - Here we see the phrase "faith of Christ" correlated with personal faith in Christ.
  - Galatians 2:16 - Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, **even we have believed in Jesus Christ**, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not

by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

- Once again, the phrase “faith of Christ” is correlated with personal belief in Jesus Christ.
- Thus, what we see is that in Romans and Galatians, Paul equates the faith of Christ that justifies with the act of believing in Christ.

## Christian

- 1. Justification**– to be declared righteous by God (forgiveness)
- 2. Works of the law**– all of the OT Mosaic law
- 3. Faith of Christ**– my faith in Christ

## Catholic

- 1. Justification**– to be infused with righteousness by God (transformation)
- 2. Works of the law**– Jewish ceremonies
- 3. Faith of Christ**– Christ’s faithfulness

Understanding the differences in these definitions help us to understand the differences in the Christian and Catholic interpretations of Galatians.

For Christians, Galatians is not only about how Gentiles don’t need to become Jews to become Christians, but it is also about how no one can be declared right before God based on what they do. We can only be declared right before God through personal faith in Jesus Christ.

For Catholics, Galatians is primarily about how Gentiles don’t need to become Jews to become Christians. They don’t see a contrast between faith and works. They see a contrast between Jewish ceremonies and the sufficiency of Jesus’ faithfulness to transform us into righteous people before God through good works.

It all comes down to definitions, and my contention tonight has been that the Catholic definitions of these very important terms are wrong. It is these wrong definitions that have distorted the doctrine of salvation in the Catholic church. It is important for us to understand that as we move forward in the book of Galatians and study Paul’s defense of the gospel.

In Galatians 3, Paul is going to begin laying out his case that Jewish ceremonies and all other aspects of the Old Testament law were insufficient to and unnecessary for making someone righteous before God.

## **Sermon**

He begins his defense by arguing from their experience, and he starts with their experience of Christ.

### 1.) Their Experience of Christ

1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you – You fools! Who has cast a spell on you?!

- Paul called the Galatians “brothers and sisters” and “his children”, but here he speaks bluntly to them in love. His words here are a reminder that sometimes a harsh rebuke is needed.
- “Who” is in the singular suggesting that the ultimate individual behind the false teachers making inroads in the Galatian churches was Satan himself. (George, 2020, p. 240)

That ye should not obey the truth – that you should not listen and hearken to the truth of the gospel

As those...

Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? – Paul here seems to refer back to the time in which the gospel was initially proclaimed to the Galatians and they received Jesus Christ by faith. Take note of how Paul describes his gospel presentation to them.

- Before your eyes – the gospel was vividly and directly presented before their very eyes. What was presented before their eyes? Or perhaps a better question is: who was presented before their eyes?
- Jesus Christ – any gospel presentation that leaves out Jesus is no gospel presentation at all. The gospel does not begin with a what. It begins with a who.
  - o 1 Corinthians 1:23-24 - But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.
  - o 1 Corinthians 2:2 - For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.
  - o As Paul preached Jesus Christ to the Galatians, Jesus Christ was...
- Evidently set forth among you – publicly portrayed among the Galatians...as what...
- Crucified – as having been crucified

- Paul publicly and graphically preached the crucifixion of Jesus Christ to the Galatians, and by faith they personally received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. They had experienced and entered into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through the preaching of the gospel.

He points them back to their receiving of the gospel and experience of Christ at conversion, and says, "How can you guys be so deceived? You know the truth. You've personally accepted Christ alone as your Savior?"

Illustration – what are you doing? You know better than that?

- Soaking my phone and then charging it and ruining it.
- What are you doing? You know better than that. It's not like you're someone that doesn't know the truth and has been deceived. You know the truth! It was told to you when your first experienced Christ.

Galatians 1:6 - I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Galatians 4:9 - But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Galatians 5:7-8 - Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.

2 Corinthians 11:3 - But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Ephesians 4:14 - That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Galatians 2:14 - But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Romans 2:8 - But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

Romans 10:16 - But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

2 Thessalonians 1:8 - In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:



Hebrews 5:9 - And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

1 Peter 1:22 - Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

1 Peter 4:17 - For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

## 2.) Their Experience of the Holy Spirit

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

This only would I learn of you – Let me just ask you one question

Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? – when did you receive the Holy Spirit? Was it after you heard the gospel and received it by faith, or did you have to go through some additional ceremony or achieve some additional moral checklist in order to receive the Holy Spirit?

- Christians receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation (Romans 8:9, 16; 1 John 4:13; 3:24).
- Ephesians 1:13-14 - In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
  - o “‘Earnest’ is from *arrabon*, which originally referred to a down payment or earnest money given by a person intending to make a purchase, as a guarantee that the full amount would be paid. In modern Greek a form of the word is used for engagement ring.” (MacArthur, 1987)

Hearing of faith - Romans 10:17 - So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- “The implied answer to this question was undisputed for one reason: the Galatians had been saved and blessed with the Spirit as a result of Paul’s preaching of “Christ crucified” long before these false teachers had ever appeared in their midst.” (George, 2020, p. 244)
  - o The indwelling of the Galatians with the Spirit validated the truth of the gospel by faith alone that Paul preached unto them. It did so far before the false teachers ever even arrived in Galatia.

Galatians 3:14 - That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Acts 2:38 - Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 10:44-47 - While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Are ye so foolish – Paul returns to the characterization of the Galatians as fools that he had also made in verse 1. Are you crazy?

- “If you received the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, not through the keeping of the law, but through faith, then why are you seeking to return to the bondage of the law? Have you gone crazy?”

Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh – Having begun your Christian life in the power of the Spirit through faith, how could you now finish it in the power of your own flesh through the keeping of the law?

- Illustration – Jacqueline saying “I can’t do it”, and asking me to help (“Daddy, help me”).
  - o Helping change her diaper
  - o Helping put her socks on
  - o Helping put her shoes on
  - o Helping pack her bag
  - o Helping open the door
  - o Helping open the gate
  - o Helping unlock the car
  - o Getting to the car and Jacqueline saying, “Daddy, I’ll drive.”
    - What! If you couldn’t do any of those other things without my help, what makes you think you could drive the car?
    - Application – If it took reliance on God and the power of His Spirit to save you through faith, what makes you think that the keeping of your salvation and/or your sanctification would take anything less?
- “The flesh” here likely has a double meaning alluding to one of the main rites that the Judaizers tried to enforce upon the Galatian believers: circumcision.  
Galatians 4:7-10 - Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements,

whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

Galatians 5:4-8 - Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.

The indwelling of the Galatian believers with the Holy Spirit after they heard the gospel from Paul validated the gospel that Paul preached to them and reminded them that just as their flesh and the keeping of the law were powerless to save them, so too they were powerless to keep them saved and to sanctify them.

### 3.) Their Experience of Trials

4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

Have ye suffered so many things in vain? – have you endured/suffered so much for no reason?

- It is not unreasonable to assume that the Galatian Christians suffered similar types of trials as Paul did during his time in the region on his first missionary journey.
  - o Antioch – filled with envy, the Jews spoke evil against Paul, contradicting and blaspheming his words
  - o Iconium – half the city opposed Paul and they concocted a plan to murder him
  - o Lystra – Paul was stoned and left for dead
- If that is the case, then it's like Paul is saying, "When you got saved through faith in the cross of Christ, you suffered great persecution from it...the brunt force of it from the Jews. Now, by embracing circumcision, are you going to submit yourself to a practice through which you could have avoided much of that persecution in the first place? Was it all for nothing?"
- "Why have you suffered so many things from the Jews if you will now return to Judaism and its focus on keeping its commandments?" (Sorenson, 2007)

If it be yet in vain – if, in fact, it was for nothing

- Paul's wording here suggests hope that the Galatian believers were not too far gone and would come back to their senses.

Hebrews 10:32-39 - But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your

confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

#### 4.) Their Experience of the Father

5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

therefore – Paul picks up where he left off in verse 2

He therefore that ministereth (supplieth) to you the Spirit – who was the one that supplied the Holy Spirit to and worked miracles among the Galatian Christians. It was God. It was the Father. God was the one who had supplied and was supplying to the Galatian believers the Holy Spirit.

- Following His resurrection and just prior to His ascension, in Acts 1:4, Jesus told His disciples to wait for the promise of the Father, which was the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- John 14:26 - But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, **whom the Father will send** in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

And worketh miracles among you - the Father not only supplied the Galatian believers with the Holy Spirit. He also worked miracles among them.

- Ephesians 3:20 - Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith – did God the Father do those things in response to you keeping the law or in response to you trusting in Jesus Christ by faith?

- “Paul’s argument is itself powerful: If a person has received eternal salvation through trust in the crucified Christ, received the fullness of the Holy Spirit the same moment he believed, and has the Father’s Spirit-endowed power working within him, how could he hope to enhance that out of his own insignificant human resources by some meritorious effort?” (MacArthur, 1987)

2 Corinthians 3:8 - How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

Acts 14:3 - Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

2 Corinthians 12:12 - Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

## **Application**

In defense of the claim that salvation and sanctification were both through faith and the power of God's Spirit, Paul appealed first to the experience of the Galatians.

- After you accepted Christ as your Savior,
  - o Did you receive the Holy Spirit as a result of faith or the keeping of the law? By faith.
  - o Did you the Father demonstrate power among you as a result of faith or the keeping of the law? By faith.
  - o If the Father and the Spirit have validated your receiving of Christ through faith apart from the works of the law, then why are you listening to the testimony of these false teachers in contrast with the testimony of the Godhead itself?

# Galatians 3:6-9

## Review

Last week we began the second major section of Paul's letter to the Galatians in which he defends the gospel of faith alone in Christ alone.

By way of introduction, we looked at three key terms and the differences between the Christian and Catholic definitions of those terms, and we looked at Scripture passages that supported the Christian definition.

## Justification

- Christian: to be declared righteous by God (forgiveness)
- Catholic: to be infused with righteousness by God (transformation)

## Works of the Law

- Christian – all of the OT law (moral, civil, and ceremonial – no rites or good deeds can save you)
- Catholic – Jewish ceremonies (ceremonial – certain Jewish ceremonies were unnecessary for Gentiles)

## Faith of Christ

- Christian – personal faith in Christ
- Catholic – Christ's faithfulness

From that brief "10 minute" introduction, we then looked at Paul's first argument in defense of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone.

He argued from their experience.

After you accepted Christ as your Savior, did you receive the Holy Spirit as a result of faith or the keeping of the law? By faith. Did you the Father demonstrate power among you as a result of faith or the keeping of the law? By faith. If the Father and the Spirit have validated your receiving of Christ through faith apart from the works of the law, then why are you listening to the testimony of these false teachers in contrast with the testimony of the Godhead itself?

## Introduction

Whereas this argument from experience was valid and important, it was by no means the only argument that Paul was going to appeal to. Why? Because emotions and experiences by themselves are unsolid footing for Christian doctrine and practice. The Galatians needed something more stable and trustworthy than that. Paul not only appealed to their experiences. He also appealed to the Scriptures. Whereas, he spent five verses arguing from their experience, Paul would go on to spend fifty-five verses (the remainder of chapters 3 and 4) arguing from the Scriptures. (George, 2020, p. 249)

- That's a great example for us today.

Application – When it comes to Christian doctrine, don't tell me what you feel. Show me what God says. We need to interpret our experiences in light of God's Word, not God's Word in light of our experiences.

- Christianity today has become so emotional and experiential. It's to the point that, for instance, people interpret the presence of the Holy Spirit with a certain feeling they get during a song or a sermon.
- The fruit of the Spirit is not a feeling, it's love, joy, peace, patience, etc. It's action oriented. You can tell someone is filled with the Spirit not by how they feel, but by what they do.
- How do you know that? The Word tells me so, and it is a firm and reliable foundation for Christian doctrine and practice.

Paul is going to defend the gospel by referring to the Scriptural account of the life of Abraham.

Contention: We are declared righteous before God through faith alone.

- He's going to defend this contention by way of an illustration, and Abraham is his illustration. Why Abraham?
- Illustration – the way that we look back on Peter and Paul and James and John is the way that first century Jews would have looked back on Abraham
  - He was the George Washington of the Jewish people
  - He was the founding father

In the Jewish culture of the first century, Abraham was seen as one who was the ultimate example of being right before God as a result of faithfulness and obedience to Him.

- Sirach 44:19-21 - Abraham was the great father of a multitude of nations, and there was no smudge on his glory. 20 He kept the laws of the Most High, and he entered into a covenant with him. He established a covenant in his flesh, and when he was tested, he proved faithful. 21 Therefore, the Lord certified for Abraham with a solemn pledge that he would bless nations through his descendants, that he would make him increase like the dust of the earth, exalt his descendants like the stars, and give them an inheritance from sea to sea and from the river to the end of the earth.
- 1 Maccabees 2:52 - Was not Abraham found faithful when tested, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness?
- Paul is going to set out to prove the opposite – that Abraham was not justified before God on account of his works, but rather on account of his faith.

As we examine Paul's argument, the first thing we see is:

### 1.) The Justification of Abraham

How was Abraham really justified before God? We're going to answer that question not by appealing to anyone's opinion but rather by examining what the Scripture actually says.

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

This is a quotation of Genesis 15:6 in which the Scripture says that Abraham believed God and God considered him as righteous on account of his faith.

Genesis 15:6 - And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Even as Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness – “even as” connects Abraham’s faith with the faith of the Galatians that he had just referenced

- Abraham was declared righteous before God the same way that you were declared righteous before God. How? Through faith.
- That is a humbling concept (for Abraham and for us), to admit that we are incapable of making ourselves righteous before God.
  - o Romans 4:1-3 – 1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.
  - o If Abraham had been made right before God because of his works/his faithfulness, then he would have reason to be proud and boastful. But that’s now how it happened. According to Genesis 15:6, Abraham was declared right before God not through the keeping of the law which would come some 400+ years later, not through his sacrifice of Isaac which would come some 30 years later, not through circumcision which would come over a decade later, but through faith in God’s Word/God’s promise to him. That’s what Genesis 15 says.
  - o God’s method of forgiveness and making people right before Him excludes boasting because it has nothing to do with anything you could do.
  - o Illustration – the difference between games with strategy and games with no strategy
- However, when God justifies us, He does begin to transform us. But that transformation does not produce salvation. It proceeds from it. It does not result in salvation. It results from salvation. You see that in the life of Abraham too by the way. When we get saved...
  - o We are indwelt by God’s Spirit (Rom. 8:9)
  - o We are a new creation/a new man (Rom. 6:1-6)
    - Rom. 6:1-6 – 1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him,



that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

- We have a new master (Rom. 6:22)
  - Rom. 6:22 - 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.
- We have a new Father (Heb. 12:6-11)
  - If you can live in sin without experiencing punishment from God, you are an illegitimate child.
- “We are justified by faith alone, but the faith that justifies is not alone.” (George, 2020, p. 255)
  - Why? Because faith produces fruit. Because being indwelt by the Holy Spirit and being made a new creation and having a new Master and getting a new Father means that you are not who you used to be.

Here’s Paul’s main point: according to Genesis 15:6, Abraham was justified, not by works, but by faith.

Genesis 15:6 - And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Romans 4:3-6 - For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

Romans 4:9-10 - Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

Romans 4:21-22 - And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

James 2:23 - And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Romans 4:11 - And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

2 Corinthians 5:19-21 - To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did

beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

## 2.) The Offspring of Abraham

7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

Here's Paul point: Abraham did not just have physical offspring. He also had spiritual offspring. His physical offspring were obviously the Jews, but those of faith are also the offspring of Abraham in a spiritual sense.



- By the way, there are those who fall into both categories: those who are both physical and spiritual descendants of Abraham: Jews of faith. Paul refers to them as true Jews or spiritual Israel.
- Romans 2:28-29 - 28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.
  - o Jesus taught this too:
  - o John 8:39 - They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

God had called Abraham to leave his home of Ur for the promised land, and He promised him a great number of descendants, a land that those descendants would possess, and that through his descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed. That was Genesis 12. Later on, Abraham and his physical descendants were given the sign of circumcision to

mark them off as God's covenant people and to symbolize their need for spiritual circumcision of the heart (Genesis 17).

- Understanding this, you might picture these false teachers saying something like this to the Galatian churches: "God promised that through Abraham and his descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed. If you, as a Gentile, are going to share in the promised blessings to Abraham, you need to become circumcised, just like all the other true physical descendants of Abraham are." (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 1963)
- Here was Paul's point. The greatest blessing Abraham ever received was forgiveness, being declared right before God. According to Genesis 15, Abraham did not receive that blessing based on any kind of a ceremony or good work that he performed. He was justified before God through faith alone. That justification took place long before God told him and his physical offspring to practice circumcision (at least 14 years prior). It took place before he offered the sacrifice of Isaac.
- True spiritual descendants of Abraham are those who receive the greatest blessing he received in the same way that he received it: through faith.
  - o Genesis 15:2, 5-6 - 2 And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? 5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.
  - o Romans 4:7-12 - 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. 9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.
- "Only genuine believers, those who are of faith, have any claim to a spiritual relationship to Abraham, or to God. Jews with no faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are not true sons of Abraham, whereas Gentiles who believe in Him are. Lest Christians think that, because His chosen people have rejected Him, the Lord will reject them, Paul declares unequivocally, "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid!" Then he repeats the declaration, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." (Rom. 11:1-2). God still has marvelous future plans for the Jews as a

people. One day God will literally fulfill the land and descendants promises that He made to Abraham and his physical offspring. But at no time of history has any person been brought into saving relationship to God by any other means than faith.” (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 2020)

Galatians 3:26-29 - For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Romans 4:11-16 - And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

Romans 9:7-8 - Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

### 3.) The Promise of God

8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham -

Here Paul personifies the Scripture...the Word of God.

God, knowing that He would bestow His greatest blessing to all peoples in the same way that He bestowed it to Abraham (through faith), foretold this in His conversation with Abraham.

When did He do this?

When he said...

In thee shall all nations be blessed – Paul’s point is that when God said this in Genesis 12, He was referring to all people being blessed by Him with forgiveness

- In the same way that Abraham was blessed: by faith
- Through the death, burial and resurrection of Abraham’s descendant: Jesus of Nazareth

Genesis 12:1-3 - Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.



- God promised Abraham and his physical descendants the land of Canaan. He promised him that his descendants would be as the sand of the seashore. He promised that through him and his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed. That universal blessing would not take place through Gentiles sharing in the circumcision of Abraham, but rather through them sharing in the faith of Abraham.
  - “Through the Jewish people the world had received many wonderful benefits, above all the sacred Scriptures and the religion of monotheism. However, Paul went much further when he simply identifies the blessing with God’s ‘grace’ and his ‘justification by faith.’” (George, 2020, p. 258)
    - o John 8:56 - Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.
      - Paul’s concept is an expansion of Jesus’ words in John 8:56.
- Acts 15:15-18 - And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down;

and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

Romans 3:28-30 - Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

Romans 9:30 - What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

Genesis 18:18 - Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

Genesis 22:18 - And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Genesis 26:4 - And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

#### 4.) The Justification of the Spiritual Offspring

What will the spiritual offspring of Abraham receive? The blessing of justification, forgiveness of sins, the greatest blessing Abraham ever received.

9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham – so then those who share in Abraham's faith, also share in his blessing of justification before God.

- Though the promise of the blessing of God is made available to all nations, it is only applied to those of faith. (Waalvord & Zuck, 1983)
- "The authentic descendants of Abraham are soul brothers rather than merely blood brothers." (Jones, 1972)

Romans 4:6-10 - 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. (*quotation of Psalm 32:1-2*)

- David talks about this blessedness of forgiveness

9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?

- Is this great blessing available only to Jews or to Gentiles as well?

for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

- Abraham received this blessing through faith. When did he receive it?

10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

- Abraham received this great blessing long before he was ever circumcised. If he received this blessing of forgiveness through faith apart from circumcision and apart from the law which would come hundreds of years later, then why would it be any different for people today? Why would Gentiles need faith + something else to be justified by God, when Abraham was justified by faith alone?
- If Abraham was blessed with forgiveness and righteousness by faith, then those who exhibit the same faith will be blessed with the same forgiveness and righteousness.

1 Cor. 10:32 - Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

Galatians 3:14 - That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Galatians 3:29 - And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 4:28 - Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

Romans 4:16 - Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

## **Application**

The greatest blessing Abraham ever received was justification before and forgiveness from God, and he received it by faith. (Genesis 15)

God promised Abraham that through him all the peoples of the earth would also receive that blessing. (Genesis 12)

Those who, like Abraham, put their faith in God will, like Abraham, be justified before and receive forgiveness from God.

Genesis 12:1-3 + Genesis 15:6 = Galatians 3:6-9

# Galatians 3:10-14

## Review

We are a few weeks into Paul's defense of the gospel in Galatians 3 & 4. He first defended the gospel by arguing from experience.

- After you accepted Christ as your Savior, did you receive the Holy Spirit as a result of faith or the keeping of the law? By faith. Did you the Father demonstrate power among you as a result of faith or the keeping of the law? By faith. If the Father and the Spirit have validated your receiving of Christ through faith apart from the works of the law, then why are you listening to the nonsense coming out of the mouths of these false teachers?

From there Paul began defending the gospel by arguing from the Scriptures, in particular, from the example of Abraham.

- From Genesis 15:6, he argued that the greatest blessing Abraham ever received was justification before and forgiveness from God, and he received it by faith.
  - o And Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.
- From Genesis 12:1-3, he argued that God promised Abraham that through him all the peoples of the earth would also receive that blessing. (Genesis 12)
  - o In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.
- He concluded in Galatians 3:9 that those who, like Abraham, put their faith in God will, like Abraham, receive the blessing of justification before and forgiveness from God.
  - o 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

That's where we left off last time.

Paul had argued that man could be justified before God through faith, but what about the law? Couldn't the keeping of the law do that? Beyond that, what's so special about faith? How does it justify us before God? In verses 10-14, Paul answers these questions. He starts off by discussing the failure of the law.

## 1.) The Failure of the Law

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Why was the law a failure? It was a failure because:

A.) The law curses everyone

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse – curse: divine judgment



- This is not in reference to those who do the law, but to those who are of the law, those who trust in the law to justify them before God. (Moo, 2013)
- In contrast to those trusting in God to save them who are blessed (vs. 9) are those trusting in the keeping of the law to save them who are cursed (vs. 10)
- The law curses everyone. It brings everyone under God's judgment. That is Paul's conclusion, but his reasoning for that conclusion can be found in what he says next.



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How do we know this is true?

For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them – This is a quotation of Deuteronomy 27:26 which says, “Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.”

- As Moses was approaching the end of his life, and as Israel was preparing to enter the Promised Land under the direction of Joshua, Moses delivered a series of parting addresses to the children of Israel. Deuteronomy is a collection of those addresses.

- In Deut. 27, when Israel crossed the Jordan, six of the tribes (Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin) were to stand on Mt. Gerizim and six of the tribes (Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali) were to stand on Mt. Ebal
  - The Levites were then to recite the blessings and the curses that would come down upon Israel dependent on whether or not they obeyed the law.
  - The Levites would recite the blessings one at a time, and the tribes on Mt. Gerizim would shout out “amen” after each one. The Levites would also recite the curses one at a time, and the tribes on Mt. Ebal would shout out “amen.”
  - Illustration – demonstrate this with the two different sides of the auditorium
    - o Blessed are the peacemakers, humble, kind
    - o Cursed are the thieves, greedy, liars
  - Moses was explaining this process to the people and what the Levites were going to say, and he ended his explanation of the curses in Deut. 27:26 when he proclaimed that the Levites would say, “Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them, and all the people shall say, Amen.”
    - o This is the verse that Paul is quoting from to prove his point.
  - Deuteronomy 11:26-29 - Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known. And it shall come to pass, when the Lord thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.
  - Deut. 27:11-16 - 11 And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, 12 These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin: 13 And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. 14 And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, 15 Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen. 16 Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

Paul says, “We know that the law curses everyone because the Scriptures say (Moses said) that the only way to escape the curse of the law is to obey everything written in the law.” Paul’s unstated but implied assumption here is that no one can do that. (Moo, 2013)

- “If men proudly insist on living by the law, it will curse them, not save them, because they cannot possibly live up to it.” (MacArthur, 1987)
  - o Romans 7:10 - And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

- But certainly that's not what Paul means. That's an impossible standard. What first century Jew would think that one violation of the law would be enough to bring someone under the curse of God?...especially when they had within the law a remedy for those violations: the sacrificial system.
  - o The sacrificial system was not a remedy for their sin. It was a reminder of their sin and a temporary postponement of the curse that sin merited. Day after day, all of those sacrifices were a reminder to the people of their need for an ultimate means of atonement for their constant violation of God's law.
  - o The sacrificial system was a temporary treatment meant to remind people of their need for a cure.
  - o Hebrews 10:1-4, 14 - For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. *(it was a treatment, never a cure)* 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. *(if the sacrificial system were a cure for sin, then there'd be no more need for sacrifices)* 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. *(every time they sacrificed, it was a reminder of how far short they fell of keeping the law, and it was a reminder that their sin problem had not been decisively dealt with)* 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. *(It is not possible for the sacrifice of animals to do what only the sacrifice of the perfect Lamb of God could do)* 14 For by one offering he *(the perfect keeper of the law)* hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. *(the sacrificial system was a treatment; Jesus was the cure)*

The law cursed everyone because no one could live up to it.

Luke 18:9-13 - And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Romans 4:15 - Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

Matthew 25:41 - Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Jeremiah 11:3 - And say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant,

Romans 3:19-20 - Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

James 2:9-11 - But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

## B.) The law blesses no one

11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident – to further prove his point that no person can be justified before God through the keeping of the law, Paul once again quotes the Old Testament

For, The just shall live by faith – the one regarded as just before God will live, will have life, by faith. This is a quotation of Habakkuk 2:4 - Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

- Deut. 27:26 proves that the law curses everyone. Habakkuk 2:4 proves that the law blesses no one. Why? Justification before God comes from without, not within. It must be through faith. (MacArthur, 1987)
- Paul quotes this OT passage here and in Romans 1:16-17 - 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.
- We cannot be saved through the keeping of the law/faith in our own self effort. We can only be saved through faith in what God has done for us.
- Illustration – rescue operation of Thai soccer team
  - In 2018, 12 members of a Thai soccer team (ages 11-16) and their 25-year-old coach became trapped 1.6 miles underground in a cave when heavy rainfall flooded the system.
  - Rescue efforts began immediately to dive down into the cave system and rescue the boys, but conditions were so hazardous that little progress was made.
  - Professional cave divers were flown in from all over the world in an effort to help, but days passed, and there was little hope that the boys were still alive.

- Nine days later British divers found all 12 boys and their coach alive in an air pocket 1.6 miles underground. The world rejoiced, but now they faced an even bigger problem, how to get the boys out.
- 1.6 miles doesn't sound like a long distance, but it took professional divers 8 hours to cover that distance, 3 above water, and 5 underwater, and one diver had already died of asphyxiation in the caverns.
- There was no possible way for the boys to swim that distance, and there was no possible way for them to make that long and that difficult of a dive without panicking and/or using up all of their oxygen.
- Do you know that the divers did? They transported diving gear for all of the kids into the air pocket, and one by one the professional divers sedated the kids, tied them up like a package, and transported them while unconscious 1.6 miles to the mouth of the cavern. Over a three-day period from July 8-10, 2018, they rescued all 12 players and their coach.
- That is a perfect illustration of the difference between salvation by faith and works.
  - You and I because of our constant violation of God's law are trapped 1.6 miles underground. We are hopeless and deserving of the impending death that awaits us. You have two options.
    - You can try to hold your breath and swim the 1.6 miles through self-effort. Or
    - You can by faith trust in the one who descended into your hopeless pit of despair to do for you what you could not do for yourself.
    - Faith vs. Works

The law has failed to save. It curses everyone, and it saves no one.

Psalms 130:3-4 - If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

Psalms 143:2 - And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 - For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Isaiah 6:5 - Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah 64:6 - But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Hebrews 10:38 - Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Most people would not have a problem with affirming that we are made righteous through faith as long as that statement does not mean that we're not saved through works. These would maintain that we are saved through faith and works. But Paul wants to make sure that we understand that salvation by faith and salvation by the law are polar opposites of one another. (George, 2020)

C.) The law stands opposed to faith

I don't mean that the law itself is opposed to faith. In fact, the Scripture teaches that the law leads us to faith. Rather, what I mean is that salvation through the law stands opposed to salvation through faith.

12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

And the law is not of faith – the way of the law is very different than the way of faith

- Righteousness through the law is very different than righteousness through faith

But – on the contrary the law says

The man that doeth them shall live in them – this is a quotation of Leviticus 18:5 - Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.

- If a man obeys my commandments, he will find life through doing so. (Moo, 2013)  
The catch though is that you must perfectly keep them.
- "If you are relying on works of the law as your means of salvation, then you have to live by them perfectly." (MacArthur, 1987)
  - o You must fully trust in God to save you, or you must trust in the perfect keeping of the law to save you. It's one or the other. If you're trying to merge them somewhere in the middle, then neither of them will save you.
  - o It's either all you or all Him.
  - o Illustration – depending on divers solely to transport sedated kids to safety versus the kids being conscious and trying to "help"
    - God doesn't need your help. You need God's help.

Romans 9:30-32 - What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

Romans 10:5-6 - For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

Ezekiel 20:11 - And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them.

Ezekiel 20:13 - But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.

The failure of the law is the bad news, but there's good news. We see not only the failure of the law, but also the provision of Christ.

## 2.) The Provision of Christ

The law has failed to save anyone. It has succeeded in cursing everyone. Well, how then can anyone be saved, and what does faith have to do with it?

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

What makes faith powerful is the object of that faith. If you are of the law...if you are trusting in your own good deeds to justify you before God, you have faith, but the object of your faith is incapable of saving you. When the Bible talks about being saved through faith, it is talking about being saved through faith in Jesus as the object of our faith. He is the only adequate object of our faith that is powerful enough to deliver us from the curse and bless us with eternal life. How?

As the only one who has ever perfectly kept God's law...

### A.) Christ bore our curse

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law – Christ purchased us from the bondage of the law (like a slave at a market). Because of our failure to keep the law, we had racked up so much judgment, so much debt, so much curse. Yet Christ freed us from the curse we deserved. How?

Being made a curse for us – He, as the only person to ever walk the planet without meriting the curse of the law, bore our curse to free us from it. He took our judgment upon Himself.

- What do you mean by that? In what way was Christ cursed on our behalf?
- “Although Jesus was born ‘under the law’ (4:4), he did not merit the curse of the law for any wrongdoing he had committed because he was as ‘an unblemished and spotless lamb’ (1 Pet 1:19). Yet both the fact and the manner of his death brought him inexorably under the curse of the law.” (George, 2020)

For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree – This is a quotation of Deuteronomy 21:22-23 – 22 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: 23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

- “In ancient Judaism a criminal who was executed, usually by stoning, was then tied to a post, a type of tree, where his body would hang until sunset as a visible representation of rejection by God. It was not that a person became cursed by being hanged on a tree but that he was hanged on a tree because he was cursed. Jesus did not become a curse because He was crucified but was crucified because he was cursed in taking the full sin of the world upon Himself.” (MacArthur, 1987)
- 1 Peter 2:24 - Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.
- The crucifixion was a major stumbling to many Jews regarding the Messiahship of Jesus. If Jesus were the Messiah, then how could the Messiah, the epitome of blessing, die under the divine curse? It didn't make sense. Yet, the resounding answer of the early church was that Christ was cursed by God for us. He willingly took upon Himself the curse that rightfully belonged to us. (George, 2020)

Christ, as the only perfect law keeper to walk the earth, was the only one who could justly bear the penalty of others, and not Himself.

Romans 10:4 - 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

- Christ was the end of the law because He did what the law could not do. He did this by bearing in His own body the curse that every human rightfully deserved for their violation of God's law.  
Romans 8:3-4 - For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:21 - For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Ephesians 5:2 - And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Titus 2:14 - Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Hebrews 7:26-27 - For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.



Romans 9:3 - For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Esther 7:10 - So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

2 Samuel 17:23 - And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

2 Samuel 18:10 - And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.

Matthew 27:5 - And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Why did Christ bear our curse? So that we might receive His blessing.

B.) We receive His blessing

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ – what blessing is that? The blessing of forgiveness of sins/a right standing before God.

- We deserved the curse of God because of our failure to keep the law. Christ merited the blessing of God because of His perfection in keeping the law. Yet Christ bore our curse so that we might receive His blessing...the blessing of a right standing before God.

But He didn't just bear our curse so that we might receive His blessing. He also bore our curse so that we might receive His Spirit.

C.) We receive His Spirit

That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith – for those who receive by faith Christ's death on their behalf, they are justified before God, and they are given the Holy Spirit by God.

- To be saved is to have been justified before God and to have received the Holy Spirit.
  - o Romans 8:9 - 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.
- The Holy Spirit has been given to us to help us live righteously as those who have been forgiven.
  - o Ezekiel 36:26-27 - A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will

give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

- That process of living the Christian life through the power of and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is what Galatians 5-6 is all about. After Paul defends the doctrine of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone in chapters 3-4, he'll then turn to discussing how the Holy Spirit helps us to live righteously as Christians in chapters 5-6.

Galatians 3:6-9 - Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Galatians 3:16 - Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Genesis 22:18 - And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Isaiah 49:6 - And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Isaiah 52:10 - The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Luke 2:10-11 - And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Acts 3:25-26 - Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

Jeremiah 31:33 - But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jeremiah 32:40 - And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Ezekiel 11:19 - And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

Joel 2:28-29 - And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

Zechariah 12:10 - And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Acts 2:38 - Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

### **Application**

The law is powerless to save. It blesses no one with life, and it curses everyone with death, and it's not because there's anything wrong with the law. It's because there's something wrong with us, and it's called sin. Because of our failure to perfectly keep the law, we are hopelessly lost under the divine curse.

And yet, there is good news. What the law was unable to do, Christ is able to do. As the divine Son of God who perfectly kept God's law, Christ bore our curse in our place on that cross, so that through faith in Him we might receive the blessing of eternal life and the promise of the Holy Spirit. Have you been saved? Have you admitted before God that you are powerless to save yourself and cast yourself in faith on His gracious provision for you through the cross and the resurrection? If you have been, when is the last time you thanked him for it?

# Galatians 3:15-18

## Review

Paul has been defending the gospel from the Scriptures, and so far in Galatians 3, this is basically what He has said.

Gal. 3:6-9 – Genesis tells us that Abraham was justified by faith and that through him all the nations of the earth will be blessed. Just as Abraham was justified before God through faith, so too Jews and Gentiles are all justified before God only through faith.

Well, what about the law?

Galatians 3:10-14 – Deuteronomy tells us that the law curses everyone before God because no one can measure up to it...no one, except for Jesus. Jesus, as the perfect keeper of the law, bore our curse in His body on that cross so that through faith in Him we can receive His blessed righteousness and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

But how does the law relate to Abraham then?

God had made an unconditional promise (covenant) to Abraham with no strings attached. He promised him a land, a seed, and a blessing (that through him all nations on the earth would be blessed).

Then, later on, with Moses and Israel God made another promise/covenant. It was not an unconditional promise. It was conditional upon Israel's obedience. If you obey, you will be blessed in the land. If you disobey, you will be cursed in the land.

Here, Paul was going to take some time to explain how those covenants/promises related to one another. His argument was that God's promise with Moses did not negate His promise to Abraham. Here in verse 15 he uses ordinary human covenants/contracts as an example.

## Sermon

### 1.) Covenants are Binding

15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

Brethren – Paul addressed the Galatians as His family in Christ. He did so at the beginning of a section in which He sought to explain what makes someone a part of the family of God.

I speak after the manner of men: - let me give you an example from everyday life

Though it be but a man's covenant – even as it pertains to contracts/covenants between men

Yet if it be confirmed – yet if that contract/covenant/testament is ratified

No man disannulleth, or addeth thereto – it's binding. You can't just set it aside or change it by adding to it.

“Diathk (covenant) is a general term for a binding agreement. It was often used to refer to wills or testaments, and in some Scripture passages the word is best translated with that meaning. A last will and testament expresses the desires and intent of but one party and may or may not involve other specific parties. A covenant, on the other hand, always involves two or more specific parties, although the terms may be stipulated and fulfilled by only one. In the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament translated in the third century B.C.) the term is consistently used of God's covenants with His people—covenants that God alone initiated and established and that sometimes were conditional and sometimes not.” (MacArthur, 1987)

Paul's logic is pretty straightforward. Covenants are binding. You can't just change them willy nilly.

Illustration – Underwood Farms Lawsuit against Huy Fong Foods

“Huy Fong Foods, Inc., the company that makes Sriracha hot sauce, must pay more than \$23 million in damages awarded to a jalapeno pepper farm by a California jury, after it failed to convince a state appellate court to dismiss the fraud claims.

The company contracted with Underwood Ranches LP in 1988 to purchase peppers for its jalapeno-based hot sauce, and the parties were partners for nearly 30 years. For the first ten years of their partnership, they executed written agreements, but they later turned to informal oral agreements.

By 2006, Underwood was growing 90% of Huy Fong's peppers. To convince Underwood to expand its pepper acreage, Huy Fong agreed to pay by the acre grown, rather than by pounds produced, and take on the risk of a smaller yield. Underwood then invested millions of dollars in acquiring additional acres, many of which came with leases that extended into the 2030s and beyond.

In 2016, by which time Huy Fong accounted for around 80% of Underwood's revenue, the hot sauce company told Underwood it would need to deliver peppers for \$500 a ton in order to compete with other producers.

The partnership deteriorated, and Huy Fong began contracting with other farmers, showing them drone footage of a recent Underwood harvest, which it had promised to keep confidential, to show new partners how to harvest peppers economically.

Underwood had nothing to plant on the thousands of new acres it had leased, and didn't have financing to plant on speculation. It was forced to lay off 40 employees, and lost over \$6 million in 2018, it said.

A jury in Ventura County unanimously found in Underwood's favor on claims of breach of contract and fraud, and awarded \$23.3 million in damages.

Huy Fong had expressly agreed to purchase the 2017 harvest, induced Underwood to lease more land, and told Underwood it would continue to purchase all of the peppers produced.

A jury could reasonably conclude that Huy Fong had no intention of keeping those promises, based on evidence that it had planned to cut ties to Underwood before it did so, Gilbert said. It shared confidential harvest footage with competitors, and even tried to hire away an Underwood executive, among other things." (Allsup, 2021)

What did the jury find? Contracts/covenants are binding. That's exactly what Paul's point is.

Romans 6:19 - I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

Hebrews 9:17 - For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

## 2.) God Made a Covenant with Abraham

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made – it was to Abraham and his offspring that God made a covenant...that God made promises. The ultimate fulfillment of these promises was going to be found in one person, one ultimate descendant of Abraham, the Messiah.

When God made these promises...

He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ – Paul here is quoting from Genesis 22:17-18.

- Genesis 22:17-18 - That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.
- In Genesis 22:17-18, the word "seed/offspring" in Hebrew can be used in reference to an individual or as a collective noun in reference to a group of people. (illustration – my offspring could refer to one of my daughters or the collection of both of them) But Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, interprets it in

reference to one individual and points out that the ultimate fulfillment of the promises to Abraham would come in and through the Messiah.

- When God promised Abraham that in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed, what He meant was “in Christ” all the nations of the earth will be blessed.
- That is one of the reasons why that terminology of being “in Christ” is used over and over again throughout the New Testament. The only way that you can be forgiven and right with God is in virtue of being in Christ, being in relationship with Him as the one who died for your sins.
- You are either in the world, cursed under the bondage of sin, or you are in Christ, blessed with redemption from sin. It’s one or the other. You can’t belong to both families.

Paul’s point here is that the Mosaic covenant could not have invalidated the covenant of promise God made with Abraham because not only are covenants binding, but also because God’s covenant with Abraham would find its ultimate fulfillment in the Messiah Himself and the New Covenant He would inaugurate. (MacArthur, 1987)

Galatians 3:8 - And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Galatians 3:27-29 - For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

1 Corinthians 12:12 - For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

### 3.) God’s Covenant with Moses Does not Negate God’s Covenant with Abraham

17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ – this is what I’m saying. The promise that God confirmed to Abraham that through the Messiah all the peoples of the earth would be blessed...that promise is unaffected by the coming of the law. (Plummer, 1902)

- “It is not often enough seen that no obligations are imposed upon Abraham. Circumcision is not originally an obligation, but a sign of the covenant, like the rainbow in Genesis 9. It serves to identify the recipient(s) of the covenant, as well as to give a concrete indication that a covenant exists. It is for the protection of the promise, perhaps, like the mark of Cain in Genesis 4. The covenant of Moses, on the

other hand, is almost the exact opposite. It imposes specific obligations on the tribes or clans without binding Yahweh to specific obligations.” (Mendenhall, 1954)

How do you know that?

For...

The law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect – the giving of the law through Moses, which came 430 years after the Abrahamic covenant (illustration – double the amount of time that has passed since the founding of the USA), cannot invalidate God’s covenant with Abraham so that the promise is invalid

- “The Law came 645 years after Abraham, but 215 years later God repeated the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob, exactly four hundred and thirty years prior to the Mosaic covenant at Sinai.” (MacArthur, 1987)
  - o Genesis 15:13 - And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and **they shall afflict them four hundred years;**
  - o Exodus 12:40-41 - Now **the sojourning** of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, **was four hundred and thirty years.** And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.
  - o Acts 7:6 - And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, **and entreat them evil four hundred years.**
  - o Galatians 3:17 - 17 And this I say, that **the covenant, that was confirmed** before of God in Christ, **the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after,** cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.
  - o Exodus 12:40 and Galatians 3:17 indicate that the total time in bondage was 430 years. Some suggest the 400 year figure given in this verse and in Acts 7:6 are rounded. (Blum, Walvoord, & Zuck) Others posit that although Israel was in the land for 430 years, they were persecuted for 400 years.
- That later covenant does not invalidate the prior covenant God made with Abraham.

What is a covenant as it pertains to God in Scripture?

- Promise
  - Can be unconditional - I WILL
  - Can be conditional - IF YOU WILL, I WILL
  - Illustration
    - If you wash my car, I'll give you \$20
    - I'll give you \$20
- With Israel
  - With the house of Israel and with Judah



- Romans 9:4 - Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;
- Ephesians 2:11-14 - 11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;
- Although the covenants (promises) are made with Israel, by being in Jesus Christ, we are blessed through them.

b. 5 Major Covenants in the Scriptures

# THE COVENANTS

Covenant = Promise

## 5 Major Covenants in the Scripture

- Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-7)
- Palestenian Covenant (Deut. 30:1-10)
- Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:12-16)
- Mosaic (Old) Covenant (Deut. 28:1-68)
- New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34)

- **Abrahamic Covenant** (Gen 12:1-7; confirmed in Genesis 15, 17, and 22)
  - a. Unconditional - I WILL
  - b. Land - His seed would possess the promised land in its entirety (Palestinian covenant expounds on this)
  - c. Seed - God would make a great nation out of his seed (Davidic covenant expounds on this)
  - d. Blessing - they would be blessed, and all the nations of the earth would be blessed through his seed, the Messiah (New covenant expounds on this)
  - e. The Abrahamic covenant is at the core of God's plan for redemption. It's foundational in the Scriptures. Everything is connected to it.
- **Mosaic (Old) Covenant** (Deuteronomy 28:1-68; Exodus 19:5)

## Mosaic (Old) Covenant

Passage	Deut. 28:1-68
Type of Promise	Conditional
Promise	If you obey the law, I will bless you

- - a. Conditional - IF YOU WILL
  - b. God says, "If you obey my law, I will bless you in the land." (Deut. 28)
    - It doesn't have anything to do with salvation which has always been by faith.
    - Problem - Israel could never live up to their end of the bargain so God did not fully bless them at that point in time (captivity, oppression, they haven't yet fully possessed the promised land, etc.)
    - Problem – when people looked to the law to save them and in their self-righteousness failed to see their moral inadequacy and their need for a Savior.
      - They looked to the Mosaic covenant to do what the Abrahamic covenant was designed to do through the coming of the Messiah.
- Abrahamic covenant
  - God promises Abraham possession of the land, a great number of descendants, and that through His descendant, the Messiah, all the peoples of the earth would be blessed/have access to salvation.
- Mosaic Covenant
  - God gives Israel the law and promises blessing or cursing in the land based on their obedience.
- Pau's point is that the Mosaic covenant/promise does not negate, alter, or invalidate the promise God made to Abraham.
  - Illustration – me promising to give Gunner \$5 and then later promising to give Korbin \$5 if he takes out my trash. The second conditional promise does not make void the first unconditional promise.

Genesis 15:18 - In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

Genesis 17:7-8 - And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Luke 1:68-79 - Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

John 8:56-58 - Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Numbers 23:19 - God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Romans 4:13-14 - For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

Hebrews 6:13-18 - For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

How do the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants/promises relate to one another?

- Covenants are binding. God made a covenant with Abraham. Therefore, the Mosaic covenant does not affect the Abrahamic covenant.

#### 4.) The Inheritance was Promised without the Law

18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

When God made His covenant with Abraham, He could have based it on the law. He could have made the inheritance contingent upon Abraham obeying the law...In that case the covenant would have been conditional. The blessings/the inheritance would have been conditioned upon Abraham's obedience. But that's not what God did. When God made His covenant with Abraham, it was unconditional. It was based solely upon God's promise. The inheritance was not conditioned upon Abraham's obedience. It was unconditionally based on God's promise which Abraham received by faith.

"Man cannot succeed in perfectly keeping the law. God cannot fail in perfectly keeping His promise. " (MacArthur, 1987)

- The law was never meant to be a means of salvation. It was meant to be a conditional litmus test of blessing or cursing in the land for Israel, but even that they couldn't live up to. Salvation was always a matter of promise.

What is this inheritance?

It's the blessing of forgiveness of sins and justification before God.

Who receives this inheritance from Abraham?

His children.

How do you become a child of Abraham?

Through faith in the Messiah, by being in Christ.

- Illustration – inheritances are received not earned; inheritances are received based on relationship
  - o Are you a child of Abraham? Are you in Christ?
- Nearly half a millennia before the law was ever given, God promised Abraham this blessing, and he received it by faith, and he became the father of all who, like him, receive it by faith and are in Christ.

Galatians 3:10 - For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Galatians 3:12 - And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

Romans 4:13-16 - For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

Psalms 105:6-12 - O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen. He is the LORD our God: his judgments are in all the earth. He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance: When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.

Hebrews 6:12-15 - That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

### **Application**

Are you in Christ? Are you a child of Abraham? Do you a heavenly inheritance?

If so, are you acting like it? Are you acting in accordance with the new identity that you have in Jesus Christ?

# Galatians 3:19-25

## Review

In Galatians 3 & 4, Paul is defending the gospel. So far, the crux of the arguments he has made are as follows

Gal. 3:6-9 - Genesis tells us that Abraham was justified by faith, and God promised that through his descendant (the Christ) all the nations of the earth would be justified too. Just as Abraham was justified before God through faith, so too all the nations of the earth are justified before God through faith in Christ, the promised one.

Well, what about the law?

Galatians 3:10-14 – Deuteronomy tells us that the law curses everyone before God because no one can measure up to it...no one, except for the promised one: Jesus. Jesus, as the perfect keeper of the law, bore our punishment in His body on that cross. He took our punishment on Himself so that through faith in Him we can receive His blessed righteousness and enter into a relationship with God.

Well Moses and the law came after Abraham. Doesn't the law supersede the promises God made to Abraham? Isn't it more important?

Galatians 3:15-18 – No. Covenants are binding. God made a covenant with Abraham. Therefore, the promises God made to Israel during the time of Moses do not invalidate the promises God made to Abraham five hundred years prior.

- God's promises to Moses don't invalidate God's promises to Abraham. God's promises to the Jews don't invalidate God's promises regarding the Gentiles. The same is true in reverse. God's promises to the Gentiles don't set aside God's promises to the Jews. The inclusion of the Gentiles in Christ does not invalidate God's promises to Israel. Covenants not invalidating prior covenants is one of the reasons why we believe that God will still keep His promises to Israel one day.

Well, if Israel was never fully blessed in the land through the keeping of the law because they failed to obey it, and if the law can't save anyone because no one can perfectly keep it, then what was the purpose of the law in the grand scheme of things?

Paul gives two answers to that question.

### 1.) To Shine a Spotlight on Sin

19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Wherefore then serveth the law? – well then, what was/is the purpose of the law?

- “What was the function of the law in the context of salvation history?” (George, 2020, p. 283)
  - He’s talking big picture. He’s not here speaking of how the law pertains to the believer’s walk with God.
- Certainly you can imagine people accusing Paul in his theology of demonizing the law, almost as it was given by the devil, not by God.
  - Acts 21:28 - Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.
  - Paul is going to address this question, this concern.

It was added – the law had a beginning. There was a point in time prior to when God gave Israel the law.

- The law God gave to Israel consisted of three parts
  - Moral laws – don’t murder, don’t commit adultery, etc.
    - These moral commandments are universal. They were wrong prior to the giving of the law, and they’re still wrong to this day.
  - Ceremonial laws - Jewish festivals, dietary restrictions, the sacrificial system
  - Civil laws – political laws regarding restitution and punishment that governed Israel as a nation
    - Whereas the moral commands within the law are universally binding across time, the ceremonial and civil laws were specifically for Israel for a period of time
- God gave Israel a law consisting of moral, ceremonial and civil commandments. Why?

Why?

Because of transgressions – transgression: the overstepping of a line. Prior to the giving of the law, sin was still sin, and man knew right from wrong because of the conscience that God had placed within him. But when God gave Israel the law, it was like He was drawing an explicit line in the sand. There was no longer any ambiguity over what was acceptable and what was not.

- Romans 4:15 - 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law (*line*) is, there is no transgression (*crossing of that line*).
- After the giving of the law, when an Israelite broke God’s law, they had not just sinned, they had deliberately, knowingly crossed an explicit line that God had drawn in the sand. That was bad.
- They hadn’t just sinned. They had transgressed. They had violated God’s explicitly laid out commands.
- The law was given to Israel by God because of transgressions...to make sin explicit.
  - Illustration: it is wrong for my daughter to hit another child. That offense is even more egregious when she does it after I’ve explicitly told her not to.

- God gave Israel the law so as to draw explicit lines in the sand and to really shine a spotlight on how sinful they were.
  - o Romans 5:20-21 - Moreover the law entered, **that the offence might abound**. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.
    - God did not give Israel the law so as to make them more sinful, but rather to reveal how sinful they truly were.

Romans 7:13 - Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; **that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.**

The law was given to shine a spotlight on Israel's sin.

For how long? Forever? No.

Til the seed should come to whom the promise was made – the law (moral, civil and ceremonial) had a beginning, and it would have an end after which it would no longer be operative. God's moral commands would still be in place, but the Mosaic law as a system would not. That end point was when the promised Messiah (the son of Abraham) would arrive, the one through which God promised that all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

- When it came to the law, Christ did what no one else could. He kept it perfectly. He was righteous, and not only that, but on the cross, He paid the penalty of every past, present, and future sin/transgression that would ever be committed. He fulfilled the law because He kept it, and because He paid the price tag of every violation of it.
  - o That was Paul's point. The Mosaic law as a system had dominion up until the coming of Christ, the Promised Savior. Its dominion began on Mt. Sinai with Moses, and it ended on Mt Calvary with Jesus. Why? Because He fulfilled it. (George, 2020)
  - o The question of what would happen to the Mosaic law system when the Messiah came was one that was debated in Judaism even prior to the life of Jesus.

and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. – The reference here seems to be Deuteronomy 33:2 wherein the law was confirmed in the presence of angels (Acts 7:53 & Hebrews 2:2 confirm this). The mediator here is in reference to Moses. He was the intermediary between God and Israel on Mount Sinai. (Sorenson, 2007)

- "The Hebrew text of Exodus 19, which contains the scriptural account of the giving of the law, does not refer to angels, but it does describe Mount Sinai as surrounded by thunder, lightning, a thick cloud, and billows of fire (Exodus 19:16–19). Later OT texts, notably the Septuagint version of Deut. 33:2 and Ps 68:18, interpret these natural phenomena to mean that a large number of angels, the fiery hosts of heaven,



accompanied God in his giving of the law at Sinai.<sup>435</sup> The participation of the angels in the giving of the law was not merely a piece of pious Jewish folklore, for it is confirmed elsewhere in the NT (cf. Acts 7:38, 53; Heb 2:2).” (George, 2020)

- Paul’s comments here are designed to show the inferiority of the law to God’s promises to Abraham. God dealt directly with Abraham. The law was handed down by angels with a man acting as an intermediary between God and Israel. (George, 2020)

- o This is what he actually says in the next verse.

Deuteronomy 33:2 - And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.

Romans 3:1-2 - What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

Romans 7:7-13 - What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Deuteronomy 4:8-9 - And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;

Psalms 147:19-20 - He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.

Romans 3:19-20 - Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 4:15 - Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

Galatians 3:16 - Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Acts 7:53 - Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

Hebrews 2:2 - For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

Exodus 20:19-22 - And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.

Deuteronomy 5:22-33 - These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me. And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it. And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! Go say to them, Get you into your tents again. But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it. Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded

John 1:17 - For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Acts 7:38 - This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one – A mediator in a covenant implies two parties, both with responsibilities. That was the case with the giving of the law. Moses was the mediator between God and Israel, and there were conditions on both side of that agreement. Mediation implies that. However, in God’s dealing with Abraham there was no mediator in that covenant. It was God dealing directly with Abraham. Why was there no mediator? There were no conditions. Because it was a one-sided unilateral promise that God made to Abraham. It was unconditional.

- With the Mosaic covenant, God mediated to Israel through Moses.
  - o Exodus 19:3-8 – 3 And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. 7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. 8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.
- However, in the case of the Abrahamic covenant, there was no mediator. God spoke directly to Abraham and there was no need for a mediator because it was only based on the actions of one party: God.
  - o Genesis 12:1-3 – 1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.
- “Paul’s point likely is that the promise made to Abraham is superior and takes precedence over the law not only in that it was given 430 years earlier, but also in that it was a direct promise. No middleman was necessary. It was a unilateral promise.” (Sorenson, 2007)
  - o The law didn’t take precedence over God’s promise to Abraham. God’s promise to Abraham took precedence over the law.

Deuteronomy 6:4 - Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

1 Timothy 2:5 - For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

Why was the law given? To shine a spotlight on sin. To draw a line in the sand for Israel and make sin worse. It was no longer just sin. It was now also transgression: a direct violation of God's explicitly laid out commands.

## 2.) To Point Sinners to the Savior

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

Is the law then against the promises of God? – well, does that mean that the law system God gave to Moses for Israel is in opposition to God's promises to Abraham? Do they contradict one another?

- "That's what you think isn't it Paul? You think the law is bad. You think that Moses and the covenant he mediated are in opposition to God's promises to Abraham."

God forbid – of course not! May it never be so.

- The God of promise is the God of the law. The God of Abraham is the God of Moses. He's one God.

For – because it was not possible for the law to impart life. Therefore, the Old Testament law and God's promise of salvation through the Messiah are not opposed to one another. Rather, they work together.

If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. – if there was a law that had been given that truly could impart life, then in that case, salvation/justification before God would have been through the law...and in that case, the law and God's promise of salvation through the Messiah would have been rival means of salvation. However, as Paul has already established in Galatians 2 & 3, the Mosaic law system saved no one and cursed everyone.

- Galatians 2:16 - 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.
- Galatians 2:21 - I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.
- Galatians 3:10-12 - 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.
- Illustration – the law was not a rival Savior to Jesus. It was like John the Baptist, preparing the way for the Lord.
  - o Its purpose was to point sinners to the Savior.

Matthew 5:17-20 - Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Romans 3:31 - Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Romans 3:20 - Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:21-22 - But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Romans 10:3-6 - For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

But – the law is not a rival to the Messiah. Rather...

The Scripture (as a whole) hath concluded all under sin – the Scripture has imprisoned all of us (Jew & Gentile) under the power of sin.

- Romans 2:12 - 12 For as many as have sinned without law (Gentiles who violate the universal moral commands of God revealed in conscience) shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law (Jews) shall be judged by the law;
- How has the Scripture imprisoned Jew and Gentile under the power of sin? In the way it describes our sinful, hopeless, lost condition. It's not that the Scripture has made it so. We have made it so through our sinfulness. We chose to take up residence in the prison of sin. What the Scripture does is shine a light on the hopeless, imprisoned condition we find ourselves in. It declares that we are lost. Why?
- To point us to the Savior...so that we might be found.

That the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe – The moral law of God imprisons all of us under the power of sin in order that what was promised (the blessing of salvation) might be given through faith in Jesus Christ (the Savior) to those who look to Him in faith to save them. (Moo, 2013)

- What is given? Righteousness before God
- To whom it is given? To those who believe (emphasis on the **activity** of faith)
- How is it given? Through faith in Jesus Christ (emphasis on the **object** of faith) (Moo, 2013)
- Before you can be saved, you have to understand that you are lost. The purpose of the Jewish law in the context of salvation history was to undeniably teach Israel and by extension the world that they were lost and in need of a Savior.

Psalms 143:2 - And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

Romans 3:9-20 - What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 5:20-21 - Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hebrews 9:15 - And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

1 John 5:11-13 - And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Mark 16:16 - He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

John 3:15-18 - That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:36 - He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Acts 16:31 - And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Romans 10:9 - That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

- This does not mean that Jews didn't have faith prior to Jesus, or that people were saved some different way than through faith prior to the coming of Jesus.
  - o One of Paul's major arguments for justification by faith is that Abraham (who lived 2000 years prior to Jesus) was justified by faith.
  - o During the time period in which the Mosaic law system was operative, Jews were saved by faith in God...but they were still under the authority of that system until the time of the Messiah arrived and He ushered in a new era characterized by faith In Him specifically.

But before faith came, we were kept under the law – before the Messiah came and the era of faith in His saving work on the cross

We were kept under the law – we (Israel) were guarded under the custody of the law. The Mosaic law as a system was operative and binding on us/on Israel.

Shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed – imprisoned under the law until the coming of Christ and faith in His death, burial, and resurrection that would be later revealed...in which the full picture of God's plan for salvation would be evident.

Galatians 3:24-25 - Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Galatians 4:1-4 - Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

Galatians 4:4-5 - But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Galatians 4:21 - Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

Galatians 5:18 - But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Romans 3:19 - Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

1 Cor. 9:20-21 - And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

Luke 10:23-24 - And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Hebrews 11:13 - These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Hebrews 11:39-40 - And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Wherefore – so that

The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ – “schoolmaster” here refers to slaves in the ancient world that young children were committed to the care of during their childhood years (age 6 to 13). They were given oversight of the children. They were charged with the moral discipline of the children. They had this oversight for a temporary period of time.



- That's like what the law was to Israel. The law was Israel's guardian that gave them moral discipline and raised them up until the time in which the Messiah arrived and a new era began. (Waalvord & Zuck, 1983)

That we might be justified by faith – when Christ came, the law handed guardianship of the child over to the Messiah. Why? So that Israel as well as the Gentiles could be justified through faith in Christ (His death, burial, and resurrection as the atonement for sin) Now that the law had been fulfilled, its penalty had been paid, and the full picture of God's plan for salvation was available, the era of the law was over, and the era of the Messiah had begun.

Acts 13:38-39 - Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Hebrews 7:18-19 - For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

Hebrews 10:1-14 - For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Gal. 2:16 - Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

But after that faith is come – after the coming of this new era of the Messiah and the advent of faith in Him...

We (Israel) are no longer under a schoolmaster – after the law handed guardianship of Israel over Jesus, the Messiah, the law no longer has custody. Israel is no longer under the temporary oversight of the law...and if that's the case for Jews, how much more so is that the case for Gentiles?

- “Once we have reached the place of turning to Christ by faith, the purpose of the law has been fulfilled and we no longer have need of it as a tutor. We have outgrown the law.” (Sorenson, 2007)

Romans 6:14 - For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Romans 7:4 - Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Hebrews 8:3-13 - For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

## **Application**

In the context of God's overarching plan of salvation, what the purpose of the Jewish law? It was to shine a spotlight on sin, and it was to point sinners to the coming Savior. Once Jesus arrived, the purpose for the law was fulfilled. Whereas prior to the coming of Christ, man was saved through the acknowledgment of his sin and looking forward with faith in God to save him from it...after the coming of Christ and His death and resurrection, man was saved through the acknowledgment of his sin and looking back in faith to the Savior that came to deliver him from it.

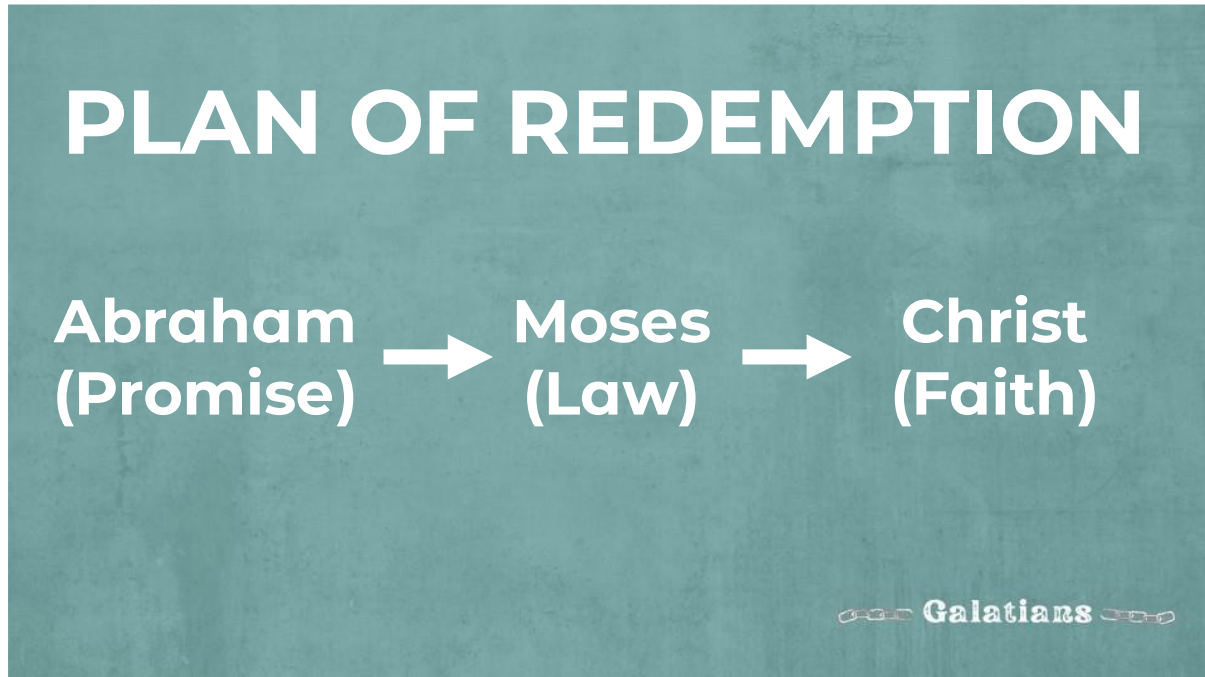
Additional purposes of the law:

1. The Mosaic law reveals God's holiness (Ps. 19:7; Rom. 7:12)
2. The Mosaic law defines sin and exposes its heinous nature (Rom. 3:20)
3. The Mosaic law confirms our need to be separate from sin (Matt. 5:14-16)
4. The Mosaic law shows how God's plan unfolds gradually and progressively (Gal. 3:24; Matt. 5:17)
5. The Mosaic law expounds on God's two most basic commands (Deut. 6:5; lev. 19:18)
6. The Mosaic law predicts that God will not forsake His children (Deut. 32:21-22, 36, 43)
7. The Mosaic law establishes the principle of sowing and reaping (Deut. 11:26-28; Gal. 6:7)
8. The Mosaic law demonstrates the value of an intercessor between God and man (Num. 3:3; 1 Tim. 2:5)
9. The Mosaic law shows the efficacy of a substitutionary sacrifice (Heb. 9:22)
10. The Mosaic law provides many pictures of Christ and His redemption (John 1:29) (Got Questions)

# Galatians 3:26-29

## Review

Over the course of Galatians 3, Paul has been defending the gospel of Jesus Christ. He has painted a historic picture of God's overarching plan of redemption.



He started off talking about how God's plan of salvation was revealed through the promise He made to Abraham that through the Messiah (in Christ) all nations would be blessed with salvation. From there, God gave Israel the Mosaic law system as a guardian for a period of time to show them their complete inability to keep God's law and their need for a Savior. Then came Christ. He was both the fulfillment of the promise and the law. He was the fulfillment of the promise because He was the descendant of Abraham through which all men could be saved. He was the fulfillment of the law because He had perfectly kept the law and paid the price tag for every violation of it. Up to this point in Galatians 3, Paul has told this story of the plan of redemption from Abraham through the law to Christ, and he has told it with more of a Jewish focus in mind.

- Whereas Galatians 3:6-25 is more forward looking and Jewish focused...
- Galatians 3:26-4:31 is more backwards looking from Christ through the law to Abraham, and it is written with more of a Gentile focus.
  - o If Jews were justified by faith, how much more so Gentiles?
  - o In virtue of Gentile believers being "in Christ", there are all kinds of ramifications for them such as being spiritual descendants of Abraham.
  - o Galatians 3:26-29 - 26 For ye are all the children of God by faith **in Christ Jesus**. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on

Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one **in Christ Jesus**. 29 **And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed**, and heirs according to the promise.

At the heart of our passage today are the ramifications for the believer in virtue of being in Christ, in relationship with Jesus through faith. As we look at our passage today the first ramification we see is that:

### 1.) In Christ, We Are Sons and Daughters

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

For – Because (connects vs. 26 to vs. 25)

- Why does the law no longer serve as a “guardian” over Israel?

Ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus – You collectively (Jew and Gentile alike) are all adults sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

- Remember, in ancient times, guardians oversaw children over a period of time up until they reached a point of maturity. Paul says, “The reason that the law no longer has guardianship over Israel is because in the coming of Christ, we have reached the point of maturity, and through Him we are now adult sons and daughters of God. That law system no longer has guardianship.”
- Illustration – WCBC rules/structure is a great illustration of the law
  - o It was a system of rules that had guardianship/jurisdiction over me for a period of time until I reached the point of maturity (that graduation day), and I was freed from them, never to return.
  - o It was hard for me coming from no rules at UCF to mega rules at WCBC.
  - o Examples of Rules
  - o Once I graduated and got married and was out of the dorms, I was no longer under the rule system. I had graduated beyond that.
  - o Why would I go back?
    - That’s Paul point. Through faith in Christ, we have become adult children of God, and we have graduated from the time period of immaturity in which the law had guardianship/jurisdiction. Knowing that, why would you want to go back? What’s wrong with you!
- “We should not read too much into Paul’s noticeable transition from first-person plural in v. 25 (‘we’) to second-person plural (‘you are’) in v. 26. As we have suggested, this passage marks a shift in Paul’s presentation: what he had just described in terms of the Jewish Christian perspective he would now restate from the standpoint of converted Gentiles. However, even in Gal 4, Paul would move from ‘we’ to ‘you’ language with no discernible difference in meaning. He could do this because the fundamental human reality is the same for Jews and Gentiles alike.” (George, 2020, pp. 306-307)

- That's what the "for" means in verse 26. It's connecting verse 26 to verse 25, but what does verse 26 mean?
  - o Because we are adult sons and daughters of God, we have graduated from the guardianship of the law system.

Ye are all Children of God – notice the familial terms (Gal. 3:26-29 is all about family). Our relationship with God the Father is a byproduct of our relationship with Jesus Christ.

- Through Christ, we are brought into a family, and we have a new awesome Father...the best Father...God, the Father.
  - o God as Creator is father of all. God as Redeemer is only father to those who are in Christ.
  - o If you have Christ, you have the Father. If you don't have Christ, you don't have the Father.
- Now that we have reached adult sonship, we no longer need a baby sitter (i.e. the law).
  - o "The law of God still has a positive role to play in the life of the believer, but it may no longer condemn, imprison, or destroy." (George, 2020, p. 307)

How does one become a child of God? How do we receive God as our redemptive Father?

By faith – not by race, ethnicity, family lines, money, religion, accomplishments

- John 1:12-13 - But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- Through faith, you are born again.
  - o You are spiritually born into the family of God.
  - o You are adopted as His child into His family.
- We become children of God through faith, but this faith that makes us sons and daughters of God isn't just faith in general...It's faith...

in Christ Jesus – this could describe either the object of our faith or the relationship that faith brings us into which makes us a child of God

- In His death, burial, and resurrection as the payment for my sins and means of everlasting life.
- "The ancient Romans had a coming-of-age ceremony called toga virilis, which was somewhat like the Jewish bar mitzvah. The ceremony signified a boy's reaching the age of manhood (which varied between the ages of 14 and 17) and full Roman citizenship, with all its rights and privileges. He no longer had a "guardian", but was now a recognized adult, responsible for his own welfare and actions. It's like Paul was saying to the Galatians, 'You have all experienced a spiritual toga virilis through faith in Christ. You are no longer a child under the guardianship of the law. You are a full-grown adult child of God.'" (MacArthur, 1987)

- You are no longer little kids. You are adult sons and daughters of God in virtue of your relationship with Christ and you have graduated from the dominion of the law which had guardianship in your time of adolescence.
- “Roman youth, nearing the end of adolescence, would remove the crimson-bordered garment of childhood and would put on the toga virilis to mark his entrance into full manhood.” (George, 2020, p. 312)

Galatians 4:5-6 - To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Romans 8:14-17 - For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Ephesians 1:5 - Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Hebrews 2:10-15 - For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

In Christ, we are adult sons and daughters. But that’s not all. For, at the moment of salvation, with Christ we are clothed.

## 2.) With Christ, We are Clothed

This is what it means to be in Christ. It means that with Christ we are clothed.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

### For – Because

- It’s connecting verse 27 to verse 26.
- The reason that we are sons and daughter of God through faith in Jesus is because when we put our faith in Jesus at the moment of salvation, we were clothed with Jesus. We became in Christ.

- The reason that we have a new Father through faith in Jesus is because through faith in Jesus we become in Christ/clothed with Christ.
- “Gal 3:27 is looking back to the divine change, to that putting on of Christ, which in Jesus Christ himself has been effected objectively and subjectively for the recipients of the epistle by his Holy Spirit.” (George, 2020, p. 310)

As many of you – this is not designating a sub class of those of faith (vs. 26), but rather a sub class of mankind in general

As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ– When Paul talks about baptism here, what does he mean?

- Is he talking about water baptism? Every one of you that have been water baptized have been clothed with Jesus. Is that what he’s saying?
  - Those who believe that water baptism is necessary for salvation would say “yes” and they would point to this verse to prove it.
  - The problem with that thought is that Paul’s primary point in the book of Galatians is that we are saved exclusively through faith in Christ independent of religious ceremonies. The major Jewish ceremony he’s been dealing with is circumcision. “You don’t need to be circumcised to be saved. You just need to put your faith in Jesus...oh and be baptized.” Is that what he’s saying? No that’s not what he’s saying.
  - “It’s not as if Paul was saying: ‘My opponents were wrong in trying to circumcise you. What you really need is to be baptized! The requirement of baptism has replaced that of circumcision. If you want to be right with God, you must trust in Jesus Christ and be baptized with water’? Yet this is precisely what Paul did not say to the Galatians.” (George, 2020, pp. 309-310)
- What is Paul talking about then?
  - Baptism – to immerse
  - The New Testament teaches two baptisms: the baptism/immersion of believers into Christ and the baptism of believers into water.
    - Baptism into Christ/Baptism of the Spirit – what the Holy Spirit does when we put our faith in Jesus at salvation. He takes us, He indwells us, and He places us into union with Jesus Christ. He baptizes us/immerses us in Christ spiritually.
      - Acts 1:5 - 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.
      - 1 Cor. 12:12-13 - 12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit (*Holy Spirit*) are we all baptized into one body (*body of Christ*), whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.



- Baptism of the Spirit is when, at the moment of salvation the Holy Spirit, places us in union with Christ...so that we are clothed with Christ as part of His body.
- In the New Testament, the ceremony of water baptism comes after that. Water baptism is a public declaration that we have put our faith in Christ, and that we are, through the Holy Spirit, in Christ.
  - In the New Testament, water baptism, in a sense, is a public testament to Spirit baptism... that we have put our faith in Jesus and are now in Christ.
  - “Baptism is recalled as the concrete moment in their own life in which they for their part confirmed, recognized, and accepted their investing with Christ from above, their ontic relationship to him, not only in gratitude and hope but also in readiness and vigilance.” (George, 2020, p. 310)
  - “Thus Barth is correct in claiming that Gal 3:27 is looking back to the divine change, to that putting on of Christ, which in Jesus Christ himself has been effected objectively and subjectively for the recipients of the epistle by his Holy Spirit. Baptism is recalled as the concrete moment in their own life in which they for their part confirmed, recognized, and accepted their investing with Christ from above,” (George, 2020, p. 310)
- “Lest there be any question of the above, notice the object of said immersion. It is ‘into Christ,’ not into water. See I Corinthians 12:13. The point Paul is leading up to is that all believers become sons of God, and all are immersed by the Spirit of God into the body of Christ. (Recall, the controversy in the Galatian churches regarding the inclusion of gentiles into the body of Christ. The Judaizers held they must become Jews, including circumcision and all the rest of the rites of Judaism.” (Sorenson, 2007)

As many of you as have put your faith in Jesus resulting in the Holy Spirit immersing you into Christ (not into water), you...

Have put on Christ – have been clothed with Christ

- There’s some significant symbolism here. In the ancient world, when someone was baptized in water, they would take off their old garments, be baptized, and then put on new garments. (George, 2020, p. 312)
  - That practice was symbolic of what had happened to them when they got saved. They were clothed with their old way of life, their old identity. Then they got saved. The Holy Spirit placed them/immersed them in Christ, and they were clothed with newness of life and a new identity as they put on Christ.

- Illustration – not dressing like I used to
  - o Brady Patriots Jersey -> Lawrence Jaguars Jersey
  - o Out with the old, in with the new
    - I am no longer enveloped in this world. I am enveloped in Christ, and I need to act like it.

Matthew 28:19-20 - Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark 16:15-16 - And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Acts 2:38 - Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 8:36-38 - And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

Romans 6:3-4 - Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

1 Corinthians 12:13 - For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Colossians 2:10-12 - And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Romans 3:22 - Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Romans 13:14 - But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Ephesians 4:24 - And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Colossians 3:10 - And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

At salvation, through faith we were clothed with Christ. We were immersed into Christ. That's significant because it means that in virtue of our relationship with Christ, we are now adult sons and daughters of God. It also means, that we are brought into unity with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

### 3.) In Christ, We are Siblings

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

In terms of our relationship with Jesus Christ, we are neither divided nor defined by our race, our social status, or our sex. Those are the three things that people in this world have historically divided over more than anything else: race, money, and gender. "I am better than others because of my race. I am better than others because of my money. I am better than others because of my gender." That mentality is wrong, and according to the Scriptures, when we become a Christian those things no longer define us or divide us because of who unites us.

Now on the flip side, that doesn't mean that when you become a Christian these distinctions cease to exist. Progressive liberal Christianity appeals to this very verse to try to say that. Don't believe that nonsense. Don't believe those that would reinterpret this verse as saying there is no difference between heterosexual and homosexual, male pastors or female pastors, transgender or cisgender. That is not what this verse means.

I did not stop being a man when I got saved. I did not stop being a Gentile when I got saved. I did not stop being a free citizen when I got saved. Rather, when I got saved, I ceased being defined by those things. I became clothed with Christ, and He is now what defines me. I am first and foremost a Christian above all else. I have more in common with my Christian brothers and sisters living halfway across the world in a hut than I do with someone who looks like me, talks like me, and votes like me but does not know Jesus.

- "Paul's point is this: all those who have heard and received this good news are now called to a new pattern of life within the baptized community. The old distinctions have not been eradicated any more than the soul of a new believer has been ripped out of his body. We still live in the tension between the no longer and the not yet. We still affirm the goodness of God's created order even while we recognize that it has been horribly marred by sin. But in Jesus Christ we have been called out of darkness into his marvelous light. This means Christians have been liberated from the demonic forces of racism, materialism, and sexism." (George, 2020, p. 322)

- "In matters of rule in the home and in the church God has established the headship of men. But in the dimension of spiritual possessions and privilege there is absolutely no difference." (MacArthur, 1987)

If you don't think that's the case, then your problem is not with me, but with the Holy Spirit who immersed you into the body of Christ.

When you got saved and began your relationship with Jesus, you didn't just get Him. You received His Father, and you got a whole bunch of new brothers and sisters that you need to get along with. Why? Because in Christ, you're all part of the same family.

- We are one with Christ, and we are one with every other believer who is in Christ.

"When a person is dipped/immersed into Christ, he comes out a changed man: his former color disappears, he comes out the color of Christ. Whether the person before dipping was a Jew or a Gentile, a slave or a free man, a man or a woman, no longer matters." – J. Bligh (Bligh, 1969, p. 324)

Galatians 5:6 - For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Romans 3:29-30 - Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

Romans 4:11-12 - And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

Romans 9:24 - Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Romans 10:12-15 - For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

1 Corinthians 12:13 - For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Ephesians 3:5-10 - Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

John 10:16 - And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

John 11:52 - And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

John 17:20-21 - Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

1 Corinthians 12:12 - For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

Ephesians 2:13-22 - But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

In Christ (having been immersed into Him and clothed with Him), we have a new Father. In Christ, we have new brothers and sisters. They might be different than you, but they're family. In Christ, we have a new inheritance. For...

4.) In Christ, we are heirs.

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

And if ye be Christ's – if you are of Christ...if you are in Christ (clothed with Him)

Then are ye Abraham's seed – then you are a child of Abraham. Why? Because Jesus was the promised seed of Abraham, and you are in Christ.

- It has nothing to do with you and everything to do with Christ, the one you are in relationship with.
- Because you are in Christ, and as a result because you are the seed of Abraham, you are...

And heirs according to the promise – Heirs of what? Salvation. According to what promise? The promise God made to Abraham that all the nations of the earth would be saved “in Christ”. (MacArthur, 1987)

- Illustration – the moment Jessica was conceived in Liz, she became a lot of things at the moment of conception. At that moment, she became a daughter (with a new daddy), a sibling (with a new sister that she's very different from), and an heir (although not of much) ...all in virtue of who she was in relationship with.
  - o The same is true of us and Christ.
- “This is not a reference to the promises given to Abraham regarding the land (Gen. 12:1; 13:14-15; 17:8), but refers to the spiritual blessings that come to all who, being justified by faith just as Abraham was (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3-11), will inherit the spiritual promises given to Abraham.” (MacArthur, 1987)
- “Those who are children of God are “heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). Christ's inheritance belongs to “all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32), His fellow “heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:7). They are “sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. 1:13), the promise of inheriting God Himself. “The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup,” exulted David (Ps. 16:5). In his vision on Patmos, John “heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain. . . . He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son”” (Rev 21:3-4, 7).” (MacArthur, 1987)

Galatians 5:24 - And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

1 Corinthians 3:23 - And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Galatians 3:7 - Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

Galatians 3:16 - Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Galatians 3:28 - There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Romans 9:7-8 - Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Galatians 4:7 - Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Galatians 4:28 - Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

Romans 8:17 - And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

### Application



In Christ, we are sons and daughters of a new Father. In Christ, we are siblings of our brothers and sisters. In Christ, we are heirs of an heavenly inheritance.

Are you in Christ? Have you accepted Him as your Lord and Savior? If not, I'd encourage you to do so today. It's a package deal. The moment you put your faith in Christ and begin a relationship with Him, yet get a new Father, new brothers and sisters, and an eternal inheritance.

If you are in Christ, are you acting like it?

- Are you acting like the child of God you profess to be?
- Are you acting like the sibling in Christ that God says you are? Are you in unity with your brothers and sisters in Christ?
- Are you acting like you have an eternal inheritance, or are you stockpiling goods and wealth here as if you had nothing waiting for you in the next life?



# Galatians 4:1-7

## Review



At the end of Galatians 3, we last studied the ramifications of being in Christ through faith in the gospel (in relationship with the Lord). We saw that in Christ, we are sons and daughters of a new Father. In Christ, we are siblings of our brothers and sisters. In Christ, we are heirs of an heavenly inheritance.

# From Slaves to Sons



Galatians

In the beginning of chapter 4, Paul is going to use an illustration (4:1-2 c.f. 3:23-26) to explain the difference between our state before Christ and our current state in Christ through the coming of Christ.

- Before Christ, we were slaves with no inheritance.
- Then Christ came.
- Now, in Christ, we are adopted sons with an inheritance.
- In this passage he's going to start with the illustration (vv. 1-2), and then he's going to use the illustration to explain our state before Christ (vs. 3), the coming of Christ (vs. 4), and our current state in Christ (vv. 5-7).
- Paul ended Galatians 3 by claiming that those who are in Christ are heirs according to God's promise.
- He begins chapter 4 by providing an illustration of a potential heir that is not yet of age.

## Sermon

### 1.) The Illustration of the Potential Heir

1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

Paul is here describing the situation of a minor heir that has not yet received access to his inheritance.

Now I say. - let me give you an illustration

That the heir, as long as he is a child – that one who is in an heir, who has legal right to an inheritance... as long as he is under age (not an adult)

Though he be lord of all – even though he, by birthright, technically owns the estate (Waalvord & Zuck, 1983, p. 601)

- He is an heir in potentiality, not in actuality.
  - o What do you mean by that? If he dies before he comes of age, he never technically receives the inheritance.

While this potential heir is a minor, he...

Differeth nothing form a servant – For all intents and purposes, while he's a minor, he's like a slave. How? In terms of freedom.

- The child heir is under supervision, and his estate is under supervision.
  - o He doesn't have the freedom to do what he wants.
  - o He doesn't have the freedom to access those funds.
  - o He doesn't have the legal rights that he will when he comes of age.
- While he is a child, he is like a slave.

Genesis 24:2-3 - And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

During this period of time, he is

2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

But is under tutors and governors - Tutors – supervised the child himself; Governors - supervised the property of the heir (the estate) (Moo, 2013, p. 259)

- For all practical intents and purposes, while the child/the potential heir was underage, he was no different than the slaves that supervised him.
  - o The slaves had masters, and so did he.
  - o The slaves had no freedom, and neither did he.

They supervised the potential heir

Until the time appointed of the father – the point in time, the age, at which the father determined that the son was sufficiently mature so as to receive rights, responsibility, freedom and the inheritance

- Illustration – trust fund kid (living trust)
  - o Bring a kid up from the audience to illustrate
  - o \$250 million trust fund
  - o Child is 11

- Child receives full access to the \$250 million at age 18
- When that child reaches age 18, people will treat him a lot different than they treat him in the present as an eleven-year-old. Why? In the present, he doesn't have the freedom to do what he wants personally, and he doesn't have the freedom to do what he wants with his estate. He is under supervision. He is like a servant, in that, he has no freedom.
  - However, when he comes of age, he receives rights, responsibility, freedom and his inheritance.
  - He is free.
- The potential heir is in bondage under supervision like a slave up until the time appointed of the Father. At that appointed time, the heir receives his freedom and inheritance.
  - There's slavery up until the appointed time. Then there's freedom and an inheritance.

That situation is a great illustration of salvation.

## 2.) Application 1 - Our State before Christ

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

Even so we – Paul applies his illustration of the heir to the situation of the Galatian Christians and himself

- “Paul’s application of the situation he describes to the Galatian Christians in 4:8 makes it likely that ‘we’ refers to Christians generally.” (Moo, 2013, p. 260)

When we were children, were in bondage – before becoming Christians, we were like the underage heir that I just alluded to. We were in slavery to, in bondage under

The elements of the world – the ABCs of the world, the basic elementary religious systems that dominated prior to the coming of Christ (e.g. Jews: the law; Gentiles: pagan religions).

- That heir before he came of age had no freedom. He had no freedom personally. He had no freedom to access his inheritance. He was in bondage underneath the supervision of caretakers.
  - In the same way, before we knew Christ, we had no freedom either. We had no access to any kind of a heavenly inheritance. We were in bondage underneath the supervision of the law (for Jews) or other religious systems (for Gentiles).

Galatians 3:19 - Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Galatians 3:24-25 - Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Galatians 4:9 - But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Galatians 5:1 - Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Colossians 2:8 - Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Colossians 2:20 - Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

But then what happened?

### 3.) Application 2 - The Coming of Christ

The appointed time of the Father arrived, and Christ came.

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

But when the fulness of the time was come – when the time set by the Father arrived (vs. 2), when the time of maturity arrived, God sent forth His Son

- That occurrence was what changed everything.
- The coming of Christ came at the exact right moment in time.
  - o Do you realize that God does everything on purpose?
    - Illustration – that is not how we operate. I am a planner, but sometimes you just have to make a decision and hope for the best. And even when I plan things out to the letter, things don't often turn out exactly as I planned them. When I make decisions, sometime I make the wrong decision. Sometimes I make the right decision but there are unintended consequences. I have a plan and I work that plan hoping for the best. But friend, that is not how God operates.
  - o Every single action He takes, how He takes it, and when He takes are all perfect. Nothing ever surprises Him. Things turn out exactly as He knew they would, and He knows how things would have turned out if He had done things differently. God's actions are carried out in accordance with His sovereign will and omniscience. That's remarkable to ponder.
  - o When God sent Jesus to this earth in the first century at the appointed time, He sent Him at the exact right moment.

- “This time was when the Roman civilization had brought peace and a road system which facilitated travel; when the Grecian civilization provided a language which was adopted as the language of the empire; when the Jews had proclaimed monotheism and the messianic hope in the synagogues of the Mediterranean world.” (Waalvord & Zuck, 1983, p. 601)
- The timing of His arrival fulfilled prophecy.
  - Genesis 49:10 - The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.
  - Daniel 9:24-26 - Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.
  - Malachi 3:1 - Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.
- Before Christ, we were in bondage under basic religion (that’s the problem; we were slaves with no inheritance), but at the appointed time, God sent His Son.

God sent forth his Son – there’s the deity of Christ as one who existed prior to His incarnation

- Romans 8:3-4 - 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Made of a woman – He was not just divine. He was human. He was born of the virgin Mary, fully God and fully man.

- The Son of God became a man so that through Him men could become a sons of God.
- Genesis 3:15 - And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.
- Isaiah 7:14 - Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Made under the law – As a Jew, Jesus was born under the law. He perfectly kept the law, and then He died to pay the penalty for all transgressions of the law, and in keeping the law and paying its penalty, Christ fulfilled the law (Mat. 5:17). (Waalvord & Zuck, 1983, p. 601)

- Matthew 5:17 - Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.
- Christ, who was over the law, placed Himself under the bondage of the law so that those under the bondage of the law could be freed from its penalty and dominion.

1 John 4:9-10 - In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Isaiah 9:6-7 - For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Micah 5:2 - But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

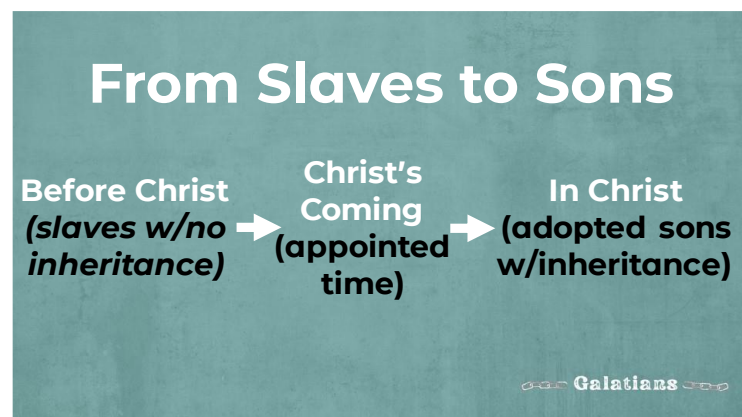
Matthew 3:15 - And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

We were in bondage under basic religious systems (the law and paganism) (that's the problem), but at the appointed time, God sent His Son. Why?

4.) Application 3 - Our State in Christ

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Why did Christ come?



- To free us from slavery and make us sons of God.

Verses 5-6 are very similar to Galatians 3:13-14.

- Galatians 3:13 – 13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
- However, in Galatians 3, the emphasis is on being redeemed from the penalty of the law, whereas in Galatians 4, the emphasis is on being redeemed from the bondage of the whole system (the oversight).

To redeem them that were under the law – Christ came to this earth and placed Himself under the law system so that He might free those who were under it.

- He kept the law and paid its penalty so that we could be released from its penalty and power.
- Galatians Application Summary: If Christ came to this earth to fulfill the law so that Jews might be freed from the penalty and bondage of the law, why would Gentile Christians want to then place themselves underneath it?
  - o Why would Gentile Christians want to go back into slavery?

Christ came to this earth and died on this cross to free us from slavery, but that's not all. He also came to earth so...

That we might receive the adoption of sons – Christ, the Son of God, came to this earth to willingly place Himself under the bondage of the law by keeping it so that we, slaves under the bondage of the law system, could be freed from it and become adopted sons of God.

- The Son became a slave so that the slaves could become sons.
- Illustration – there are more slaves now than at any point in world history (50 million). Imagine someone not only freeing a slave but then adopting them into their family
  - o We were in bondage to the law system. Christ came to free us from that bondage so that we could become adopted into the family of God.
- The moment that we by faith accept Jesus Christ as our Savior “All the enjoyments and privileges of a mature son in a family belong to us who have entered into the benefits of Christ’s redemptive work.” (Waalvord & Zuck, 1983, p. 601)

Matthew 20:28 - Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Hebrews 9:15 - And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

Galatians 3:26 - For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.



John 1:12 - But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Ephesians 1:5 - Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

But that's not all...

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Because we have been adopted into the family of God as His children, He has placed the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Christ – Rom 8:9) in our hearts as a reassurance to us of that relationship. For the Holy Spirit cries out to the Father from within us, “Daddy, daddy.” (Sorenson, 2007)

- Romans 8:15-17 - For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.
- Illustration – someone freeing a slave, adopting him into his family, and then giving him an indestructible copy of the adoption paperwork as a reassurance of the relationship.
- Ezekiel 36:26-27 - 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Ephesians 4:30 - And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son – This is Paul's point to the Galatian Christians.

- Folks, as those who are in Christ, you are no longer a slave to religious systems, you are an adopted son of God.

And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ – Why? Because as adopted children of God, we are by virtue of that relationship heirs of our Father's heavenly inheritance.

- “Adopted child inheritance law protects adoptees' rights to their adoptive parents' inheritance, just as there are laws that protect any child's rights to their parents' inheritance.”

inheritance. In other words, there is legislation in place that protects the inheritance rights of an adopted child like you.

- When it comes to a child's legal ability to inherit, there is no difference between adoptees and biological children. They are all equal in the eyes of the law, so you won't need to worry about any legal obstacles in the way of your inheritance.
- Even if your adoptive parents die before making a will, you will still receive their inheritance because you're their child. If such a need arises, then you can also contest or challenge your adoptive parents' will." (American Adoptions)
- We were slaves under the bondage of religion, but God in His love redeemed us from that bondage. He set us free, but He didn't just set us free. He adopted us into His family as sons. As such, we have all the rights and privileges of His inheritance in due season. (Sorenson, 2007)
- The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit within us testifies to us that we are the children of God and by extensions it testifies to us of the heavenly inheritance that awaits us as sons of God.
  - o Romans 8:15-17 - For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.
  - o Ephesians 1:13-14 - 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
  - o 2 Corinthians 1:22 - Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Galatians 3:29 - And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

### **Application**

There was our state before Christ: slaves to religion without freedom and without a heavenly inheritance.

There was the coming of Christ at the appointed time: He died on the cross for our sins to free us from bondage.

There is our state in Christ: if we have accepted Him as our Lord and Savior, we are no longer slaves, we are adopted children of God, and we are heirs of His heavenly inheritance.

# Galatians 4:8-20

## Review

In Galatians 3-4, Paul has been defending the gospel in an attempt to keep the Galatians from returning to the bondage of the Jewish Old Testament law.

- There was the false teaching that one had to keep the Old Testament law in order to be saved and there was the false teaching that in keeping the Old Testament law a Christian could become more holy before God.
- Paul was combatting both of these ideas. He was speaking against trusting in the Old Testament law both for salvation and sanctification.

In Galatians 4:1-7, we saw last week that Paul gave an illustration to highlight the difference between the bondage of the law outside of Christ and the freedom that can be found in Christ.

- Illustration of the minor heir
  - o While he's underage, he's in bondage to guardians
  - o Until the time appointed of the father
  - o At that point in time he is freed from that bondage and receives access to his inheritance
- Paul's application
  - o Before Christ, we were like that minor heir. We were slaves with no freedom or inheritance.
  - o But then Christ came at the time appointed of the father
  - o And now in Christ we are not only freed from bondage but adopted into His family as heirs of His inheritance

Before Christ, we were slaves, but now in Christ we are sons and daughters of God. Why would you want to return to the bondage from which Christ died to save you?

The remainder of Galatians 4 is going to be a very personal, sincere, heartfelt warning to the Galatians against returning to slavery.

In this warning against slavery, we are going to see Paul's concern for the Galatians (4:8-11), Paul's appeal to the Galatians (4:12-20), and Paul's illustration of the Galatians (4:21-31). Tonight, we're going to be looking at the first two parts of that warning beginning with...

## Sermon

1.) Paul's Concern for the Galatians

Framework – imagine that you have a child that is veering from God and that you are writing this letter to beg them not to go down the path that they are on (that is the heart of Paul in Galatians 4:8-20)

8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Howbeit then – Verses 8 & 9 are a contrast between the Galatians' former situation before they knew Christ back "then" (vs. 8) and the Galatians' current situation as children of God "now" (vs. 9)

- Back then...

When ye knew not God – before you placed your faith in Jesus Christ...before you became a Christian

- Remember that Paul is writing to a predominantly Gentile audience in Galatia

Ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods – Back then before you became a Christian, as pagans, you were in slavery to gods who weren't truly gods at all.

- There's different viewpoints on how to interpret the phrasing that Paul uses here ("them which by nature are no gods").
  - o Perspective 1 – Before you knew the true God, you were slaves to gods who weren't truly gods. In fact, those gods were demons.
    - There's a lot of biblical precedent for the idea that demonic spirits masquerade as false gods and are behind pagan deities.
    - Psalms 106:37-39 - Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.
    - 1 Cor. 10:20 - 20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.
    - Revelation 9:20 - And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

- Application – this is one of the reasons why it is so dangerous to mess around with the occult & witchcraft. Why? Because the Bible paints a very active picture of the way in which Satan and his demons interact in this world.
      - Illustration – films like the exorcist
      - “Oh there’s nothing to be scared of. There is stuff to be scared of.”
  - Option 2 – Before you knew the true God, you were slaves to gods who weren’t truly gods. They were just wood or stone or whatever. They were gods only in the figments of people’s imagination. (George, 2020, pp. 342-343)
    - There’s plenty of biblical passages that highlight the fact that all other gods outside of the one true God are not gods at all. Christians, outside of the one true God, are atheists.
      - This was more of a contentious point in the early days of Christianity when a significant portion of the world (e.g. the Roman world) was polytheistic. Christians were seen as bigots for denying the reality of all other gods except for the God of the Bible.
      - 1 Cor. 8:4-6 - 4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. 5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) 6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Regardless of what specifically Paul was getting at here, his point remains. To the Galatians he says, “Back then before you knew God, you were in bondage to false gods. You were slaves.”

9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God – but now that you have known God intimately and experientially...now that you have entered into a relationship with Him, or more accurately, He has entered into a relationship with you.

How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? – Now that you have a relationship with God, how can you turn back to slavery? You used to be slaves to paganism until Christ set you free from that and adopted you into

His family. But now, you are returning back to slavery, not the slavery of paganism, but rather the slavery of Judaism. Although it was a different flavor of slavery, it was still slavery, nonetheless. (Chappell, 2013)

- “What the Galatians had forsaken in paganism, they were now embracing in the legalism of Judaism.” (Chappell, 2013) They were exchanging one form of slavery for another.
- What are you thinking?!
- Illustration – a slave on cotton plantation being set free and set up for life, but then voluntarily returning to slavery on a tobacco plantation (since it’s not cotton, it must not be slavery)

10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

This is a list of some of the practices they were beginning to observe in their bondage to Judaism.

- Days: weekly Sabbath observance as well as other feasts in which celebrations were only a day long
- Months: new moon rituals (Numbers 10:10)
- Seasons: major Jewish feasts (e.g. Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles) (cf. 2 Chr. 8:13; Zech. 8:19)
- Years: year of Jubilee, sabbatical year, and new year celebrations (George, 2020, p. 347)
  - o They were observing these practices with the expectation that so doing would either save them or make them more holy.

“However, for Paul, just as circumcision was neither good nor evil in itself, so too the observance of special feast days and holy seasons was neither mandatory nor inherently blameworthy. In Rom 14:5–6 he observed: “One person judges one day to be more important than another day. Someone else judges every day to be the same. Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind. Whoever observes the day, observes it for the honor of the Lord.” Obviously Paul was concerned that the Galatian believers would be drawn into a religious system where adherence to certain cyclical celebrations was regarded as obtaining or maintaining a favorable standing with God.: (George, 2020, p. 348)

Colossians 2:16-17, 20-22 - 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ....20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

Deuteronomy 15:15 - 15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day.

11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

I'm afraid that all of the work I have put into you may have been for nothing.

Illustration – I feel what Paul says here. He's not talking about people who have already apostasized (grief). He's talking about people who are on the verge of doing so (fear).

- People I baptized and discipled once a week for four months and don't know where they are (they stopped coming to church)

“Within the wider context of the entire letter, this bleak expression must be placed over against Paul's overall confidence and hope that the Galatians could still be won back from the confusion and danger that now beset them.” (George, 2020, p. 349)

“Real apostasy, as opposed to a temporary backsliding, is possible only for those who have never been genuinely converted. Paul had good reason to believe this was not the case with his Galatian converts, whom he called “brothers and sisters” and “my children.” At the same time, Paul did not claim to possess infallible knowledge of the spiritual status of his readers. He therefore had to entertain the possibility that at least some of them may have feigned repentance, received baptism by water, and even “tasted God's good word and the powers of the coming age” (Heb 6:5) without being savingly converted.” (George, 2020, p. 347)

Paul was concerned for the Galatians, and out of that concern, Paul made an appeal.

## 2.) Paul's Appeal to the Galatians

In this appeal, we get a glimpse into the heart of Paul for these people. (George, 2020, p. 350)

12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.

Brethren I beseech (*beg*) you, be as I am; for I am as ye are -

- In this verse, Paul writes in the imperative (“command”) for the first time in Galatians. He has communicated truth, and now he is calling the Galatians to respond based on that.
- In other places (e.g. 1 Cor. 11:1), Paul had said to his children in the faith, “Become like me, for I have become like Christ.” Here Paul is saying, “Become like me, for I have become like you.”
  - o “Look at what has happened to me. I was once a zealous devotee of the Mosaic law, stricter than any of you in careful observance of its many requirements. But Christ has delivered me from bondage to the law. I now live by faith in him who loved me and gave himself for me (Gal 2:20). *I was like you.* Now I long for you to become like me, living in the liberty of those who are truly the children of Abraham and of God through faith in Jesus Christ.” (George, 2020, p. 352)

- Illustration – someone who was converted from Catholicism to Christianity warning one of their converts who is being tempted to revert to Catholicism (to save them or sanctify them)

Ye have not injured me at all – You have wronged me in nothing.

- I believe Paul is here referring back to when they initially received him and heard the gospel from him. (MacArthur, 1987)

13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

When Paul initially came and preached the gospel unto the Galatians, he did so despite a very serious physical ailment.

- We don't know what this ailment was, but it was not a private struggle. It was something that the Galatians were well aware of from when they first met Paul.
- Most commentators believe that this is in reference to some sort of bodily illness that Paul struggled with while on his missionary journeys.
  - Option 1 – Malaria
    - Sir William Ramsey postulated that Paul have become afflicted by this ailment when he was first exposed to the swampy climate of Pamphylia in the southern region of Asia Minor.
  - Option 2 – epilepsy
    - Back during this time period, there was a common belief that seizures were caused by demons, and you could exorcise the demon that caused these seizures by spitting at the person afflicted with them.
    - In verse 14, Paul's statement that the Galatians did not despise him when they saw his condition could be literally translated "you did not spit out at me".
  - Option 3 – eye problems
    - This would make sense of Paul's statement in verse 15 that the Galatians were willing initially to tear out their own eyes and give them to him. It would also make sense of Galatians 6:11 in which Paul remarks about how he wrote "large letters" in his own hand (not in reference to length, but size). (George, 2020, p. 354)

Regardless of what exactly Paul's ailment was, he wrote to the Galatians reminding them that when he first came he ministered to them in spite of it, and they received him in spite of it.

2 Cor 12:7-10 - 7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon



me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

And my temptation which was in my flesh, ye despised not, nor rejected – and despite the trial of this ailment in my flesh, you did not reject me or treat me with contempt.

Rather, you

received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus – you received me as an angel/a messenger of God. You received me as if in so doing you were receiving Christ.

Matthew 10:40 - He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? – at that point in time, you blessed me and you considered yourself blessed to receive me and the gospel message I preached to you. What has happened since then?

For I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. – You loved me so much that if it were possible you would have given to me your own eyes (possibly alluding to some sort of eye malady for Paul).

- Illustration – my old pastor saying that there were some people who used to say they'd take a bullet for him, that now, if given the opportunity, would probably like to put a bullet in him.

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

Because I insist that both salvation and sanctification are by grace through faith without the law...because I tell you that the law can neither save nor sanctify you?

Paul thought back to the intimacy of their relationship when he first ministered to the Galatians, and then he contrasted it with the estrangement of the relationship in the present. You can imagine him thinking to himself, "Where did I go wrong? What did I do?"

It's the pastoral heart of Paul. Sometimes that's really hard as a pastor when you pour so much into people and you pray over them and you give to them grace and time and mercy, and then all of a sudden you say something they don't like or you make a mistake or some false teacher comes along, and then they're just gone. It just hurts...and as I read the words of Paul in this letter, I can feel the hurt in his heart.

17 They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

They zealously affect you – these false teachers desire you greatly. They are deeply interested in you.

- Illustration – they are courting you

But not well – but not for a good purpose.

Illustration – courting for lust, not for love

They would exclude you – they want to shut you out. They want to shut you off from me and by extension from the truth.

That ye might affect them – In order that you would desire them...in order that you might attach yourselves to them and them alone.

18 But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.

But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing – I'm not speaking against courtship/desire/relationships. It is good to be courted/desired for a good purpose.

And not only when I am present with you – that's what I did when I was with you. I went after you for a good purpose, that you might be saved. That was a good thing... but when I left, that's not what happened. When I left, you allowed yourself to be courted/pursued for a bad purpose (i.e. this false teaching).

19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again - I am like a mother willingly undergoing labor and delivery all over again for you. I am working tirelessly, and I am undergoing severe anguish in the pursuit of your wellbeing.... again.” (George, 2020, pp. 360-361)

- Paul said, “I've already done this. It's not natural to deliver the same child twice. This isn't natural. I shouldn't have to be going to such lengths in such anguish with you. “You have already experienced the new birth, but now you are acting as if you need to be spiritually born all over again. You make me feel like a mother who has to deliver the same baby twice.” (MacArthur, 1987)

I am laboring with you again...

Until Christ be formed in you – until you be conformed to the image of Christ

- Romans 8:29 - 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.
- That was Paul's goal for them, and that should be our goal for ourselves: to be conformed to the image of Christ.

20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

I desire to be present with you now – How I wish I were physically with you right now

And to change my voice – so that I could change my tone (i.e. speak in a gentler tone)

For I stand in doubt of you – for I am at a loss with you. I don't know what to do.

- I don't understand how you got from where you were when I left you to where you are today.

Paul's concern for the Galatians, and His appeal based on that concern.

### **Application**

I think all of us have people in our lives like the Galatians.... people that we have poured so much into and that for whatever reason, they are not where they used to be. We worry that perhaps all of our efforts in their lives have been for naught. We grieve over them. We fear for them. We wish we could just wake them up from the delusion that has taken captive their mind.

As we ponder that, I want to encourage you with two observations.

1. Even the Apostle Paul himself had people like this in his life. He had lots of people like this in his life (in Galatia, in Corinth, etc.). At the end of the day, people have free will, and as much as we wish it weren't the case, we can't make people do the right thing. So don't be discouraged if you've got some Galatians in your life. We all do.
2. Paul did everything in his power to point the Galatians back to the truth. He didn't give up. He kept trying. He poured out his heart for them. My encouragement to you is to keep praying for the Galatians in your life. Keep loving the Galatians in your life. Keep reaching out to the Galatians in your life.
  - a. As Paul did, reach out to them with both mercy and truth.

# Galatians 4:21-31

## Review

At the heart of Galatians was the question of whether those who were not Jews, those who were not biological descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, needed to become Jews in order to become Christians.

Remember, Jesus was Jewish. The twelve apostles were all Jewish, and at the start of Christianity, which occurred in Jerusalem, everyone in the church was Jewish...However, as the gospel message of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection as the atonement for man's sins began to spread, guess who started believing? People who weren't Jews. At first, it was those who were part Jewish (aka the Samaritans). But then those who weren't Jewish at all began to believe. The million-dollar question that faced the church in the first century was, "Do these non-Jews who are hearing the gospel of Christ need to become Jews through circumcision and the keeping of the Old Testament Mosaic Law in order to be Christians?"

That question has been at the heart of everything Paul has said in chapters 3 and 4 of Galatians. Remember, the church at Galatia was a predominantly non-Jewish church that was being told by Jewish false teachers that they needed to become Jews (through circumcision and the law) in order to be real Christians. Paul, in chapters 3 and 4, is fighting against that false teaching with every fiber of His being.

"The gospel is not faith in Jesus plus religion. It is not faith in Jesus plus ethnicity. It is not faith in Jesus plus good works. It is faith in Christ alone."

As Paul established his defense of the true gospel in chapter 4, he begged the Galatians not to abandon the freedom of the true gospel for the slavery and bondage of false religion. (By the way, any religious system that adds anything to Christ for salvation is a false religion of bondage and slavery).

Then at the end of chapter 4, Paul closed out his argument for the true gospel by using a familiar story from the Old Testament as an analogy...the story of Ishmael and Isaac. If you remember the story from our study of the life of Abraham, you will recall that God had promised Abraham and his wife Sarah that she (Sarah) would give birth to a son that He (God) would bless greatly. Well, time passed and as they got older and older, Abraham and Sarah lost faith in God's promise, and they decided to take things into their own hands. Sarah convinced Abraham to marry one of her slaves named Hagar and have a son with her (which was actually pretty customary 4000 years ago in the Middle East). Abraham did this, Hagar conceived, and then she gave birth to a son named Ishmael. This displeased the Lord because this was not His plan, and He made it very clear to Abraham that Ishmael was not the son He would keep His promises through...Sarah, in her old age would give birth to a son, and he would be the child of promise. Following this reaffirmation of God, Sarah miraculously conceived and gave birth to a son named Isaac. God kept His word, and He made it very clear to Abraham and Sarah that Isaac, not Ishmael, was the child of promise

that would be Abraham's heir and that which God would bless greatly. As time went on, great animosity grew between the slave Hagar and her son and the wife Sarah and her son. Eventually, when Ishmael was of age, Hagar and Ishmael were sent away. One of the two boys was the true son of Abraham who was the promised heir. The other was not.

In verses 21-31 of chapter 4, Paul ends his defense of the gospel by appealing to this story as an analogy, and I believe that the reason he did so was probably because the false teachers were using this story to convince the Galatians that they, like Ishmael, were not true children of Abraham/God, until they became a Jew like Isaac (through circumcision and the keeping of the Old Testament law). I believe these false teachers likely told the Galatians that because they were non-Jews racially, they were illegitimate as was Ishmael and needed to become like Isaac to be real Christians.

"On balance it seems that the Hagar-Sarah example serves both as a concluding proof of Scripture, rounding out Paul's central concern for justification by faith, and also as a connecting link with the exhortatory section that follows in Gal 5:6. The theme of Christian freedom that is especially prominent in the last two chapters is anticipated here by the contrast between Hagar the slave and Sarah the free woman." (George, 2020, p. 365)

Understanding that context, as we look at this passage of Scripture, we see first off...

#### 1.) The Story of Isaac & Ishmael

21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law – you who desire to place yourself underneath bondage of the Old Testament mosaic system

- Law – Mosaic System

Do ye not hear the law? – do you not listen to what the Scripture says?

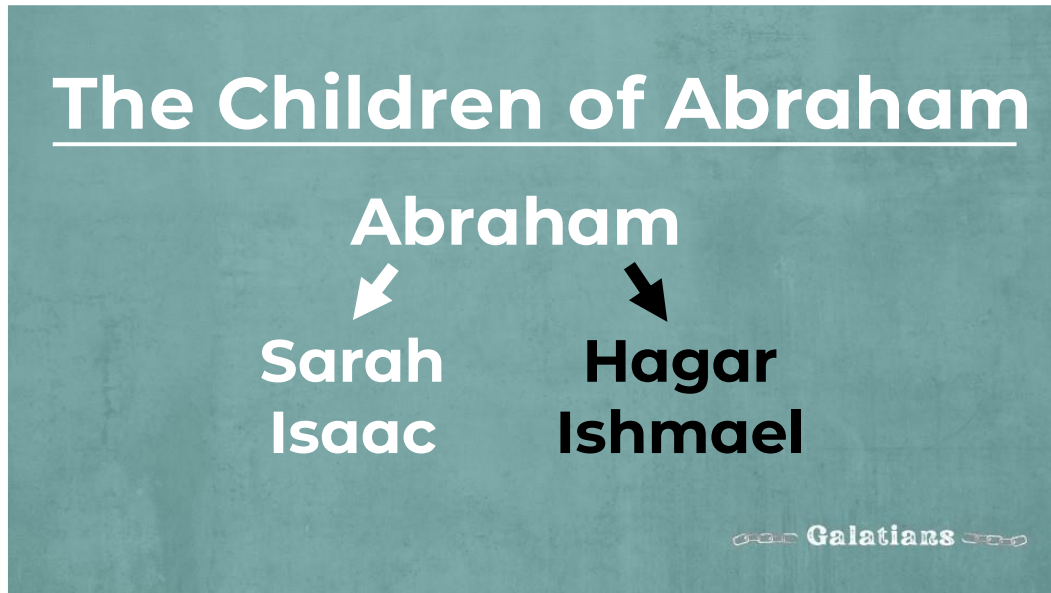
- Law – Pentateuch
- Paul is going to tell the story of Isaac and Ishmael from Genesis.

Matthew 21:42-44 - Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

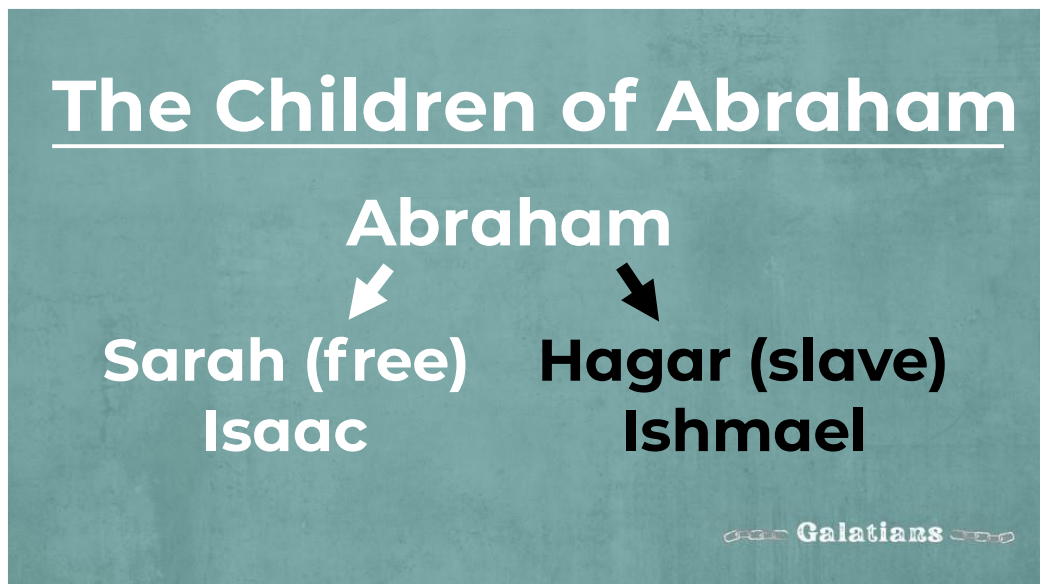
For it is written – The Scripture records

- Unlike many modern “Christian” scholars, Paul assumed that what the Old Testament said happened, actually happened.



That Abraham had two sons – Isaac and Ishmael

- Technically, Abraham had 8 sons (6 by his later wife Keturah after Sarah died), but Paul did not mention the other 6 here because they were irrelevant to his analogy.
- The two pertinent sons of Abraham were Isaac and Ishmael.
  - o In time, the biological descendants of Isaac and his son Jacob were known as the Jews, whereas the biological descendants of Ishmael became associated with the Gentiles, the non-Jews, in general. (George, 2020, p. 368)



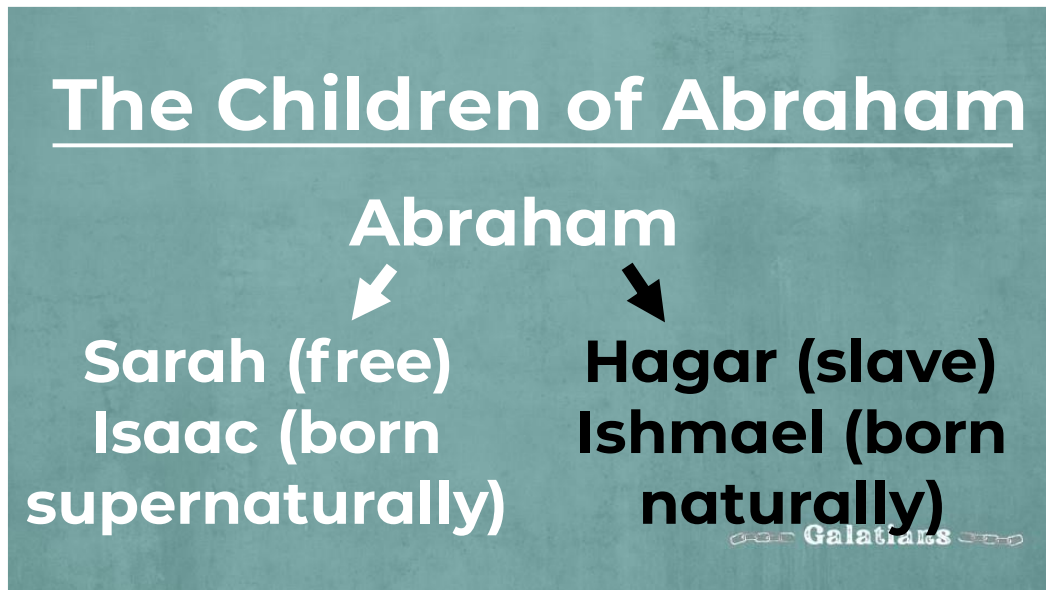
The one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman – Isaac was the offspring of a free woman (Sarah), the lawful wife of Abraham. Ishmael was the offspring of a slave woman (Hagar), Sarah’s handmaiden. (George, 2020, p. 369)

Genesis 16:2-4 - And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

Genesis 16:15 - And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.

Genesis 21:1-2 - And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.



But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh – Ishmael’s birth was a natural birth that took place as a result of human plans/human effort. It took place in the same way that all other human conceptions and births take place.

But he of the freewoman was by promise – in contrast, Isaac’s birth was a supernatural birth that took place as a result of what God had done.

- Ishmael's birth came about through what man did. Isaac's birth came about through what God did.

Up to this point in time, Paul has just stated facts. He hasn't provided any commentary or interpretation or anything like that. However, in the verses that follow Paul took it a step further. For, he wrote not only of the story of Isaac and Ishmael, but also of the analogy of Isaac and Ishmael.

Romans 14:23 - 23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Romans 4:18-21 - Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Romans 9:7-8 - Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Genesis 18:10-14 - And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son

## 2.) The Analogy of Isaac & Ishmael

The false teachers infiltrating the Galatian church had likely made the claim from this story that Gentile Christians were illegitimate sons like Ishmael and Jews who were circumcised and faithfully kept the law were true sons of Abraham, like Isaac. However, Paul in his commentary on this story, takes that claim and flips it on his head.

Gentiles who have put their faith and trust in Jesus, like Isaac, are the true spiritual sons of Abraham...and Jews, who have put their faith and trust in the slavery of the law, like Ishmael are spiritually illegitimate.

24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.



Which things are an allegory – This story is an analogy, a type, a picture

- Allegory illustration – Pilgrim’s Progress
  - “Bunyan depicted various stages of the Christian life through a series of coded characters, events and places - Pliable, Faithful, Hopeful, Giant Despair, Doubting-Castle, Hill Difficulty, City Beautiful, and so on.” (George, 2020, p. 370)
  - “In contrast to allegorical interpretations, typological exegesis “seeks to discover a correspondence between people and events of the past and of the present or future...In other words, a “type” is a kind of prophetic foreshadowing by one historical event of another yet to come. Thus there is a typological, but not an allegorical, correspondence between the brazen serpent Moses erected in the wilderness and the cross on which Jesus was impaled (Num 21:8–9; John 3:14). In the early church typological exegesis was championed by the biblical scholars associated with the school of Antioch who were wary of excessive allegorizing, which they found incompatible with the historical and grammatical meaning of the scriptural text.” (George, 2020, p. 371)
  - “What he here called allegory might be better termed typology: a narrative from OT history interpreted in terms of new covenant realities.” (George, 2020, p. 371)
- Five sets of twos
  - Two moms (Sarah and Hagar)
  - Two sons (Isaac and Ishmael)
  - Two covenants (Old and New)
  - Two mountains (Sinai and Zion)
  - Two cities (present Jerusalem and heavenly Jerusalem)
    - The two moms stand for the two covenants, one of which can only produce slaves and the other of which can produce free men and women.

**SARAH (FREE) = HAGAR (SLAVE)**  
**NEW COVENANT = OLD COVENANT**

Galatians

For these are two covenants – Hagar and Sarah are types/pictures of two covenants (promises that God made)

- Old covenant – conditional promise that God made to Israel (if you obey, I will bless you)
  - o It was based on natural human effort, just like Hagar’s conception of Ishmael.
- New covenant – unconditional promise that God made to forgive sins and provide man with a new heart (the way He kept his promise was through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus)
  - o It was based entirely on God’s promise, just like Sarah’s conception of Isaac.

**SARAH (FREE) = HAGAR (SLAVE)**  
**NEW COVENANT = OLD COVENANT MOUNT SINAI**

Galatians

The one from Mount Sinai which gendereth (*gives birth*) to bondage, which is Hagar -

- Which covenant was given by God at Mount Sinai? It was the Old Covenant. Remember, God gave the Mosaic law system to Moses at Mount Sinai.
- Hagar is a picture of the Old Covenant system of laws and regulations that was given at Mount Sinai. Just as Hagar as a slave could only give birth to slaves, so too the Old Testament law could only produce slaves. Why? Because no one could perfectly keep the law.
- 2 Cor. 3:7-16 - 7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: 8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? 9 For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. 10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. 11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. 12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: 13 And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: 14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. 15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. 16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.
- Hebrews 9:15-24 - And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:
- Hebrews 10:15-18 - Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

Additionally,

For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia. - by the way, in case you forgot, Mount Sinai is physically located in Arabia, where the descendants of Hagar and Ishmael, the Arabs, live (Gen. 25:6, 18).

- “Now the mountain that is Sinai and that is represented by Hagar is in Arabia; nevertheless, she represents the present Jerusalem.” (Moo, 2013, p. 303)
- “The descendants of Hagar through Ishmael eventually moved into the desert areas to the east and south of the Promised Land. They came to be known broadly as Arabs and their territory as Arabia, and it is significant that Mount Sinai is located in what is still known today as the Arabian Peninsula.” (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 3241)
- The word “Hagar” itself is still preserved in the name of the modern city of Chegra, located in what is today the extreme northwestern section of Saudi Arabia. According to certain ancient traditions, the mountain range near this vicinity was believed to be the site of Mount Sinai, where Moses received the law. (George, 2020, p. 373)
- Paul’s going to great lengths in his analogy to connect the law and Mount Sinai with Hagar.



and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children – Hagar is a picture of the Old Covenant law which was given to Moses at Mount Sinai...but Hagar is also a picture of present-day Jerusalem, a city whose children, whose people have predominantly rejected Christ (the ultimate provision for sin) and willfully remained under the slavery of the Old Testament law.

- It's interesting because Jerusalem and its citizens in the first century, like Hagar, were under bondage both spiritually and physically. They were in bondage spiritually to a law they could not keep, and they were in bondage physically to the Roman empire.
- Hagar is like the Old Covenant because both of them were based on human effort. Hagar is like Mount Sinai because both of them gave birth to slaves and because that's where Hagar's descendants live. Hagar is like first century Jerusalem because both of them were in bondage.
  - o The point Paul is getting at is that although first century Jews were physical descendants of Sarah, most of them were spiritual descendants of Hagar. They were a people so caught up in the slavery of the law, that they missed out on the true freedom and forgiveness that could only be found in Christ, the promised one. In contrast, a growing number of Gentiles, although physical descendants of Hagar, were spiritual descendants of Sarah. Why? Because by faith they trusted in God's promised provision for sin through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
    - Hagar – picture of human effort and bondage (1st century Judaism)
    - Sarah – picture of faith and freedom (1st century Christianity)
- “Hagar, Sarah’s bondswoman, represents the law, for she was held under bondage and required to do the works of her master. At Mt. Sinai God gave a conditional covenant that said if the children of Israel obeyed the law, He would bless them. In Paul’s day, the Jews who lived in Jerusalem, who had rejected the gospel concerning Jesus Christ, were like Hagar.” (Chappell, 2013, p. 95)
- “The present Jerusalem then is Paul’s way of speaking of the Judaism of his day, a Judaism that continues to rely on the law and ignore or not give adequate place to Christ.” (Moo, 2013, p. 304)

26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

But – in contrast

**SARAH (FREE) = HAGAR (SLAVE)**  
**NEW COVENANT = OLD COVENANT**  
**MOUNT ZION = MOUNT SINAI**  
**HEAVENLY JERUSALEM = PRESENT JERUSALEM**

Galatians

Jerusalem, which is above is free, which is the mother of us all – in contrast with the slavery that typifies most citizens/children of present-day Jerusalem, is the freedom that typifies the citizens/children of heavenly Jerusalem, the dwelling place of God on Mount Zion

- Just like Sarah, the free woman, believed in God's promised one to her, so too the citizens of heaven are the ones who believe in God's promised one, the Messiah who died and rose again for our sin so that we could be forgiven and have everlasting life.

Philippians 3:20 – when you become a Christian through faith in Jesus, you become a citizen of heaven

Hebrews 12:22 – As Christians, we are not come to Mount Sinai, but rather we are come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.

Revelation 3:12- 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Although that heavenly city today exists above, according to Revelation 21:2, there is coming a day after Christ returns to earth, at which that holy city, new Jerusalem will come down from God out of heaven, prepared as bride adorned for her husband and we will be with God forever.

Revelation 21:1-4 -1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and

there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

In 4 Ezra 10:7, Zion is called the mother of us all.

Micah 4:1-2 - But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Hebrews 11:10, 14-16; 12:22; 13:14 - 10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.... 22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,... 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

For it is written – here Paul quotes from Isaiah 54:1.

Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not, break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband - “This famous passage of Scripture likens the city of Jerusalem to a barren widow sitting at the gates of Jerusalem. She is covered in sackcloth and ashes because her husband has been carried away into captivity and she has no children to care for her in her old age. In the midst of this desperate situation, the voice of God breaks in: ‘Rejoice, childless woman, unable to give birth. Burst into song and shout, you who are not in labor, for the children of the desolate woman will be many, more numerous than those of the woman who has a husband.’” (George, 2020, p. 375)

- These words that were originally written to Jewish exiles in Babylon to comfort them, Paul here applies to Sarah. Hagar had Ishmael first, but Sarah’s time of rejoicing came later in due season.
- Paul’s point is that what was true of the women in particular would also be true of their spiritual descendants. Although back in the first century, the spiritual descendants of Hagar (Jews who chose the law over Christ) greatly outnumbered the spiritual descendants of Sarah (Christians), that would not be true for long. The barren, the childless, would rejoice in due time.

- “As freedom and greater fruitfulness came again to the nation in Babylonian captivity, so it would come to the people in captivity to the law and its death penalty. As Zion was a mother of children by grace after captivity, so believers will multiply in grace in the heavenly Jerusalem, which was also figuratively barren for a long time. ‘The general assembly and church of the first-born’ (Heb. 12:23) was not occupied until Jesus was crucified and resurrected, taking captivity captive and removing the spiritual barrenness that no human effort under the Old Covenant could remove. Heaven, the Jerusalem above, will continue to be populated with the born-from-above saints of God until God’s appointed time.” (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 3290)
- Sarah’s barren condition was reversed by a special life-giving intervention of God. Abraham believed in the God who gives life to the dead (Rom. 4:17). In our current context, that which brought life to the barren was none than the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Take note that Isaiah 54:1 follows the prophetic chapter of Isaiah 53 in which Christ’s suffering and death is depicted. Paul would have read Isaiah 54:1 as a celebration of the new state of affairs brought about by the death and resurrection of Christ. (Moo, 2013, p. 308)

Isaiah 54:1-5 - Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

We’ve seen the story of Isaac and Ishmael.

- Two sons: Isaac and Ishmael
- One was born of a slave. One was born of a free woman.
- One was born through human effort. One was born through faith in God’s efforts.

We’ve seen the analogy of Isaac and Ishmael.

- Gentiles who trusted in God’s promised one (Jesus) and were freed from the penalty of sin and death were not spiritual descendants of Hagar, but rather of Sarah.
- In contrast, Jews who remained under the slavery of the law trying to earn God’s favor through their own efforts were not spiritual descendants of Sarah, but rather of Hagar.
- Spiritually, these Gentile Christians were not Ishmael. They were Isaac.



Finally, this evening, we see the application of the analogy.

### 3.) The Application of the Analogy

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

“Guys, these false teachers keep telling you that you need to do this and observe this to become like Isaac, and what I’m telling you is that through faith in Jesus Christ, you already are Isaac...the spiritual offspring of Abraham and Sarah.”

Why? Just as Isaac was born as a result of faith in God’s promise, so too we have been born again through faith in God’s promised one: Jesus.

- Your spiritual birth did not come about through self-effort. It came about through faith in God’s promise...just like Isaac’s.

And beyond that...

29 But as then he that was born after the flesh (*Ishmael*) persecuted him that was born after the Spirit (*Isaac*), even so it is now.

Just like Ishmael persecuted Isaac back then, so too that is happening now. These spiritual descendants of Hagar, these false teachers, who are slaves to religion are persecuting you, the spiritual descendants of Sarah, who, through faith in Christ, have been freed from slavery to sin and adopted into the family of God.

“Throughout history, and still today, the physical and spiritual descendants of Hagar and Ishmael have, respectively, opposed and persecuted the physical and spiritual descendants of Sarah and Isaac. Those who hold to salvation by works, trusting in their own performance of the law, hate those who proclaim salvation by grace without works.” (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 3313)

Genesis 21:9 - And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.

Romans 2:28-29 - 28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

Nevertheless what saith the scripture? – where do we go from here? What am I (Paul) calling on you to do?

Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman – just like Abraham cast out Hagar and Ishmael, who were

persecuting Sarah and Isaac, so too, you need to cast out these false teachers who are trying to pull you into the bondage of their false religion.

Illustration – fellowshiping widely with other Christians, but separating from those who teach that salvation is through human effort not faith in Gods promised provision

“The persecutors are going to be thrown out, and the persecuted will receive their promised and rightful inheritance. As Sarah had Hagar and Ishmael cast out of Abraham’s household (Gen. 21:10-14), so will their unbelieving descendants, those who live by works of the flesh, be cast out of God’s household (cf. Matt. 7:22-23; 25:41). No one outside the covenant of grace will receive anything from God.” (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 3336)

“The greater point is even as Ishmael would not be heir with Isaac, likewise, those seeking to impose the law upon the church could look forward to same.” (Sorenson, 2007)

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

We are not spiritual descendants of slavery through religion, but rather of freedom through Christ.

Spiritually, we are not Ishmael. We are Isaac.

“Because we are in Christ, we are not the descendant of Hagar (the law and its bondage) but rather of Sarah (grace, promise, and faith). We are not saved by good works, nor do we lose our salvation by the failure to maintain good works.” (Sorenson, 2007)

“Paul’s inversion of the traditional interpretation of the analogy shows that the true descendants of Isaac are those who are justified by grace through faith on the basis of God’s unfailing promise, while the offspring of Ishmael are those, like the Judaizers, who seek to justify themselves ‘according to their own works.’” (George, 2020, p. 380)

## **Application**

There are two choices: Ishmael or Isaac.

- Ishmael was born into slavery as a result of human effort, and he is a picture of those who try to earn God’s favor and get to heaven based on what they do...based on their own self effort...through religion, good deeds, etc.
  - o Your self-effort will not undue your past wrongs. It will condemn you. It will further separate you from God as you find yourself buried alive under the weight of your sin.
  - o Those who try to get to heaven through self-effort are slaves buried under the weight of their own sin, evaluated by a standard of perfection they’ll never come close to keeping.
- Isaac was born a free man as a result of faith in what God had promised. He is a picture of those who receive God’s favor and a heavenly inheritance not based on what they do, but through faith in what Christ has done for them...who died for our

sins so that we could be forgiven and rose again so that we might have everlasting life.

Self-effort brings slavery. Faith in Christ brings freedom.

What will you choose?

Are you Isaac or are you Ishmael?

- If you are Isaac, rejoice! Rejoice in the freedom and inheritance you have through your faith in Christ.
- If you are Ishmael, repent! Escape the slavery that comes from trusting in your own self effort to save you, and make the decision to trust in Christ as your Savior.

# Galatians 5:1-6

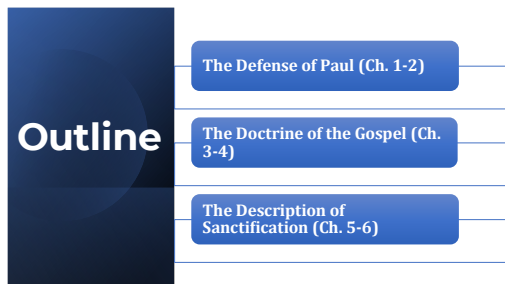
## Review

Why was Galatians written?

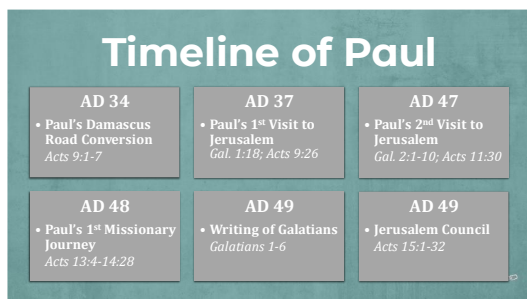
In the Galatian churches, a very serious false gospel of grace plus works (the keeping of the law) was being taught to these Gentile Christians by outsiders. They taught that Gentiles had to become Jews through circumcision before they became Christians, and that all Christians (Jew & Gentile alike) had to keep the Mosaic regulations and ceremonies in order to be righteous before God. (MacArthur, 1987, p. 137) These false teachers sought to come behind and prey on Paul's converts in Galatia, and they did so by challenging Paul's apostolic authority and adding to his gospel message. (George, 2020, p. 69)

Paul wrote this letter to the Galatians to defend his apostolic authority from the attacks of these false teachers and to combat the false gospel of grace plus works that these heretics were spreading.

Understanding this, we discussed how that there were three major parts to the letter of Galatians.



In chapters 1-2, as a result of the false teachers attacking his credibility as an apostle, Paul defended himself.



- He described his conversion to Christianity and his calling to be an apostle which both came directly from the Lord Jesus Himself who appeared to him on the road to Damascus.

- He described his first visit to Jerusalem in which he spent two weeks meeting and getting acquainted with Peter, as well as James, the brother of Jesus...ensuring they were on the same page.
- He described his second visit to Jerusalem in which the chiefest apostles in Jerusalem (Peter, James, and John) recognized him as a fellow laborer on equal grounds with them whom God had called to minister to the Gentiles.
- He described an encounter he had with Peter at one point in time in which he rebuked Peter to his face because Peter was in the wrong.
  - o Paul defended his credibility as an apostle by saying, "Hey, the Lord Himself saved me and called me to be an apostle. The chiefest apostles in Jerusalem recognized that calling on my life, and at one point in time I even rebuked the apostle Peter himself to his face. Don't listen to these fools who are trying to tell you that I'm not a real apostle."

Then, in chapters 3-4, Paul defended the gospel. "We are not saved by faith in Jesus plus anything else...It's not Jesus plus circumcision. It's not Jesus plus the keeping of the OT law. We are saved by faith in Jesus alone as the means of atonement for our sins. Don't let these false teachers deceive you into thinking you need to add on something else to Jesus to be a real Christian."

- Think back to the Old Testament. Abraham was declared righteous before God, not because of anything he had done, but because of his faith in God. And God made a promise to Abraham that through His offspring (the Messiah) all the peoples of the earth would one day be blessed like Him...not through their works, but through faith in the Messiah.
- In contrast with the promise God made the Abraham, the law that God gave to Moses hundreds of years later didn't make anyone righteous. It cursed everyone and blessed no one because no one could keep it.
  - o But that was no accident because that was why the Messiah came. Because of our failure to keep God's law, we were cursed with no hope of redemption, and yet while we were sinners, Christ (the Messiah) came to this earth, lived a perfect life, and died for us. When He died on that cross, He bore our curse in His own body so that we could be forgiven through faith in Him.
  - o Through Christ's death, burial, and resurrection for our sins, God kept His promise to Abraham that through his offspring all the peoples of the earth could be forgiven.
  - o Well then, what was the purpose of the law that God gave to Moses?
    - It was to show people their sin and point them to the Messiah as their means of salvation.
  - o And to those who trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation, the Scripture teaches that they are freed from the slavery of sin and adopted into the family of God.
- Paul defended the gospel. We are not saved from our sin by self-effort. We are saved from sin through faith in Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection alone.

Up to this point in his letter, Paul has defended himself (Ch. 1-2) and defended the gospel (Ch. 3-4), but beginning in chapter 5, Paul shifts directions once again. For, in chapters 5-6, Paul describes for us what life looks like after salvation for someone who has been saved by faith in Jesus Christ. "Ok, I've been saved, but where do I go from here? What does Christian living look like practically?"

"J. H. Ropes developed the 'two-front theory' of Pauline opposition in Galatia (see p. 50). On this view Gal 3-4, the argument for justification by faith, was directed against legalists who were trying to impose the law of Moses on Paul's Gentile converts. However, another set of opponents, spiritualists or libertines, exploited the evangelical freedom of the Galatian believers by encouraging them to throw off all moral restraints, resulting in a life of utter laxity and licentiousness. To counter these dangerous teachers, Paul drafted the ethical instructions found in the last two chapters of the letter." (George, 2020, pp. 382-383)

"What Paul did in the closing chapters of Galatians was to draw out the implications of the doctrine of justification by faith alone and to describe what it meant for the believer who had 'died to the law' now to 'live for God' (2:19). The energizing principle of Christian ethics, then, is union with Christ and life in the Spirit. Justification by faith is not a morally barren doctrine. We are justified by faith alone, but it is a faith that is active in love leading to holiness. Justification is the presupposition of the Christian life." (George, 2020, pp. 383-384)

Paul answers that question in chapters 5-6 as he describes sanctification...or to put it more plainly, as he describes how what we believe impacts how we behave. As we dive into this third section of Paul's letter, we see first off:

### 1.) The Call to Stand

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Stand fast – stand up with your feet firmly in the ground and your head held high (do not bow your neck!)

- Paul loved this analogy, this metaphor.
  - o Ephesians 6:14 (church at Ephesus) - **Stand therefore**, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
  - o Philippians 1:27 (church at Philippi) - ...that ye **stand fast** in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;
  - o 1 Thessalonians 3:8 (church at Thessalonica) - For now we live, if ye **stand fast** in the Lord.
  - o 2 Thessalonians 2:15 (church at Thessalonica) - Therefore, brethren, **stand fast**, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.
  - o 1 Cor. 16:13 (church at Corinth) - Watch ye, **stand fast** in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

- Dig your heels in, and don't retreat from where you are. Don't compromise. Stand firm on your convictions and beliefs.
- Illustration – pushing someone when they do and don't have their feet planted firmly in the ground
  - o We need to stand with our feet planted firmly...but in what?

In the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free – there are things in life that are negotiable. There has to be some give and take in life and in relationships. We have to be able to compromise on some things, give up some ground.

- Illustration – Liz wants to watch a Christmas movie and I want to go play pickleball. We have to be willing to compromise. We have to meet in the middle, with me deciding to watch the Christmas movie.
- But there are some things in life that we never compromise on. Our feet are planted firmly in them, and we give up no ground regardless of the circumstances...one of those things is the gospel...the message that saves us from sin...that makes us free...the message that we are saved and forgiven through faith in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection alone. For the Christian, there is no room for compromise there.
- Stand firm in your belief that you are forgiven and free by grace through faith in Christ alone...and not through anything else.
  - o You were once a slave with no hope of freedom. Christ came to you where you were at, bought you out of slavery and adopted you into His family. Christ has brought you from slavery to freedom through faith in what He has done for you on the cross.
  - o You stand firm in that, and don't let someone tell you that you need to add something else to Jesus to be truly to be truly forgiven. No, you already are forgiven.
- “The freedom thus bestowed is spiritual liberty which is quite independent of outward circumstances. St Paul in chains, a prisoner in Rome, exulted in it. Nero on his throne, the master of the world, with thirty legions at his back, was the miserable slave of his lusts.” (Plummer, 1902)

“Christian liberty is freedom for others, freedom that finds its true expression not in theological privatism (“I am free to believe anything I choose”) or spiritual narcissism (“I am free to be myself no matter what”) but rather freedom to love and serve one another in the context of the body of Christ.” (George, 2020, p. 387)

“The freedom for which Christ sets us free (v. 1) is the freedom to live a life of righteousness in the power of the Holy Spirit.” (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 3383)



And be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage – don't allow yourselves to be trapped again underneath a yoke of slavery. Don't bend your neck to the yoke of slavery.

- You were freed from the yoke of paganism. Don't allow the yoke of Judaism to take its place on your neck.
- Yokes are like shackles.
  - o You are a free person through faith in Jesus. Don't allow someone to tell you that you're still a slave and put shackles on you where they don't belong.

Stand firm in the freedom that you have through faith in Jesus Christ. Don't surrender to slavery. Don't submit to those who would try to cause you to retreat into the slavery of religion systems that can never deliver you from the penalty and power of sin in your life.

John 8:32-36 - And ye shall know the truth, **and the truth shall make you free.** They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Galatians 2:4 - And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

Galatians 4:9 - But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Paul issues a call to stand, but he also issues a warning against...

2.) The Consequences of Compromise



2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

Behold, I Paul say unto you – I, Paul, in accordance with the authority given to me by God as an apostle of Jesus Christ tell you

That if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing – “You have been taught the true gospel message that you are saved by faith in Jesus alone...that complete forgiveness and freedom come only through faith in the Lord. However, these false teachers have come along telling you that faith in Jesus is not enough...that you are not truly forgiven and free until you submit to the ritual of circumcision...if you submit to that ritual, viewing it as part of salvation, then Christ is no good to you. Here’s why. If you are looking to something in addition to Jesus to save you, what you are really saying is that Jesus is not enough to save you...and if you do not think that Jesus is enough to save you and free you, then He does you no good.”

- The issue here wasn’t getting circumcised. Paul, himself, had been circumcised. The issue was getting circumcised with the expectation that in so doing that act was a part of salvation. If you’re trusting in Jesus plus anything else to save you, then you’re not really trusting in Jesus, and if you’re not trusting in Jesus, he profits you nothing.
  - o Application – giving to charity, volunteering, baptism
- “Gentiles do not need to become Jews to become Christians. All they need to do is put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone to save them.”
- Fortunately, the conditional structure of Paul’s statement here indicates that the Galatians had not yet taken the extreme step of getting circumcised.
- “The issue, of course, was not circumcision per se but what circumcision represented. As Paul explained in v. 6, to be circumcised or not was neither here nor there. He himself was a circumcised Jew...On one occasion he himself had Timothy, whose mother was Jewish, circumcised in order to better facilitate his missionary work among the Jews. Yet Paul drew a line in the sand at his opponents’ insistence that circumcision is necessary for salvation. For the Galatians to accept this heretical theology and the practice derived from it would mean that they had rejected God’s all-sufficient provision for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and his finished work on the cross.” (George, 2020, pp. 389-390)
- “Paul’s objection here is not to circumcision in itself. Like all Jewish boys, he himself had been circumcised as an infant (Phil. 3:5). He did not object to a Christian’s being circumcised if, as in the case of Timothy (Acts 16:1-3), the act would open doors for ministry. Because Timothy was half Jewish, Paul had him circumcised in order that they might together have greater opportunity to witness to Jews. And had he known of the possible health advantages of circumcision, he would not have objected to it for that purpose either. Paul’s warning about circumcision pertained only to the false idea that in itself it carried spiritual benefit or merit. The Judaizers were saying, in effect, that faith in Jesus Christ, although important, was not sufficient for complete salvation.” (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 3406)

Galatians 5:4 - Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; **ye are fallen from grace.**

Acts 15:1 - And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, **ye cannot be saved.**

Romans 9:31-32 - But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

If you compromise the gospel...if you give in to the idea that faith in Jesus is not enough to save you, there are very serious consequences, the first of which is that Christ does you no good. For if you're not trusting in Him exclusively, you're not trusting in Him at all.

However, that's not the only consequence of compromising the gospel. Look at verse 3.

3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

For I testify again - I solemnly protest again

To every man that is circumcised - to every man that undergoes this ritual of the law with the expectation of being saved by it

That he is a debtor to do the whole law -

- Illustration - Have you ever gone to purchase something with the expectation that it would cost a certain amount, but then when you got to the final checkout screen, there were all of these additional fees? Isn't that frustrating? That's how it is with hotwire/Airbnb nowadays. There's an advertised price, but then there's the fine print and hidden fees that come along with that advertised price.
  - o In a similar way, what Paul is saying here is that, "These false teachers are advertising to you that you need to be circumcised, that you need to keep this part of God's Old Testament law in order to be saved...but they're not sharing with you the whole picture...For, according to the Scripture, if you are looking to the works of the law to save you, the standard is not obeying one of the laws. The standard is perfectly obeying all of the laws."
    - That's a big problem because no one can do that.
  - o James 2:10-11 - For whosoever shall keep the whole law, **and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.** For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.
    - The whole penalty.
    - None of us can live up to that standard.
- "Not only would they lose Christ and all his benefits, but they also would gain an intolerable burden they would not be able to bear. This was true because receiving the Jewish ritual of circumcision carried with it a further all-encompassing

obligation: the necessity of observing the law in its every precept.” (George, 2020, p. 390)

Galatians 3:10 - For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, **Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things** which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Deuteronomy 27:26 - **Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law** to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

There are very serious consequences for compromising on the gospel message...for surrendering to the idea that faith in Jesus alone is not enough to save you.

- Christ does you no good.
  - o If you're looking to Jesus plus something else to save you, then you're not truly trusting in Jesus, and He does you no good.
- Having rejected Christ, the only way to salvation that remains is perfectly obeying all of God's laws which is impossible.

Paul reiterates himself in verse 4.

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

Christ is become of no effect unto you – to those who seek to add on to Jesus their own self efforts, Christ does you no good. Why? Because it's one or the other. They are polar opposites. You can either trust in Christ to save you, or you can trust in yourself to save you...and the moment you try to add self-effort to what Christ has done for you, you reject Christ and are left only with our own self effort.

- Calvin – whoever wants a half Christ loses the whole (Calvin, p. 11:93)

Whosoever of you are justified by the law – whosoever of you seek to be justified by the law (as an add on to Christ)

Ye are fallen from grace – this does not mean that they are fallen away from salvation, but rather that they are fallen away from the doctrine of grace that Paul had laid out for them when he taught them the gospel.

- The gospel message is a message of grace. It is a message that we are saved exclusively by faith in what Christ has done for us through His death and resurrection. Through faith in Jesus we receive what we do not deserve: forgiveness, freedom, and everlasting life. That is the gospel message. It is a message of grace.
  - o To the one who hears that message and seeks rather to be saved through his own self effort, he has rejected the way of grace. He has fallen from grace. (MacArthur, 1987)
- “He is not teaching that a person who has once been justified can lose his righteous standing before God and become lost again by being circumcised or otherwise legalistic. The Bible knows nothing of becoming unjustified...Paul's primary point in

this passage, as throughout the letter, is that law and grace cannot be mixed. As a means to salvation they are totally incompatible and mutually exclusive. To mix law with grace is to obliterate grace. For a 'professing Christian' to start living again under the law to merit salvation is, in fact, to reject salvation by grace and demonstrate that he was never saved in the first place." (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 3486)

Galatians 5:2 - Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

Galatians 2:21 - I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Galatians 1:6-9 - I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Romans 11:6 - And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

We've seen the call to stand. "Don't give ground on the gospel."

We've the consequences of compromise. "If you are not trusting in Christ exclusively to save you, then you are not trusting in Christ at all...and you stand condemned before God in your sin."

Finally, this evening, we see...

### 3.) The Way to Stand

What does it look like practically for us to stand firm in gospel freedom?

5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

Who stands firm? We Christian stand.

For we – in contrast with those who compromise on the gospel, who seek to be justified by the law, we, who are Christians stand

- "Phillips puts it like this: 'For it is by faith that we await in his Spirit the righteousness we hope to see' (emphasis added). The 'we' (hēmeis) at the beginning of the sentence is deliberately emphatic, meaning 'we who are true Christians' as opposed to the underhanded heretics who are Christians only in name." (George, 2020, pp. 392-393)

In whose power do we stand?

Through the Spirit – who indwells us, guides, and empowers us

How do we stand? We do so by...

Wait for the hope of righteousness by faith – how do we stand?

- We stand by faith.
  - Romans 1:17 - For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.
  - We were saved by faith, and now that we have been saved, how do we live? We live by faith. We live by faith in God's Word. We live by faith in God's promises to us regarding our eternal destination, which is the hope of righteousness.
    - Titus 2:13 - Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;
    - By faith, we look forward to a day in which we are with God in heaven, and we are free of sin's presence in our lives once and for all.
    - How do we stand?
      - We stand firm in faith looking forward to that day. But that's not all.
- We also stand patiently. "We wait."
  - Why? Because that day that we look forward to in faith has not arrived yet.
  - But it will, and it will be here before you know it.
  - Illustration – imagine being given the option to have \$50,000 today or \$10 million one year from now
    - Those who get the fifty thousand dollars today might rub it in your face a little in the short term, but they're fools, and that year is going to be over before you know it.
    - We stand firm in faith patiently believing that when the year is up, we will receive the greater inheritance.

"So both these sayings are true; that I am made righteous already by that righteousness which is begun in me; and also I am raised up in the same hope against sin, and wait for the full consummation of perfect righteousness in heaven." (Plummer, 1902)

- Take note of the contrasts in the life of the Christian
  - Power: Lived through the Spirit, not lived through the flesh
  - Disposition: Lived through faith, not by works
  - Attitude: Lived in patient peace, not hurried anxiety
    - We live by faith.
    - We live through the Spirit.
    - We await eternity.

Philippians 3:9 - And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

2 Timothy 4:8 - Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

For in Jesus Christ – as those who have been brought into union with Jesus through faith in His death, burial, and resurrection as the atonement for our sins

Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision – the ritual of circumcision has no value

- “Abraham believed before he was circumcised, St Paul was circumcised before he believed. Therefore the being circumcised or uncircumcised in itself availeth nothing.” (Plummer, 1902)

But do you know what does have value?

But faith which worketh by love – faith is the root that saves us. Works of love are the fruit that flow out of that root.

- How do we stand firm in the gospel?
  - o We stand by faith in our eternal destination.
  - o We stand patiently as we await our promised inheritance.
  - o We stand by working out our faith in love.
    - We don’t do good works in order to be saved, but rather, we do good works in love because we have been saved...as an outflow of our faith.
    - “But their working is the product of their faith, not a substitute for it. They do not work for righteousness but out of righteousness, through the motivating power of love. In so doing they ‘walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might’ (Col. 1:10-11).” (MacArthur, 1987, p. Loc 3529)
    - “What is important to God is ‘faith which worketh by love.’ What pleases God is (1) faith in Jesus Christ and (2) living thereafter in love. He will address this more fully in verses 13-15. Though faith is the principle which links us to God, love ought to be the bond between God’s people thereafter.” (Sorenson, 2007)
- There is an undeniable bond between what you believe and how you act.
  - o What you believe affects how you act.
  - o Illustration – if you were in a theater and the guy next to you leaned over and said that that the theater was going to blow up in 5 minutes, your actions would be determined by whether or not you believed him. If you truly believed what he had said, would you stay in that theater? No way. You would hightail it out of there no matter how good the movie was.

- In the same way, if you truly believe that you were hopelessly lost in your sin destined for an eternity separated from God...but God in His love sent His Son down to this earth to pay the penalty for your sins so that through faith you could be forgiven and have a real relationship with Him...if you truly believed that...if you believed that Jesus was God and this book was His Word, it would undeniably change the way you lived your life.
- Why? Because what you believe impacts how you behave. Faith is the root of which works of love are the fruit.

Galatians 6:15 - For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Galatians 3:28 - There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:11 - Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

Hebrews 11:8 - By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Hebrews 11:17-19 - By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

James 2:14-26 - What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

1 John 3:14-20 - We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

### **Application**

Paul told the Galatians, "Stand firm in the freedom that you have through faith in the gospel. Don't compromise on the gospel, for a compromised gospel is not a true gospel at all. Stand firm." What does that mean?

- Stand by faith patiently looking to the eternal destination God has promised us.
- In the meantime, stand by working out that faith in love...love towards God and love towards others.
  - o If you truly believe in Christ, it will change the way you treat God, and it will change the way you treat others.



# Galatians 5:7-15

## Introduction

As a reminder, we are in the third section of the letter that Paul wrote to the church at Galatia.

He began his letter by defending himself against the attacks of these false teachers that had made their way into the church at Galatia (ch. 1-2). He then proceeded to defend the gospel against the attacks of these false teachers. We're not saved by faith plus works, faith plus religious rituals, or faith plus ethnicity. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone (ch. 3-4).

Now, in chapters 5-6 Paul is describing sanctification...or to put it in a simpler way, he's describing how what we believe in the gospel should impact how we behave as Christians.

The last time we met we looked at verses 1-6 of chapter 5 in which Paul called on the Galatians to stand firm in the freedom that they had through faith in the gospel. Don't compromise on the gospel, for a compromised gospel is not a true gospel at all.

Illustration – head of an interfaith coalition I met at the community faith leaders conference

In verses 1-6, Paul discussed the call to stand in freedom. However, as we pick up his train of thought tonight beginning in verse 7, we see also the...

## Sermon

### 1.) The Enemies of Freedom

As we look at what Paul says about these false teachers (in verses 7-12), we're going to see that they were not only the enemies of freedom, but as such, they were also the enemies of the Galatians, the enemies of God, and the enemies of Paul.

Beginning in verse 7, we see how Paul first off portrays these false teachers as the enemies of the Galatians.

#### A.) They were enemies of the Galatians

7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

Ye did run well – you came out of the gates on fire in your Christian life

- Illustration – the Christian life is like a race
  - o 1 Corinthians 9:24 - Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? **So run**, that ye may obtain.

- Hebrews 12:1 - Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, **and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,**
- Illustration - Bring up a kid from the audience to illustrate as the focal point of this concept.
- It's not a sprint. It's a marathon.
- It's a marathon that the Galatians had started well.

Who did hinder you – who cut you off? Interrupted you? Tripped you up?

- This is rhetorical. The obvious answer is that it was these false teachers.
- Illustration – have someone from the audience stick out their leg to “trip” the runner up
  - If you're running a race and someone trips you or gets in your way, are they your friend or your enemy?
- Galatians 3:1 - O foolish Galatians, **who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth,** before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

That ye should not obey the truth? – they've done this in order that you should not listen and hearken to the truth of the gospel

- They tripped you up and pointed you in a different direction.
  - “Hey I know God is pointing you in this direction, but why don't you go over this way?”
- Illustration – have the runner that was tripped up get off track from the race that he was running
- Acts 6:7 - And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.
- Romans 2:8 - But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,
- Romans 6:17 - But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.
- 2 Thessalonians 1:8 - In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:
- 1 Peter 1:22 - Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.

This treacherous belief/conviction that you have been sold on does not come from God, but rather from the great deceiver Satan himself.

- This false teaching that one needs to observe the law to be saved and to stay saved does not come from God, but from Satan. (Sorenson, 2007)

- Application – when someone tells you something different than what God says, they are not your friend. They are your enemy because they are God’s enemy, and they are trying to keep you from following God’s path for your life.

Galatians 1:6 - I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

“It only takes a little bit of yeast to make the whole batch of dough rise.”

- Illustration – one rotten apple spoils the whole bowl (George, 2020)
  - o Bring in a bowl of apples
  - o A little lie can cause a lot of harm. A little false doctrine in a church can cause a lot of harm.
- Application – a little false doctrine destroys the gospel
  - o The difference between saying that we’re saved by faith alone versus by faith plus works might seem small, but it’s not. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. A little false doctrine destroys the gospel.
  - o “The difference between that teaching and ‘the truth of the Gospel’ may appear inconsiderable, and the teachers themselves may be insignificant in numbers or in authority. But error, once admitted, is a virus which will gradually spread and poison the whole system of doctrine, or the whole spiritual life of the individual or of the Church.” (Plummer, 1902)

Luke 12:1 - In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

1 Corinthians 5:6-7 - Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

These men are not just the enemies of freedom, they’re also the enemies of you. They’ve tripped you up on the race that God has called you to and pointed you in a different direction.

They’re not your friends. They’re your enemies, and they’re also the enemies of God.

B.) They were the enemies of God

10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

I have confidence in you through the Lord – although in my own heart I have apprehensions, in the Lord I have a confidence in you

Galatians 4:11 - I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

Galatians 4:20 - I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

Philippians 1:6 - Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

2 Thessalonians 3:4 - And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

That ye will be none otherwise minded – that you, as God’s children, will return to the true gospel which I preached to you and that you received by faith

- You may have strayed a little, but I have confidence that as God’s children, you’ll come back to the truth

But he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be – “Elsewhere Paul spoke of his opponents in the plural (1:7; 5:12). Still, they might well have had a ringleader whom Paul believed was principally to blame for the disturbances.” (George, 2020)

- Paul here may be speaking of a ring leader of these false teachers, or he may be just speaking in general terms of anyone that would try to turn the Galatians away from God.
- Whereas I am confident that you as God’s children will return the truth, I am also confident that these false teachers as God’s enemies will be judged by Him.
  - o They were the enemies of the Galatians because they lied to them. They were the enemies of God because they opposed Him.
  - o Illustration – what happens when you pick a fight with someone who is bigger than you? When you make yourself that person’s enemy? You lose.
    - That is true in life in general, and that is true with regards to God as well. When you make yourself His enemy, when you pick a fight with God, you lose.
  - o Illustration – Picking a verbal fight with my dad as a 12 year old and losing big. I think I got grounded from everything.
    - I wasn’t going to win that fight. I was a fool for trying, and those who make God their enemy by opposing Him are fools as well.

Galatians 1:7 - Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

2 Cor. 11:15 - 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

These false teachers were the enemies of the Galatians. They were the enemies of God, and they were the enemies of Paul.

### C.) They were the enemies of Paul

Just as they had lied to the Galatians about God, it seems that they had also lied to them about Paul.

11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

Apparently, some of these false teachers there in Galatia were making the claim that even Paul taught the necessity of circumcision (this religious ritual) for Gentiles. They perhaps supported this claim by pointing out that Paul had his protégé/his disciple Timothy (who was half Gentile, half Jew) get circumcised (Acts 16:3).

- Acts 16:3 - Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.
  - o 1 Cor. 9:20 - 20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;
- But the reason Timothy underwent this important Jewish ritual was not to get saved or to become more holy, but rather as a way of opening up doors of opportunity for ministering to the many Jews that he would encounter on his missionary travels.
  - o Illustration – if I went to India to be a missionary, I probably wouldn't eat beef. I would cut that out of my diet. Why? Not because I thought it would make me more holy or save me, but because that's a big cultural no no over there, and I wouldn't want that to get in the way of me sharing the gospel to Indian people.

And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? – If I did still teach what I taught before I got saved...that Gentiles need to become Jews through circumcision and the keeping of the law in order to know God...then why do the Jews persecute me? Why do they now treat me as their enemy?

Then is the offence of the cross ceased – if I were still preaching the necessity of some religious ritual to be saved, then the offensiveness/stumblingblock of salvation exclusively through the cross would be ceased.

- 1 Cor. 1:23 - 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;
- “Circumcision signifies a way of salvation that focuses on the doing of the law (5:2-4), while for Paul, Christ's crucifixion signifies a way of grace and faith (2:21; 3:1-6; 5:5). The 'offense' of the cross, then, may include the need for human beings to give up any means by which they might by their own efforts secure their status before God” (Moo, 2013)

12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

There's a not so subtle allusion/word play here by Paul.

I wish these false teachers/ these troublemakers that are trying to get you to submit to circumcision would cut off/castrate themselves.

Paul was very blunt. Why? Because these false teachers were their enemies. They were the enemies of Paul. They were the enemies of God, and they were the enemies of the Galatians.

Stand firm in the freedom of the gospel that God has called you to. Don't listen to the lies of these enemies that would point you in a different direction.

We've seen the call to freedom. We've seen the enemies of freedom, and now tonight, finally we see the exercise of freedom.

## 2.) The Exercise of Freedom

We're free from the slavery of sin and the slavery of the Mosaic law, and God has not only set us free. He's also adopted us into His family. Now that we are free and a part of the family of God, how do we use that freedom? How do we exercise that freedom?

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

It seems that Paul is picking up his train of thought here from verse 8, or he may be connecting his comments that follow to his harsh statement regarding the false teachers in verse 12.

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty – you have not been called to the slavery of religious system. You have been called to the freedom that is found in Jesus Christ. You've been set free.

- I wish these false teachers were cut off because you have been called to freedom.

Only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh – let me tell your first off, how not to use that freedom. This freedom that you have in Christ is not the freedom to sin.

- Don't allow your flesh (sin nature) to take hold of your freedom in Christ as a base of operations.
  - o "Freedom can become a pretext or opportunity (Gk. aphormē, lit., a 'springboard' or 'base of operations') for throwing off all moral restraints and indulging the lusts of the flesh." (George, 2020)
  - o True Christian freedom does not lead us to indulge the flesh. It leads us to oppose it.
- 1 Peter 2:16 - As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

- Romans 13:14 - 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.
- “Under the cloak of Christian liberty, some professed Christians claim they are free to get drunk, enjoy worldly amusements, feed their minds on smutty books, magazines, and movies, and live in almost unrestrained self-indulgence. But such a person gives strong evidence that he is not a Christian at all. Although a true believer may fall into serious sin, his renewed conscience and Christ’s own indwelling Spirit will not allow him to enjoy it for long.” (MacArthur, 1987)
- “Perhaps partly as a response to the Judaizers’ charges that he was a libertine, and as a warning to believers who were tempted to abuse their Christian liberty, Paul makes clear that the freedom of the gospel is not tolerance of self-indulgence. It is not a means for satisfying the desires of the flesh but for opposing them.” (MacArthur, 1987)
- “In 5:1 freedom in Christ was threatened by a relapse into legalism, and so the apostle warned against assuming again the yoke of slavery. However, here in 5:13 Christian freedom is in danger of being undermined by presuming on the grace of God through licentious living resulting in moral chaos.” (George, 2020)

Freedom leads us to oppose the flesh, but it also leads us to serve one another.

But by love serve one another – “Christ does not give freedom to believers so they can do what they want but so they can, for the first time, do what God wants, out of love for Him.” (MacArthur, 1987)

- Don’t be the servant of sin. Rather, allow the love of God shed in your hearts to lead you to serve one another...and in so doing follow the example of Christ who humbled himself as a servant to come down to this earth and die for you.
- Christ, in love, served you. Now you, in love, serve one another.
- True freedom is expressed in the slavery of love.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Paul here quotes Leviticus 19:18 and reiterates the teaching of Jesus Christ Himself.

- Leviticus 19:18 - Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.
- Matthew 22:36-40 – 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.
  - o Illustration – Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan

Romans 13:8-10 – Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

The idea Paul espouses here is that “although Christians are not bound under the Old Testament Mosaic law, when a Christian genuinely loves others he fulfills all the moral elements of the Mosaic law.” (MacArthur, 1987)

- You could in essence summarize the ten commandments as (1) love God and (2) love others.

Just think about it. If you love your neighbor as yourself, are you going to have an affair with his wife? If you love your neighbor, are you going to kill him? Steal from him? Lie about him? Become envious of him? No. All of these sins are rooted in selfish desires, and love is the opposite of that. Whereas sin is selfish, love is selfless. Love gives. It doesn't take. Love serves. It doesn't seek its own.

“Paul's ethical argument throughout this entire passage is based on the premise that the moral law of God, far from being abrogated by the coming of Christ, remains the divinely sanctioned standard for Christian conduct and growth in grace. Indeed, the believer is no longer 'under the law,' as Paul would reiterate in this same context (5:18); rather believers are freed from the bondage of the law in order to fulfill the law in the power of the Spirit. The moral law of God is nothing less than the outward expression of God's holy character and will. The moral law of God thus antedates the Mosaic covenant.” (George, 2020, p. 415)

- “Paul did not say the entire law is summed up in the Ten Commandments but rather in a single commandment (lit., “word,” logos): “Love your neighbor as yourself.” No doubt Paul was echoing here the words of Jesus, who quoted this same verse from Lev 19:18 in his own summation of the Law and the Prophets (Matt 5:43; 22:34–40).” (George, 2020, p. 415)
- “The ceremonial and civil aspects of the Mosaic legislation are no longer binding on Christians today, but the moral law, expressed in the Ten Commandments, is indeed relevant for the NT believer who by divine grace has been incorporated into the people of God. This believer delights in the law of God in accordance with the new nature he has received and thus joins fervently in the exclamation of the OT saint, “O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (Ps 119:97 KJV).” (George, 2020, p. 416)
- “The Christian is able to fulfill the law through the gift of love that is the result of the twofold sending Paul described earlier in Gal 4: God's sending of his Son into the world and his sending of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of believers.” (George, 2020, p. 418)



James 2:8-11 - If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

We exercise our freedom as Christians by opposing the flesh and by love serving one another.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

But - in contrast

Paul is going to speak directly into the Galatian church.

If ye bite and devour one another – as opposed to love and serving

- Illustration – like wild animals brawling it out (Gator vs Jaguar)

Take heed that ye be not consumed one of another – beware lest mutual destruction be the end result

- Illustration – wild animals brawling and both of them ending up dead

James 3:14-18 - But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

James 4:1-3 - From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

## **Application**

God has called us to stand in the freedom of the gospel. He has called us to ignore the lies of the enemies of freedom, and He has called us to exercise our freedom. How do we exercise it? What do we do now that we're saved? We oppose our flesh and in love we serve one another. We choose selflessness over selfishness.

# Galatians 5:16-21

## Review

Last week we were in Galatians 5:7-15, and we talked about God's calling on our lives as those who have been saved. We saw that He has called us to stand in the freedom of the gospel. He has called us to ignore the lies of the enemies of freedom, and He has called us to exercise our freedom. How do we exercise it? What do we do now that we're saved? We oppose our flesh and in love we serve one another. That's basically where we left off in verse 15.

## Introduction

Beginning in verse 16, Paul is really going to expound upon that concept... how we should and how we should not exercise our freedom as Christians... how we should and should not live now that we are saved. He presents this internal conflict between what we should and shouldn't do as a war between the Spirit of God within us pulling us in one direction and our innate sinful desires pulling us in a different direction.

Paul begins in verse 16 by providing us with instructions for how to navigate this conflict that we find ourselves in the midst of.

### 1.) The Instructions for the Conflict

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

This I say then – coming off of his warning about devouring one another, Paul prescribes the Galatian church a path forward.

- Here is how you exercise your freedom. Here is how you navigate the conflict between God's Spirit within you and your own sinful desires.

Walk in the Spirit – What does that mean? Let's break it down.

- Walking in the Spirit is not...
  - o The baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Spirit happens at salvation. The Bible says that every Christian is metaphorically baptized or joined into the body of Christ at salvation (1 Cor. 12:13 - For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.). We know that this is not the walking in the Spirit because we are commanded to walk in the Spirit. You can't be commanded to do something that's already been done to you when you got saved.
  - o The Holy Spirit dwelling inside me. Once again at salvation the Holy Spirit not only places us into the family of God. The Holy Spirit comes to dwell inside of us and guide and direct us in our lives. The Bible says in Romans 8:9 – “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” If you do

not have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of you, you are not saved. Why? Because the Holy Spirit indwells believers at the moment they get saved.

- The indwelling of the Holy Spirit happens to me at salvation. Walking in the Spirit is a command given to me subsequent to salvation now that I have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of me.
- A spiritual gift.
  - 1 Corinthians 12 - Spiritual gifts are distributed by the Holy Spirit to believers as the Holy Spirit sees fit. All believers have spiritual gifts, but we don't all have the same ones.
  - Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to believers as He sees fit. Walking in the Spirit is a command given to all of us.
- Well, what is it?
- First off, this is an imperative. That means that walking in the Spirit for the Christian is not a suggestion to be considered. It's a command to be obeyed.
  - Illustration – it's not "Johnny, will you clean your room?" It's "Johnny, clean your room."
    - It's not "will you walk in the Spirit?" It's "walk in the Spirit".
- Secondly, we know from the tense that this isn't a one-time command. We are commanded to walk in the Spirit continuously day after day.
  - Illustration – it's not "Johnny, clean your room." It's "Johnny, you need to keep your room clean."
    - "You need to be walking in the Spirit."
  - Walking in the Spirit is a command to be obeyed on an ongoing basis.
- Next, let's talk about the word "walk".
  - Walking is a metaphor that's used pretty regularly throughout the Scriptures...and whenever it's used as a metaphor it's typically referring to our way of life...our daily conduct...our walk.
  - So when we Paul says to walk in the Spirit, what he means is to live your life/conduct yourself in the Spirit.
- We are commanded on an ongoing basis to conduct ourselves/to live our lives in the Spirit...You need to be living your life in the Spirit. But what does it mean to live your life in the Spirit?
  - There's two primary connotations: (1) living your life in the power of the Spirit (2) living your life according to the direction of the Spirit.
  - We're faced with a choice. In our own strength, we can live in accordance with our own sinful desires. We can live in the flesh. We can walk in the flesh...OR...empowered by the Holy Spirit, we can live in accordance with His leading in our lives. We can walk in the Spirit. We can live in the Spirit.
  - "You need to be living your life in accordance with the empowerment and instructions of the Holy Spirit."
  - Illustration – how do I illustrate this concept of the Spirit's enablement and direction in my life? The best illustration I could come up with is I what I do in helping my two year old to wash her hands.

- The way that I help my two year old clean her hands up is similar to the way that the Holy Spirit helps me clean my life up.
- My two year old is not able to wash her hands on her own for a number of reasons. The sink is too high. The faucet handles are too far back. In her own power, left to her own devices, her hands would remain dirty...but, fortunately for her, she has a loving father that wants to help her get cleaned up. I enable/help her to do that which she could not on her own. I lift her up so that she can reach the sink. I turn on the faucet. I grab the soap. I dispense it into her hands. I empower her to do what she could not on her own.
- Then, I instruct her on what to do. I provide her direction on how to clean her hands (“scrub, scrub, scrub!”).
- Then, having been empowered her to wash her hands and instructed her on how to wash her hands, she is faced with a choice. Will I follow the leading of my father and place my hands under that faucet, or will I rebel and do what I want?
  - What a great picture of how the Holy Spirit helps us as Christians to clean up our lives. Through His indwelling presence, He helps us to do that which we couldn’t on our own. He lifts us up. He turns the faucet on. He puts the soap in our hands. Then, through cleansing power of the Word of God, He instructs us on what to do...on how to clean our lives and become more like Jesus.
  - Day by day, He provides us with the power and the instructions we need to wash our hands spiritually, and day by day we are faced with the same choice as my two-year-old: will I follow the instructions of my father, or will I rebel and run around the house with dirty, disgusting hands?
    - Will I walk in the Spirit, or will I walk in my flesh?
    - Will I be led by the Spirit, or will I be led by my rebellious flesh?

Paul said to the Galatians, “Hey, there is an ever present battle going on between the Spirit of God within you and your own sinful desires. Here’s how you navigate that conflict. You need to day by day consciously choose to live your life empowered by God’s Spirit and in accordance with His instructions found in the Word of God...and if you follow the instructions that I’m giving you, I’m going to make you a promise...”

And ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh – this is a promise (George, 2020)

- If you’re not careful, you can get so caught up in the negative: can’t do this...can’t do that...don’t go there. If you obsessively think about what you can’t do, those are the things that you’re going to end up doing.
  - Illustration – don’t think about the donuts/muffin.
  - That’s not the way to fight this conflict. You need to focus the majority of your energies on following the leading of God’s Spirit and He instructs you through the Word...and if you follow the Spirit’s leading, then you won’t do

these things. Why? Because the Spirit is leading in the exact opposite direction.

- Flesh – selfish
- Spirit – selfless
- Flesh – obsesses over my glory
- Spirit – obsesses over God’s glory
- Flesh – takes
- Spirit – gives

The power for walking in the Spirit is the Holy Spirit

- Romans 8:12-13 - 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.
  - The Spirit empowers us to fight off and kill off our fleshly desires
  - "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh"
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 -But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.
  - The empowerment behind our sanctification process is the Holy Spirit.
- Acts 1:8 -but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you
  - Just as He did with the early believers, when the Holy Spirit takes up residence inside of us, He empowers us.

The pattern for walking in the Spirit is the Word of God

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.
  - If everything we need for Christian living is found in the Word of God, then where else is the Spirit going to direct us for daily sanctification other than the Word of God
- John 14:26 - 26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.
  - We see here the pattern of the Holy spirit bringing to remembrance the words of Christ

- John 16:13-14 - 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.
  - The Holy Spirit doesn't point people to himself. He reflects and points people to the Son.

In verse 16, we see the instructions for the conflict, but then Paul takes it a step further and provides a description of the conflict.

## 2.) The Description of the Conflict

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

For the flesh listeth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh – God’s Spirit within us and our own sinful desires are “portrayed as two warring forces locked in mortal conflict within the life of the believer.” (George, 2020)

- This is one of the reasons why it’s essential that you don’t get complacent in your Christian life. You’re at war every single day, and the second that you let your spiritual guard down is the second you’re going to suffer a spiritual defeat.
- Illustration – Can you imagine someone walking across an active battlefield in shorts and flip flops? That’s crazy. And yet when we let our guard down and don’t intentionally put on the armor of God, that’s exactly what we’re doing on a spiritual level.

And these are contrary the one to the other – they’re opposed to one another like repelling magnets.

So that ye cannot do the things that ye would – they keep you from doing the things that you would have. This can happen both ways. We’ve probably all experienced both ways in our lives.

- Example 1 - The Spirit of God prompted you to do something good (e.g. give, share the gospel, do a good deed), and your flesh held you back.
- Example 2 – Your flesh tempted you to do something wrong (e.g. spout off in anger, gossip, lie, cheat on your taxes) but the Holy Spirit of God helped you refrain.

There’s this war going on within you between your sinful desires and the Spirit of God.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

But if ye be led by the Spirit – Being led by the Spirit is the same as walking in the Spirit. Walking in the Spirit is following the instructions of the Holy Spirit as He leads us. (MacArthur, 1987)

- If you're walking in the Spirit, you're being led by the Spirit.
- Romans 8:14 - 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Ye are not under the law – you're not under the authority and leading of that Old Testament system. You're under the authority and leading of the Holy Spirit of God.

- We do not seek to follow the Old Testament mosaic law in the power of our flesh. Rather, the we seek to follow the leadership of God's Holy Spirit in the power of the Spirit within us.
- These are antithetical to one another.
- Either you are following the law in your own strength or you're following the Spirit in His strength, but you can't have it both ways.
- Romans 8:3-4 - 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

We've seen the instructions for the conflict. Live in accordance with the power and leading of God's Spirit within you and you won't fulfill the sinful desires of your flesh. We've seen the description of the conflict. There is ongoing battle within each of us between the Spirit of God and our own sinful desires, and now finally tonight, we see the culmination of the conflict.

What does it look like when someone follows the flesh versus the Spirit, and what happens when they do?

### 3.) The Culmination of the Conflict

What we're going to see in verses 19-21 are the works of the flesh, and then by contrast in verses 22-23, we're going to see the fruit of the Spirit. As we look at these lists we're going to be presented with a vivid depiction of what it looks like to in accordance with God's design and what it looks like to live in opposition to God's design.

All the way back in Galatians 5:13, Paul had warned these Christians not to use their freedom in Christ as a base of operations for the flesh. Here, beginning in verses 19, we see

what happens when someone does choose to do just that and indulge the flesh, rather than oppose it.

#### A.) The Works of the Flesh

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these –What sinful human nature produces is pretty obvious. (Barnes, 1834)

- Works is plural. It's ala carte. You can pick and choose what you want. The list of sinful activities one could engage in is seemingly never ending which I why Paul ends verse 21 by essentially saying "etc., etc."

#### (1) Sins of Immorality

Adultery – physical intimacy with someone who is not your spouse

- That's not how God designed us.

Fornication – broad term; any kind of sexual immorality (adultery, premarital, mental, pornographic)

- These actions are not expressions of love, but of lust.
- They are graphic manifestations of self-centeredness that do remarkable damage to every person involved.
- That's not how God designed us.
- "The term has a broad meaning, referring to all illicit sexual activity—especially, but not limited to, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bestiality, and prostitution. In 1 Corinthians 5:1, Paul uses the term to refer to a form of incest (sexual relationships of a man with his mother or stepmother) that even the pagans did not practice. In the next two chapters (6:13,18; 7:2; cf. Eph. 5:3; 1 Thess. 4:3) he uses the same word to represent sexual sin in general." (MacArthur, 1987)

Uncleanness – "moral impurity: dirty jokes, literature, thoughts" (Sorenson, 2007)

- "Any impurity that prevents a person from approaching God." (MacArthur, 1987)
- These are in opposition to God's design.



- Romans 1:24 - Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

Lasciviousness – “excess. It refers to unrestrained sinful indulgence without shame and without concern for what others think or how they may be affected” (MacArthur, 1987)

- It is self-destructive and in opposition to God’s design.

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

(2) Sins of Idolatry

Idolatry – worshipping the creation above the creator

Illustration – I’m all about protecting the environment, but a significant part of our population have rejected the creator and now worship at the feet of creation.

- God designed us to worship Him, not creation.

Witchcraft – the word here is “pharmakeia” which literally means drugs. In the New Testament its usage also connects it with the occult which is why it’s translated as “witchcraft”.

- “Many ancient religious ceremonies involved occultic practices in which drugs were used to induce supposed communication with deities, and pharmakeia thereby came to be closely related to witchcraft and magic. Aristotle and other ancient Greek writers used the word as a synonym for witchcraft and black magic, because drugs were so commonly used in their practice.” (MacArthur, 1987)
- God did not design us to be out of our minds in communication with devils. He designed us to be soberminded in communication with Him.
- “In NT times pharmakeia in fact denoted the use of drugs with occult properties for a variety of purposes including, especially, abortion. As J. T. Noonan has written, ‘Paul’s usage here cannot be restricted to abortion, but the term he chose is comprehensive enough to include the use of abortifacient drugs.’<sup>683</sup> In the early church both infanticide, often effected through the exposure of newborn babies to the harsh elements, and abortion, commonly brought about by the use of drugs, were regarded as murderous acts. Both are flagrant violations of Jesus’s command to ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’” (George, 2020)

(3) Sins of Animosity

Hatred – hostility towards others; attitude

- God designed to us to be in relationship with others not hostile towards them.

Variance – conflict...which results from hatred

- God's design is community, not conflict.

Emulations – jealousy born out of covetousness.

- “At the root of all sentiments of jealousy is the basic posture of ingratitude to God, a failure to accept one's life as a gift from God. To envy what someone else has is to fling one's own gifts before God in unthankful rebellion and spite.”  
(George, 2020)
- God designed us to be grateful to Him, not envious of others.

Wrath – outbursts of anger; flying off the handle.

- God designed us to be under control, not out of control...and when we're out of control, we do major damage.

Strife – selfish ambition and rivalry

- Illustration – dirty political campaigning
- God designed us to work with one another, not against one another.

Seditious – divisiveness

- Romans 16:17 - 17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

Heresies – “divisiveness that is the result of intentional choices to walk in the way of selfish pride, envy, and bickering rather than the way of love, forgiveness, and kindness...which is the opposite of how we were designed.” (George, 2020)

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Envyings – “refers to the jealous envy that negatively ‘energizes’ someone with an embittered mind” (Helps Word Studies)

Murders – not how God designed us.

#### (4) Sins of Excess

Drunkenness – God’s design is sober mindedness, not absent mindedness. Drunkenness and drug use have no place among God’s people.

- “There is no place for drunkenness in a Spirit-directed lifestyle. Alcohol abuse was a common feature of urban life in the Roman Empire, but Paul expected a different, higher standard of conduct among those who belonged to Christ.” (George, 2020)

Revellings – wild partying (which is discussed three times in the NT and always connected to the sin of drunkenness)

And such like – etc. etc..... the list goes on and on and on

- “Furthermore, the fifteen items Paul included in his catalog of evil were by no means intended to be exhaustive. And so when he came to the end of his enumeration he added a postscript, ‘and anything similar.’ It is as though Paul were saying: ‘You know, I could go on forever like this! No one can name all the works of the flesh,’” (George, 2020)
- When we indulge our sinful desires, the result is a life full of self-destructive behaviors in opposition to the way that God designed us to function.

What’s the end result of those who consistently, intentionally engage in such self destructive behaviors?

They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God - Those who habitually practice these things demonstrate that they are not believers and have no place in the kingdom of God because they have not been saved.

- “Those who are slaves to the works of the flesh show themselves to be no heirs of the kingdom of God; and, as Jesus said, unless they repent and turn from their wicked ways, they will all likewise perish.” (George, 2020)

#### **Application**

As Christians, we have been saved from the penalty of our sin, but we have not yet been delivered from the presence of sinful desires in our lives. We used to be led and governed exclusively by our flesh, but when we got saved the Holy Spirit moved in, and now there’s a battle raging.

How do you navigate the conflict? You, day by day, live empowered by the Spirit and in obedience to His commands. You don't need to worry about all the wrong decisions you might make and directions you could go. You just need to open the Word of God and follow the leading of the Spirit in the power of the Spirit, and He will lead you in the right direction.

# Galatians 5:22-26

## Review

Last week we began to look at the battle that rages within us between the Spirit of God and our own sinful desires. We saw the instructions for the conflict. Live in accordance with the power and leading of God's Spirit within you and you won't fulfill the sinful desires of the flesh. We also saw the culmination of the conflict: what it looks like when someone follows the flesh versus the Spirit. We saw that when someone walks in the flesh they manifest the works of the flesh in their life. By contrast tonight, we're going to see that when someone walks in the Spirit, they manifest the fruit of the Spirit in their life.

As we examine the fruit of the Spirit we're going to see a vivid contrast between what it looks like to follow the flesh versus the Spirit.

## Sermon

### 1.) The Fruit of the Spirit

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

But the fruit of the Spirit - Fruit is singular. It's a package deal meaning that there are nine collective character traits that a Christian will manifest together when he is walking in the Spirit.

- Matthew 7:16-18 - 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

The first of these is love.

Love - What is love? Love is selfless action (1 Cor. 13:1-8)

- In 1 Cor. 13:1-8, we are given a detailed description from Paul of what love is, and what it is not.
- It is
  - o Patient
  - o Kind (full of service to others)
  - o Covering (reluctant to draw others out into scandal)
  - o Trusting
  - o Positive
  - o Persevering

- It's not a feeling. It's an action.
- It is not
  - Jealous
  - Boastful (doesn't love the platform)
  - Prideful (arrogant)
  - Improper
  - Self centered
  - Quickly irritable
  - Scorekeeper
  - Crude
- Love is selfless action. It does not take. It gives.
- Illustration – caring for a newborn (it's giving)
  - We have all been loved with that type of love.
    - Romans 5:8
    - God has loved us that way, and in turn we should love one another that way.

Joy – What is joy? Joy is the discipline of remembering how blessed we are in Christ (Psalm 100)

- Philippians 4:4 - 4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.
  - Joy is not a feeling. It's an action.
- Psalm 100 – 1 Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. 2 Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. 3 Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. 5 For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.
- One of the reasons that we are so blessed is that we know that God's ultimate victory is just right around the corner.
  - "Christian joy is marked by celebration and expectation of God's ultimate victory over the powers of sin and darkness, a victory actualized already in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ," (George, 2020, pp. 437-438)
  - Illustration – rewatching the Jags game after they win because I know how the game ends

Peace – What is peace? Peace is surrendering my worries to God and living graciously (Philippians 4:4-7)

- Philippians 4:4-7 - 4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. 5 Let your moderation (*reasonableness*) be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

- Where does that peace come from?
  - o Rejoicing
  - o Graciousness with others
  - o Prayer
- Illustration – peace is handing something heavy off to someone else and knowing they will take care of it (i.e. the ball won't get dropped)

Longsuffering – What is longsuffering? It's patience. It's allowing God to right wrongs instead of taking things into our own hands. It's allowing God to judge (James 5:1-11)

- “It is the ability to put up with other people even when that is not an easy thing to do...If God has been so long-suffering with us, should we not display this same grace in our relationships with one another?” (George, 2020)
- Illustration – potty training
  - o My parents were patient with me. I can be patient with my kid.

Gentleness – What is gentleness? It's kindness and compassion (Eph. 4:25-32)

- In Ephesians 4:32, when the Bible says to be “kind” one to another, the word that's used there is the same word that is translated as “gentleness” here in the KJV.
- That kindness in verse 32 is contrasted with all different types of anger in verse 31.
  - o It's contrasted with bitterness - smoldering resentment
  - o It's contrasted with wrath - outbursts of anger
  - o It's contrasted with anger - selfish anger (as opposed to righteous anger)
  - o It's contrasted with clamor - commotion making (public yelling)
  - o It's contrasted with evil speaking - Slander (can be public or private; can be loud or quiet)
  - o Put away all of those things and be kind. Be gentle.
- Illustration – treating God's children the way that you treat your own children

Goodness – What is goodness? It's holiness. It's acting as God would (Eph 5:1-10)

- Ephesians 5:1 – be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.
- 1 Peter 1:15 - 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;
- We want to live like Jesus. We want to be holy as God is holy.

Faith – What is faith? It's making a present substance out of a future reality (Heb. 11:1-6)

- Heb 11:6 – without faith it is impossible to please Him.
- Faith means living by conviction in the unseen.
- Illustration – giving to the building. We are making a present substance out of a future reality. We are giving in anticipation of God opening up a door.

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Meekness – controlled strength. It's compassionate strength. It's strength that cares and isn't harsh or out of control.

- Illustration – nuclear power plants
  - o When that strength is controlled, it's a blessing.
  - o When that strength is out of control, it's destructive (e.g. Three Mile Island meltdown in 1979)

Temperance – self control; discipline (1 Cor. 9:24-27)

- 1 Cor. 9:24-27 - 24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.
- It's not being a victim of feelings, emotions, circumstances. It's being a victor by bringing my body and my mind under subjection. Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. Self discipline has to do with how I manage that 90%.

The fruit of the Spirit (what is manifested in our lives when we walk in the Spirit) is these nine character traits: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, and temperance.

Against such there is no law - Maybe there's a little sarcasm in that for the legalists. You that are so worried about law, there's no law against these virtues.

We've seen the fruit of the Spirit, and then Paul brings this whole section together by ending with the conclusion of the matter.

## 2.) The Conclusion of the Matter

If the Christian life is a continuous tug-of-war between the flesh and the Spirit, are not believers consigned to a spiritually meager existence of perpetual defeat and minimal growth? (George, 2020)

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

- Our old man, our flesh, our old identity was nailed to the cross of Calvary when we put our faith and trust in Christ and got saved so that we can say as Paul did in Gal. 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."
- As one commentator put it, "Like a chicken with its head cut off, the flesh has been dealt a death blow, although it continues to flop around the barnyard of earth until the last nerve is stilled." (MacArthur, 1987)



- There is a battle going on within you between your flesh and your Spirit, but your flesh has been dealt a death blow. It's not a fair fight. The Spirit has the upper hand. The flesh should not be allowed to rule our lives.
- Luke 9:23 - 23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.
- Romans 8:13 - For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.
- Romans 13:14 - But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

- If the Holy Spirit has dealt the flesh this death blow and given us new life in Christ, maybe it'd be a good idea to follow His leading. Maybe He knows what He's doing.
- "Having been engrafted into his body by faith, we are to walk in the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, and keep in step with the Spirit every day of our lives. The verb translated 'keep in step with' is a military term meaning to 'be drawn up in line,' to 'stand in a row.'" (George, 2020)
- Galatians 5:16 - This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.
- Romans 8:4-5 - That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Let us not be desirous of vain glory – seems to suggest that some of the Galatians were being snobbish and arrogant

Provoking one another – the strong in their arrogancy provoke the less fortunate

envying one another – the less fortunate respond to the arrogancy of the strong with envy

"This is an important transitional verse connecting Paul's discussion of the Christian life with the specific situation in the churches of Galatia. Grammatically it is linked with the preceding verse. It's like Paul is saying, 'If we have newness of life by the Spirit, let's follow the Spirit. Let's not become arrogant and boastful.' This verse really sets the stage for Paul's practical instructions in chapters 6 for how the Galatians should interact with one another in the Spirit." (George, 2020)

## **Application**

As those who have been given newness of life by the Holy Spirit, let's tap into His power and follow His leading in our lives. May we be a people who are known to others by our love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith and temperance.

# Galatians 6:1-6

## Review

Take your Bibles and open up to Galatians 6.

In chapters 5-6 of Galatians Paul is in the third section of his letter to the churches of Galatia. He has defended himself personally. He has defended the gospel message vigorously, and now in this third section of the letter his focus is on explaining the Christian life practically. Ok, I've been saved by grace through faith in Jesus alone. Now what do I do?

Paul's general answer to that question was for Christians to oppose their own sinful desires and in the power of the Holy Spirit to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit as He guides them through the Word of God...and when Christians walk in the Spirit, they manifest the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.

In Galatians 6, Paul begins by applying these general principles of Christian conduct to some specific situations that were seemingly going on behind the scenes in the churches of Galatia. In so doing, Paul issued three commands to the churches, the first of which was to..

## Sermon

### 1.) Command 1 - Bear Each Other's Burdens

Galatians 6:1-3 - 1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 **Bear ye one another's burdens**, and so fulfil the law of Christ. 3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one

Brethren – he's addressing the Galatians as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

If a man be overtaken in fault – if one in your midst, is overtaken, surprised, caught in sin, some type of stronghold in their life.

- If this happens, we've got a problem.
- We know that as human beings we all have sin struggles in our lives, but there are certain types of transgressions that are particularly hurtful to the fellowship of the church (especially when they're unrepentant and public). These types of transgressions must be dealt with in the church. (George, 2020)

If a brother falls into this type of sin, how many of you can understand that we've now got a problem on our hands?

Kids Illustration – One of the kids has been stealing and everybody knows about it.

We've now got a problem within the church that needs to be dealt with. A brother has fallen into sin. Who deals with this problem?

What does Paul say?

Ye which are spiritual - who are the spiritual?

- In contrast with those who are carnal, immature (consuming milk), and self-oriented are those who are spiritual, mature (consuming meat), and others oriented.

In the context of Galatians, the spiritual are those who walk in the Spirit. They obey the Word of God as the Spirit directs them to it. They exhibit the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. These are the ones who have a special responsibility to be involved in dealing with the issue of a fallen brother.

- These situation call for those who are peacemakers, not problem causers...those who are longsuffering, not short tempered...those who are compassionate, not overly critical...those who have faith in God's ability to restore, not cynicism towards the whole process.

1 Cor. 2:15-3:4 - 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ. 1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Galatians 5:16-17, 22-24 - 16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would...22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

What's the problem? A brother has fallen into sin.  
Who deals with the problem? Those who are spiritual.  
What do they do about the problem?

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual...

- Kick that guy to the curb?
- Cut the dead weight?
- Gossip about her?
- No.

restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Restore - mend something that is broken, restore to a former condition

Illustration – the kids don't just kick the thief to the curb. They first need to confront and try to restore him.

Confrontation and attempting to restore a fallen brother are righteous expressions of both love and anger. Righteous anger at that which God hates leads us to confront and call out sin, but tender love for the one who God loves leads us to seek restoration.

- That doesn't mean there aren't consequences to actions.
- That doesn't mean this doesn't get messy...but what it does mean is that biblically when a brother or sister falls into sin, God calls the church to confront and seek to restore that fallen person.
- We are called by God to bear one another's burdens, and this is one way in which we do that.
- "Here in Galatians Paul did not outline a specific procedure of church discipline, but he likely knew and presupposed the one given by Jesus in Matt 18:15–17.715 That process incorporates several levels of appeal beginning with personal admonition in a one-on-one encounter, moving to a small-group discussion involving two or three others, and culminating with a congregational conference ("tell the church") and, if necessary, formal excommunication, that is, withdrawal from the fellowship of the Lord's Table and expulsion from participation in the governance of the church body." (George, 2020)

When things are broken, our default reaction should not be to throw them away, but rather to try to fix them.

Illustration – How many of you have ever broken a bone before? Aren't you thankful that when it comes to broken bones, your doctor's default reaction is to try to heal the bone instead of throwing it away?

- Lenden Davis just broke his leg and hand in a mountain biking accident.
- I bet you that he was thankful that the doctor's default reaction to the x-rays was not to tell him, "Welp, they were good while they lasted but your bones are broken. I'll give you a few minutes to say your goodbyes."
  - o No! We're going to try to fix that which is broken before we resort to throwing it away.

We need that mentality with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

When people are broken, we don't throw them aside. We help mend them. We seek to bear each other's burdens. How do we do that?

How do we help people see their sin and call them to repent and confess that sin before the Lord?

1.) In meekness

In the spirit of meekness – strength under control...which is part of the fruit of the Spirit and which is another reason why it's important for the people involved in the process to be walking in the Spirit.

- “Paul was not here calling for the kind of leniency that overlooks the transgression committed or precludes any kind of consequences. But he was saying that the work of restoration should be done with sensitivity and consideration and with no hint of self-righteous superiority.” (George, 2020)

Galatians 5:22-23 - 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Illustration - your brother has a fly on his head. In your right hand, you have a hammer. In your left hand, you have a fly swatter. Meekness is using the fly swatter even though you have the hammer.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 - 24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Trapped people need help not hammers. They need gentleness, not grandstanding. They need meekness, not meanness.

## 2.) In humility

Considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.

- Consider how you would want to be treated if you were in that person's shoes.
- Be careful not to fall into the same sin that you are restoring your brother from.

1 Cor 10:12 - Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall

What's the problem? A brother has fallen into sin.

Who deals with the problem? Those who are spiritual.

What do we do about the problem? Confront and seek to restore that brother in meekness and humility.

Why do we seek to restore?

2 Bear ye one another's burdens – heavy loads... this could be in reference to a sin burden (as Paul just mentioned in verse 1), but the term is broader than that as well. As fellow brothers and sisters, we don't just have a responsibility to pick up a brother or sister when they've fallen under the weight of sin. We have a responsibility to pick them up when they're struggling under the weight of anything (a physical ailment, the loss of someone, a financial struggle, a family crisis, etc.) (George, 2020)

- We need to pick each other up. Why? For in so doing, we ...

fulfill the law of Christ. – what is Jesus' law?

- Remember what Paul had just written in Galatians 5:14? - 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
- That's the law of Christ: to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.
- When we help bear our brothers' and sisters' burdens, we are loving our neighbors as we love ourselves. We are fulfilling Jesus' law.
- "The moral law of God has never been abrogated or annulled, although the civil and ceremonial aspects of the Mosaic legislation have been made obsolete by the coming of Christ. The moral law of God, epitomized in the Ten Commandments and summarized in Jesus's restatement of the 'new commandment' given to his disciples (John 13:34; 15:12; 1 John 3:23), continues to play an important role in the life of the justified believer. In sum, the 'law of Christ' is for Paul 'the whole tradition of Jesus' ethical teaching, confirmed by his character and conduct and reproduced within his people by the power of the Spirit' (cf. Rom 8:2)." (George, 2020)

Illustration – Imagine if we walked out of here tonight and we discovered that there had just been an accident outside and there was a woman trapped under the weight of her car. In such a situation, what would you think of a church member who walked up to that lady and started kicking her? That started piling additional weight on top of the car? That started talking badly about her instead of trying to help her?

- You would be outraged...and yet in churches all across the country, when a believer falls under the weight of sin or some kind of burden, that's the default response of a lot of Christians.
- You can't always help someone. Sometimes, people refuse to acknowledge their sin and repent of it and they're removed from the fellowship...and in those instances, that's on them. But our heart, our default reaction, should always be that when someone falls, we try to help them up.

Paul continues on by saying,

3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

- As you help that brother struggling under the weight of a burden get back on his feet, don't you look down on him...and don't you think that it's beneath you to help someone in such a situation.

"Such an attitude of conceited self-importance leads to two fundamental failures in relationship: one, the refusal to bear the burdens of others, for that would be a task too menial and deprecating for a person who 'thinks he is something'; the other, the refusal to allow anyone else to help shoulder one's own burdens since that would be an admission of weakness and need." (George, 2020)

- You and I cannot do the Christian life alone. We need help. We need God's help, and we need each other's help. That's why Christ created the church...He did it so that we could minister to and help support one another.

2 Cor. 3:5 - Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

## 2.) The Command to Bear Your Own Burden

“This verse and the one that follows it must be read in tandem, for they present two diverse aspects of the Christian’s scrutiny and examination before God: the first, the serious self-examination Paul enjoined upon all believers regarding their Christian walk in this present life; the second, the evaluation that will be disclosed by Christ himself when every believer appears before his judgment seat to give an account of the stewardship of his life.” (George, 2020, p. 453)

Instead of thinking of yourself as too high and mighty to help a fallen brother...

### 4 But let every man prove his own work,

Prove – examine.

- The Greek word used here *dokimazo* is the word used for the fiery testing of gold so as to determine its purity. (George, 2020)
- Each of us as Christians is individually responsible for examining how we are living our lives in light of what God has called us to do.
- The reason for that is that one day when we stand before God as individual Christians, I’m not going to give an account for Josh’s life. Dennis is not going to give an account for Stephen’s life. We will all give an account to Christ individually for how we lived our lives after we were saved.
  - o Understanding that, we see the importance of examining the way we’re that we’re running our Christian race. That is a burden that no one else can bear for you.

Having done so...Having examined himself...

and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. – then you will be able to rejoice not in how you compare to others, but rather in light of what God is doing in and through you.

- o For, when you stand before Christ one day, you won’t be evaluated in light of how you compared to others. You will be evaluated in light of what God gifted you and called you to do.
- o “Don’t compare yourself with Pastor Jim or Deacon Smith or Sister Jones. God wants you to bring your own life before the open pages of his Holy Word. Are you more loving and patient than you were this time last year? How do you gauge your gentleness and self-control, your kindness and faithfulness? No one who honestly brings his or her life before God in this kind of way is going to have any interest in ‘comparing himself to somebody else.’ This kind of honest scrutiny will issue in confession, not competition, in humility, not in vainglory.” (George, 2020)

Luke 18:11 - The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

Why do we need to examine our lives before Christ individually, not comparing with other believers?

### 5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

Hold on a second. Did Paul contract Himself? In verse 2 he says to bear one another's burden, but here in verse 5 he says to bear our own burden.

- Paul uses two different words for burden in these verses.
- In verse 2, he used the word *bare* which refers to a heavy load that one is expected to carry for a long period of time. In verse 5, he used the word *phortion* which refers to the cargo of a ship (Acts 27:10), a soldier's knapsack, or a pilgrim's backpack. (George, 2020)
  - "So we are to bear one another's 'burdens' which are too heavy for a man to bear alone, but there is one burden which we cannot share—indeed do not need to because it is a pack light enough for every man to carry himself—and that is our responsibility to God on the day of judgment. On that day you cannot carry my pack and I cannot carry yours." (Stott, 1984, pp. 159-160)
    - That is the burden we must carry alone.
  - "Here in v. 5 Paul placed the verb in the future tense (*bastasei*) to indicate that he was thinking not merely of an individual's carrying his own weight or bearing his own responsibility here in this life but more particularly the future reckoning that every Christian must make before the judgment seat of Christ." (George, 2020)
  - 1 Cor. 3:10-15 - 10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.
  - The Bible teaches that the return of Christ will bring with it a judgment upon all believers. It is not a judgment of salvation, but rather an evaluation of what each of us has done with the gift of salvation that has been given to us. Having been saved from eternal condemnation, did we live our lives for God's eternal purposes, or did we squander our lives on that which is inconsequential?



- If upon the foundation of our salvation, we built our lives out of shoddy materials, those things will be burnt and we will suffer the loss of eternal rewards, though not the loss of our salvation. In contrast, if we built our lives out of eternal materials, we will be rewarded. On that judgment day, every believer will bear his own burden. (George, 2020)

2 Cor. 5:10 - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

We are commanded to bear each other's burdens, to help carry each other's loads. We are commanded to bear our own burden, knowing that one day we will all stand before Christ and give an individual account for our lives.

Finally, Paul issues one last command to...

### 3.) The Command to Bear Your Pastors' Burdens

6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

At first glance, this verse seems a little puzzling and out of place, but when we realize that verses 1-6 are all about bearing different types of burdens, it fits right in.

This verse is likely the earliest reference to paid Christian ministry in the New Testament. Jesus said in Matt. 10:10 that the workman is worthy of his food, and Paul seems to be drawing on that general principle as he applies it to Christian ministers of the Word of God. Now, Paul himself, often (2 Cor. 11:8) did not take regular financial support from the churches he started. He supported himself bi-vocationally by making tents.

However, Paul insisted to the churches that he founded that they financially support the pastor teachers in their midst.

- 1 Cor. 9:13-14 - 13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? 14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.
- 1 Tim. 5:17-18 - 17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.
- According to Paul, as Christians, we have a special responsibility as those being taught the Word of God within the church to give so as to care financially for those pastors/elders who are teaching us.
  - Application – your tithing here at Horizon in large part supports the Bundy and Young families as we labor in the Word amongst you. We take that

responsibility seriously. We strive to be frugal in our spending and also to be generous in our giving to the Lord through the local church. We tithe. We give to missions. We give to the building fund.

- Part of the reason for that is that we know that one day we will stand before God and give an account.
- Why did Paul direct this statement to the Galatian church?
  - Perhaps as a result of the attacks of the false teachers in Galatia, some church members had withdrawn financial support from their elders.
  - “In any event, Paul reminded them here, in the broader context of his command for them to bear one another’s burdens, of the importance of sustaining a faithful gospel ministry through generous financial support.” (George, 2020)

### **Application**

In this passage of Scripture, we are instructed to bear burdens.

We are instructed to bear each other’s burdens as we seek to lift each other up when we fall. We are instructed to bear our own burden knowing that one day we will each individually stand before Christ and give an account for our lives. We are instructed to help bear our pastors’ burdens as we support financially those who regularly deliver to us the Word of God.

# Galatians 6:7-10

## Review

Take your Bible and open up to Galatians 6:7-10. As a reminder, we are in the third section of Paul's letter to the Galatians in which he focused on providing practical instructions for Christian living. In chapter 5, Paul encouraged the Galatians to walk in accordance with the leading of God's Spirit within them as opposed to their own sinful desires.

Here, at the end of chapter 6, Paul is going to warn the Galatians about the consequences of orienting one's life around the flesh as opposed to orienting it around the Spirit of God. He did so first off by providing:

## Sermon

### 1.) A Farming Illustration

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth (*plants*), that shall he also reap (*harvest*).

Be not deceived – Do not allow yourself to be deceived

- For Paul, this phrase is one of his ways of calling for people's attention.
- It's like he's saying, "Listen up here. Make no mistake about it. What I'm about to tell you is true and important."
- Be not deceived.

Galatians 6:3 - For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he **deceiveth himself**.

Jeremiah 17:9 - 9 **The heart is deceitful above all things**, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

1 Corinthians 3:18 - **Let no man deceive himself**. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

1 Corinthians 6:9 - Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? **Be not deceived**: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

1 Corinthians 15:33- **Be not deceived**: evil communications corrupt good manners.

Ephesians 5:6 - **Let no man deceive you** with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 - **Let no man deceive you** by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

God is not mocked – There may be those who attempt to make a mockery of God, but in the end God will always have the last laugh.

- God will not be mocked by those who openly blaspheme the one who made them, and God will also not be mocked by those who claim to be His followers.
- Those who claim the name of Jesus and yet live in unrepentant sin make an open mockery of God as if He could be outwitted. Paul reminds the Galatians that God cannot be outwitted, and God will not be mocked. You will reap what you sow.
- Illustration – Jaguars fans mocking Trent Baalke with a clown out at their final home game
  - When I think of mockery, I can't help but think of the Jacksonville Jaguars. Now the Jaguars had a good year last year, but the year before that, they were the worst team in the NFL, and Jaguars fans were mad. They wanted the general manager of the team fired. Around that time, Sports Illustrated published an article about the sentiment of Jaguars fans leading up to the last game of that season. This was the title of the article.
  - Sports Illustrated Article Title: NFL Team's Fanbase Set to Wear Clown Outfits to Final Home Game in Effort to Get GM Fired
  - “Frustrated fans are revolting against the Jaguars and have the team owner in their crosshairs. Hundreds, if not thousands, have changed their social media profile pics to a clown. And they've started replying to every Jaguars post or live feed with countless clown emojis. Next up: They're planning to don clown costumes—red rubber noses, face paint and colorful wigs, when the Jaguars (2–14) host Indianapolis (9–7) at TIAA Bank Field on Sunday. The goal is to persuade the owner to fire general manager Trent Baalke.(NFL Team's Fanbase Set to Wear Clown Outfits in Effort to Oust GM, 2022)
  - Did they do it? They sure did, and they actually won that game.



- (Lewis, 2022)
- What were the fans doing? They were trying to make a mockery of the owner and the general manager so as to get their way. Did they get their way? Did he get fired? No he did not. He stayed on, and he was a big part of turning the team around this year. Now, one year later, it is Trent Baalke the general manager, who has gotten the last laugh.
- There may be those who attempt to make a mockery of God, but in the end God will have the last laugh. God can't be mocked. Why?

Job 13:8-9 - Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God? Is it good that he should search you out? or as one man mocketh another, **do ye so mock him?**

For whatsoever a man soweth (*plants*), that shall he also reap (*harvest*) – We have a number of farmers here in our church. Some, like Jim Bushong, do it for a living. Others do it as a hobby or to lower their grocery bill, but we have a number of farmers in the church.

- To those who have trees or vegetables or fruits in their back yard, let me ask you a question. Is it possible to plant apple seeds and grow an avocado tree? Well, I mean, I know that most of the time, apple seeds plant apple trees, but surely every once in a while, you might get an avocado tree? Right? No.
- What you plant is what you harvest. This is the law of sowing and reaping. In agriculture, there are no exceptions to this law. It doesn't matter who does the planting, or what type of seed is planted. The seed you sow will produce the fruit you grow. Here's Paul's point: what is true in agriculture is true in morality as well.
- Job 4:8 - Even as I have seen, **they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.**
- Proverbs 11:18 - The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to **him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.**

Proverbs 1:31 - Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

Hosea 10:12 - Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

Luke 16:25 - But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: **but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.**

Romans 2:6-10 - Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

2 Corinthians 9:6 - But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Paul began with a farming illustration in verse 7, but then he quickly transitioned to a spiritual application beginning in verse 8.

## 2.) A Spiritual Application

8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

- Pastor, if we're applying the law of sowing and reaping to morality, doesn't that contradict the gospel that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus apart from our own self effort? No it does not. For the gospel proclaims that Jesus Christ sowed a life of perfect righteousness, thus meriting eternal life, which He then graciously gives to those who trust by faith in what He has done. "The believer reaps eternal life because, in faith, he is united with Christ and with what He has sown and reaped on man's behalf." (MacArthur, 1987)
- Well, then does that mean that the Christian is exempt from the consequences of his own sowing, his own moral actions? No. "The Christian will never reap the ultimate consequences of sin, which are death and judgment, because his Lord already reaped those consequences for him. But he continues to reap the earthly heartaches, wounds, shame, and pain of his sins and foolishness. God's law of cause and effect still operates in the lives of His children." (MacArthur, 1987)

Let's break this verse down.

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption – What does it mean to sow/plant to the flesh? It means to orient your life around your flesh. It means to orient your life around your own sinful desires.

- Paul here paints this picture of two diverging paths. There is the path of orienting your life around your flesh, and there is the path of orienting your life around the Spirit of God.
- What does it look like to orient your life around your own flesh? Throughout the book of Galatians, Paul spoke primarily against two forms of this. There are those who orient their life around their flesh by just indulging in whatever sinful desires they have. That's one form of fleshly living. But then there's another one as well. It's in reference to those who orient their lives around their own self righteousness. They don't live their lives indulging in depravity. Rather, they live their lives seeking to justify themselves before God through their own righteousness in their own power.
- Yet, what does Paul say? The one who orients his life around the flesh (sows to the flesh) whether through sinful indulgence or self righteousness will reap what kind of harvest? Corruption, death, and decay.
- The seed of the flesh grows into a harvest of death.
  - o That is true as it pertains both to this life and the next.
  - o Those who rebel against their Creator and live a life of sinful indulgence will reap the ultimate corruption of eternal death in Hell.
    - “Hell is both final and eternal. In Rev 21:8 the roll call of those who will find their place in the fiery lake of burning sulphur is remarkably similar to Paul's category of evil in Gal 5: the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters, and all liars. Apart from eternal separation from God, the most horrible thing about hell is the unchanging eternal depravity of those who go there. ‘He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still’ (Rev 22:11 KJV; emphasis added). This is the ‘corruption’ of the second death.” (George, 2020, p. 460)
      - Have you heard someone say before that it's not fair for God to punish a lifetime's worth of sins with an eternity in hell? Those who say such a thing assume that people will not continue sinning in hell. The Bible says that they will, and that's part of the ultimate corruption of hell. Those who go there become worse and worse and worse.
      - Those who orient their lives around sinful indulgence or self righteousness will reap the ultimate harvest of corruption in Hell.
  - o In a secondary sense, for the Christian, although through faith in Christ, He is saved from the ultimate corruption of Hell, upon engaging in sinful

behaviors, he can still reap corruption, suffering, and tragic consequences in this life as well as the loss of eternal rewards. (MacArthur, 1987)

- Romans 6:21-23 - 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Romans 8:13 - **For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die:** but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

If you sow to the flesh (if you orient your life around the flesh), you will reap the harvest of death and corruption...

But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting – Just as to sow to the flesh is to orient your life around your flesh, so to sow to the Spirit is to orient your life around the Spirit of God.

- In contrast with those who spend their lives indulging in sin or self righteousness are those who recognize their sin and their need for salvation. When the Spirit of God convicts such a one of their need to be saved, they respond by putting their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. Guess what happens? That moment the Spirit of God saves them from their sin, gives them newness of life, and takes up residence within them. The Spirit of God then begins directing that one to become more like Jesus through the obedience of the Word of God. This process of becoming more like Jesus through the leading of the Holy Spirit is referred to as sanctification.
- In contrast with a life oriented around the flesh is a life oriented around the Spirit of God who saves us and sanctifies us. Furthermore, the one who orients His life around the Spirit of God will reap a harvest, not of corruption and death, but of what? Everlasting life.
  - What does that mean?
  - This is primarily in reference to the coming day in which those who have been raised to newness of life spiritually by the Holy Spirit will one day be raised from the dead physically by the Holy Spirit and receive a new, incorruptible glorified body. (George, 2020, p. 461)
    - Romans 8:9-13 - 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live



after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

- To those who orient their lives around the Spirit of God, they will ultimately reap the harvest of a glorious resurrection body, as opposed to the corruption of hell.
- Nevertheless, I do believe that in a secondary sense this also applies to life here and now. In this life, the Christian who follows God's Spirit will reap the full enjoyment of the abundant spiritual life he has already received at salvation. (MacArthur, 1987)

Don't be deceived. You can't sin and win. God will not be mocked. You will reap the harvest of what you have planted. Continuing on with his spiritual application of the law of sowing and reaping, Paul said in verse 9...

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

And let us not be weary in well doing – Knowing that the law of sowing and reaping is true, don't stop planting. Don't stop sowing. Don't give up. Don't get tired of doing the right thing. Why?

2 Thessalonians 3:13 - But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

Hebrews 12:3 - For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

For in due season we shall reap if we faint not – Paul is not here talking about eternal life, but blessing. "He is saying that it is possible to serve God for a long time and then to give up and lose blessing here in this life and eternal rewards in the next life as well." (MacArthur, 1987)

- 2 John 8 - 8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.
- Sometimes, just as those who engage in sin seemingly without consequence can be deceived into thinking that they will not reap the harvest of their actions, so too, we as those who engage in spiritual endeavors seemingly without fruit can be deceived into thinking that our labor is in vain. In both instances, we must remember that the law of sowing and reaping is absolute, although the timing of that harvest is sometimes delayed. (Chappell, 2013, p. 218)
- Illustration – William Carey doing missions work in India (beginning in 1793)
  - "I feel as a farmer does about his crop: sometimes I think the seed is springing, and thus I hope; a little blasts all, and my hopes are gone like a cloud. They were only weeds which appeared; or if a little corn sprung up, it quickly dies, being either choked with weeds, or parched up by the sun of persecution. Yet I still hope in God, and will go forth in his strength, and make mention of his righteousness, even of his only." (George, 2020, p. 463)

- He baptized his first Hindu convert (Krishna Pal) in Ganges river on December 28, 1800 after 7 years. He would go on to become known as the father of modern missions.

2 Tim. 4:7-8 - 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Psalms 145:15 - The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.

James 5:7 - Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

Isaiah 40:30-31 - Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season, we shall reap if we faint not.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Just as the ultimate harvest comes in God's timing, so too must we remember that our time for planting is very limited.

- James 4:14 - For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

As we have therefore opportunity – in this incredibly brief period of time that we have during our lives on earth

Let us do good unto all men – let us take every possible opportunity to plant seeds in God's name to all men. All men and women are made in God's image and thus precious in His sight and deserving of our care and compassion. (George, 2020, pp. 464-465)

Ecclesiastes 9:10 - Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

Ephesians 5:16 - Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Luke 6:35 - But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 - See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

As Christians, we should do good unto all men, but...

Especially unto them who are of the household of faith – as Christians we have a responsibility to care for all, but we have a special responsibility to care for our brothers and sisters in need.

- Illustration – if someone is struggling, I have a heart to help, but if one my brothers (Tim or Caleb) is struggling, I have an extra special heart to help. Why? Because they're family.
- What is true with our biological families, should be true with our Christian family.
- "Every poor and distressed man had a claim on me for pity, and, if I can afford it, for active exertion and pecuniary relief. But a poor Christian has a far stronger claim on my feelings, my labors, and my property. He is my brother, equally interested as myself in the blood and love of the Redeemer. I expect to spend an eternity with him in heaven. He is the representative of my unseen Savior, and he considers everything done to his poor afflicted as done to himself. For a Christian to be unkind to a Christian is not only wrong, it is monstrous." (Brown, p. 348)

1 John 3:13-19 - Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

## **Application**

Don't be deceived. God is not mocked. You will reap the fruit of the seeds you plant. We have a very limited period of time on this earth to plant, but may we take full advantage of that opportunity knowing that in due season we will reap the blessing of our planting.

# Galatians 6:11-18

## Review

Tonight, we are going to finish Paul's letter to the Galatians. We started the book of Galatians back in May, and here we are 10 months later just about ready to finish it. In truth, last week we already finished the body of Paul's letter, and tonight we're going to be examining his conclusion, or as I prefer to call it, his closing argument.

Illustration – how many of you have ever been on a jury before? How many of you have been on trial? (just kidding!) In a typical court proceeding both the prosecutor and defense attorney will go back and forth making their case until all the evidence has been presented. At that point in time, they will then make their closing arguments summarizing everything that has been presented and calling the jury to action.

- In essence, which is what Galatians 6:11-18 is. This is Paul's closing argument in which he summarizes and appeals to many of the different themes appearing throughout the main body his letter.
  - o "In these verses history, theology, and ethics are interwoven in a convincing summary of the key points Paul had been trying to make in all that went before." (George, 2020, p. 467)
  - o "Thus, despite the lack of personal greetings and intimate disclosures, Paul did not lose sight of his primary reason in writing this letter to the Galatians: to win them back from the brink of apostasy to a full-orbed faith in the one and only gospel of Jesus Christ, his Lord and theirs." (George, 2020, p. 467)

## Sermon

What did Paul say in his closing argument?

He began with a personal appeal.

### 1.) Personal Appeal

11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

Now Paul did not usually handwrite his letters himself. His normal practice was to speak the content to a scribe or fellow laborer who then wrote it down for him.

- Romans 16:22 - I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.
- Furthermore, we know that often at the end of his letters that he narrated, Paul would often handwrite a salutation.
  - o 2 Thess. 3:17 - 17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

- 1 Corinthians 16:21-23 - The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
- Col. 4:18 - 18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.

Paul typically orated his letters to a scribe, but is that what he did with Galatians? No it's not. "You see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand."

Paul began his closing argument by making a big deal out of the fact that he had personally handwritten this letter to the Galatians. Why would Paul handwrite this letter to the Galatians? I think it was because they mattered so much to him, and he wanted them to know it.

- Illustration – It's sort of like when you get a handwritten letter in the mail. There's nothing wrong with a typed letter, but there's just something special about a letter being handwritten. Why? Because it communicates that the other person cared enough to take the time out of their day to write it for you.

Paul said, "Hey, I want you to take note of how much I care for you. I took the time to personally write this letter with my own two hands...and I don't want you to just take note of the fact that I wrote this letter. I want you to also take note of how large the letter is."

What does that mean? Well, Paul's not talking about the length of this letter because Galatians isn't a long letter. In fact, it's one of his shorter letters. Well then, what is Paul talking about? I believe he's talking about the size of the letters themselves.

Illustration – being required to write a one page essay in school and writing words as large as humanly possible

Illustration – writing in big letters on a whiteboard.

There are two primary explanations for why Paul would have handwritten this letter with such large letters.

1. His eye sight was failing him, and he had to write large so that he could see what he was writing.
  - a. This would fit in well with his earlier statement in 4:13-15 that when he arrived in Galatia the first time they cared so deeply for him that if possible they would have plucked out their eyes and given them to him, possibly indicating that he had a serious eye condition. Some believe that that was his thorn in the flesh.
  - b. If such were the case, then what Paul was basically saying in this verse was, "You know how bad my eyesight is, and you know how hard it is for me to write, but I care so much about you, that I handwrote this letter to you in its entirety."

2. Another possible explanation for why Paul wrote this letter with such large letters is that he did so for emphasis (perhaps writing in Greek uncials rather than in a smaller cursive script).
  - a. If such were the case, then what Paul was basically saying in these verse was, “Guys, please take note of how large my letter is that I’ve handwritten to you. I’ve written it in all caps in hope that you will get my point.”

Regardless of what exactly Paul meant in referring to the size of the letter, in this verse Paul made a personal appeal to the Galatians to take note of the special attention he gave in handwriting this letter to them.

“I have handwritten this letter because I care for you. In contrast...”

12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised – in contrast with I, who care for you, are these false teachers who are trying to compel you to be circumcised. Why are they doing so? It’s not because they love you. It’s because they want to make a good fleshly showing. They want to manipulate you into getting circumcised as Jews and then parade you around like their trophies.

- When Paul talks about the desire of the false teachers to have a good showing in the flesh, there’s a sort of double meaning here.
  - o One the one hand, he could be saying that their desire for these Galatian Christians to get circumcised was so that they could boast in their own flesh. It was so they could brag about how many Gentile Christians they had converted to Judaism.
  - o On the other hand, when Paul talks about making a fair show in the flesh, this could also be taken literally with regards to the Galatians and the surgical procedure of circumcision.
    - Illustration – Saul told David that the bride price for David to marry his daughter Michal was 100 Philistine foreskins
      - David went out and killed 200 Philistines and brought their foreskins to Saul in exchange for his daughter’s hand in marriage
      - “Figuratively, Paul’s opponents were doing the same thing David and his soldiers had done of old: presenting Gentile ‘foreskins’ as a mark of their own success and ingenuity as representatives of the Jewish Christian establishment.” (George, 2020, p. 471)
  - o In a sense, it’s like Paul was saying, “These false teachers don’t love you. They just want you to get circumcised so that they can boast in their fleshly heart about what they got you to do in your fleshly body.”

It's like Paul was saying, "I love you. They are using you."

Paul's contrast here is a great reminder to us that we are not to use people and love things. We are to love people and use things. We are to treat people as God would have us to treat them, and we are to point them in the path that God has for their lives, not the path that we have for their lives. We shouldn't look at people as a means to an end. We should look at them as image bearers of our Heavenly Father.

Paul said to the Galatians, "Hey, these false teachers that are trying to compel you to get circumcised, to become Jews, they don't love you. They're using you. Beyond that, they're acting in such a way as to avoid..."

Only lest they should suffer the persecution of the cross of Christ – These false teachers were adding to the gospel. They were saying to the Galatians, "Hey, Jesus is great. It's really important that He died on the cross for your sins...but in order to be saved you need Jesus plus circumcision. You need Jesus plus the law. You just need Jesus plus etc..." By adding to the cross of Jesus Christ, these false teachers were side stepping persecution. What do you mean by that? The message of salvation through the cross of Jesus alone is offensive (5:11). Those who believe that message and share that message will inevitably undergo persecution. Paul had experienced it. The Galatians had experienced it, but these false teachers had not experienced it.

- Why? Because they didn't believe or teach the true gospel.
- "Whatever the exact historical referent Paul had in mind, the theological meaning of his statement is clear: to follow Jesus Christ faithfully and to proclaim his gospel unflinchingly is to invite persecution. The Galatian Christians knew this from their own experience (cf. 3:4). By using the motivation of his opponents as a foil, Paul was here reminding them of how much they had already suffered for the cause of Christ and encouraging them to remain steadfast in their discipleship." (George, 2020, pp. 472-473)

Paul said, "I love you. These false teachers are using you and side stepping the persecution that inevitably accompanies the true gospel."

Furthermore,

13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law – for, even these false teachers who insist on your keeping of the law for salvation are unable to perfectly keep the law themselves.

- So if they can't even keep the law so as to secure their own salvation, then why are they trying to insist that you add the law onto faith in Jesus?

But desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh – it has nothing to do with the law and it has everything to do with glorifying in you as their Gentile trophies (Plummer, 1902)

- “You are a means to an end, and that end is their own prideful boasting in their self-righteous religious accomplishments.”

Paul issued a personal appeal to the Galatians, but then he provided them with a summary of the gospel.

## 2.) A Gospel Summary

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

But God forbid that I should glory – God forbid that I should do such a thing...that I should use you as a means to an end of boasting in my own accomplishments. I will not boast in any such thing, but rather

Save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ – as Christians, we do not boast in what we have done. We boast in what Christ has done for us. He gets the glory. He gets the praise.

- Do you understand that the gospel message completely nullifies pride? It nullifies boasting. We were sinners on our way to an eternity separated from God in a place of torment called hell. There was nothing we could do to change that. We were helpless. We were hopeless. We were incapable of saving ourselves, but God commended His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.
  - o There is only one hero in the gospel story, and it's not you, and it's not me. It's Jesus.
  - o For the Christian, when it comes to boasting, we have no room to boast in ourselves or our accomplishments. We boast in Jesus Christ alone, our hero.
    - Romans 3:26-27 - 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 **Where is boasting then? It is excluded.** By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.
    - 1 Cor. 1:31 - That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.
- We have seen the person of the Christian's boasting, but take note also of the place. We do not glory in our own self-righteousness. We glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - o I say that today, and everyone nods their heads in agreement, but I feel like because we've heard that so much over the years, we fail to understand the stigma and the shock that would have accompanied such a statement in the first century. It would be kind of like today if I talked about boasting in an electric chair or a lethal injection site or a noose. There's a stigma that accompanies such objects because that's how bad people die.



- “For two thousand years the cross has been so variously and beautifully represented in Christian iconography and symbolism that it is almost impossible for us to appreciate the sense of horror and shock that must have greeted the apostolic proclamation of a crucified Redeemer...It would be like if Paul had said today, ‘God forbid that I should boast, save in the lynching of Jesus Christ.’” (George, 2020, pp. 473-474)
- And yet the awful cross upon which Jesus Christ was crucified is the source of our rejoicing and boasting today. Why? Because it was on that cross that Jesus Christ took my place and took my sin.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 - Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

Furthermore, it was through that cross, Paul stated, that three crucifixions took place:

- The crucifixion of Christ
- The crucifixion of the world to me
- The crucifixion of me to the world

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,

By whom the world is crucified unto me – as a result of the cross of Jesus Christ, this world is dead to me. I have no interest in its pleasures, its applause, or its purposes. This wicked world that lies in darkness is dead to me. (Plummer, 1902)

- 1 John 2:15-16 - 15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And I unto the world - Beyond that, the feeling is mutual. Just as the world is dead to me, so too I am dead to the world. We are not friends. We are not acquaintances. We are enemies.

- James 4:4 - Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.
- Application – based on that truth, it shouldn’t surprise us that there aren’t a lot of Christian late night comedians, actors, politicians, newscasters, etc.
  - Why? The kingdom of this world, and God’s kingdom are diametrically opposed to one another.

Paul goes on.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision – in Christ, as a Christian, it does not matter whether you've been circumcised or not. It doesn't matter whether you're a Jew or not. Who you were or what you did does not matter.

What matters is that in Jesus Christ, you are a

New creature – That transformation takes place through being united with Jesus Christ through faith in the cross and His resurrection. Faith in Jesus brings you into a permanent relationship with Jesus that changes you.

- 2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
- It doesn't matter what you were. It matters what Christ has made you into.
- Illustration – my background versus my pastor friend's background

Galatians 5:6 - For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Colossians 3:10-11 - And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

1 Corinthians 7:19 - Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

And as many as walk according to this rule – as many as will walk in/conform to this rule of faith...this doctrine of salvation through faith in Christ alone apart from works or rituals

Peace be on them, and mercy – Paul says, “May they have peace and mercy in their lives.”

Furthermore, lest anyone think that I am anti-Jewish based on my statements throughout this letter, may this blessing of peace and mercy also be upon....

And upon the Israel of God – “The Israel of God refers to Jewish believers in Jesus Christ, to those who are spiritual as well as physical descendants of Abraham (Gal. 3:7) and are heirs of promise rather than of law (v. 18). They are the real Jews, the true Israel of faith, like those referred to in Romans 2:28-29 and 9:6-7.” (MacArthur, 1987)

- “While the grammatical structure of the verse is not entirely clear, reflecting perhaps the Hebraism of an earlier formula Paul may have been adapting here, it seems best to give the particle kai its full connective sense (‘and’ or ‘also’) rather

than translating it as an intensive link ('even') with the preceding phrase." (George, 2020, p. 478)

- If Paul intended simply to equate the Gentile believers with the people of Israel that he would make this crucial identification here at the end of his letter and not in the main body where he developed at length his argument for justification by faith. Stranger still, Paul did not put this potent expression to use in his magisterial exposition on the role of Israel in salvation history in Rom 9–11." (George, 2020, p. 478)
- "Although the NT elsewhere (1 Pet 2:9–10) refers to the Christian church as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people belonging to God, there is no explicit identification of the church as the 'new Israel' anywhere in early Christian literature until about AD 160, when Justin Martyr used this language for the first time." (George, 2020, p. 478)
- "God has not abandoned his ancient people but continues to deal with them in the context of his eschatological ordering of world events. Indeed, one of the most remarkable facts of world history is the survival of the Jewish people. No other group or nation has withstood so many attempted genocides—from Haman to Hitler and Hezbollah. As W. S. Campbell has aptly noted, 'It would be naive to suggest that it is merely an accident of history that the historical people of God, the Jewish race, should continue to exist alongside Christianity.' Throughout this torturous history there has always been a remnant of believing Jews who have accepted Jesus as Messiah and look forward to his coming again in glory." (George, 2020, p. 479)
- "While some believe that the 'Israel of God' is the church, the evidence does not support such a conclusion. First, the repetition of the preposition indicates two groups are in view. Second, all the 65 other occurrences of the term 'Israel' in the New Testament refer to Jews. It would thus be strange for Paul to use 'Israel' here to mean Gentile Christians. Third, Paul elsewhere referred to two kinds of Israelites – believing Jews and unbelieving Jews (cf. Rom. 9:6). Lest it be thought that Paul is anti-Semitic, he demonstrated by means of this benediction his deep love and concern for true Israel, Jews who had come to Christ." (Waalvord & Zuck, 1983, p. 611)

Philippians 3:16 - Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

Galatians 5:25 - If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Galatians 1:3 - Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,

Numbers 6:23-27 - Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift

up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.

Romans 2:28-29 - For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Romans 9:6-8 - Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Paul began his closing argument with a personal appeal ("I love you. These false teachers are using you.") He continued it with a gospel summary ("It doesn't matter what you were. It matters who you are in Christ as a result of what He has done for you on the cross."). He then concluded with a final farewell to both his opponents and the Galatians.

### 3.) A Final Farewell

To his opponents, he says...

17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

From henceforth let no man trouble me: - from here on out, leave me alone.

Galatians 1:7 - Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

Galatians 5:12 - I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

Acts 15:24 - Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:

For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus – Just as cattle are branded with the mark of their company, and just as slaves bear the mark of their master, so too I in my body bear the marks of my Lord...the marks of persecution and suffering...the marks that the Lord Himself bore during His time on earth. I have been branded.

- Paul's statement here reminds us of some of Jesus' last words to His disciples in John 15: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have

persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.”

- “Stop harassing me and trying to undermine my ministry because my apostolic labor has already been validated by Christ—not only on the Damascus road but also in my suffering and affliction, the signs of which are evident for all to see.” (George, 2020, pp. 480-481)
  - o “There may well be a veiled reference here to the effects of the brutal stoning Paul received outside the city of Lystra during his first preaching mission there (cf. Acts 14:19–20). In this case at least some of the Galatians to whom Paul was writing would have had good reason to know firsthand about the ‘marks’ to which he referred in this verse.” (George, 2020, p. 480)
- “Paul’s opponents, on the other hand, had their own distinctive brand mark of which they boasted and bragged—the mark of circumcision.” (George, 2020, p. 480)
- “But every believer who has been baptized “into the death of Christ” has become identified with Jesus in the koinonia of his sufferings no less than in the triumph of his resurrection.” (George, 2020, p. 481)

2 Corinthians 4:10 - Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

2 Corinthians 11:23-25 - Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

To his opponents, Paul said, “Leave me alone.”

Then to his Galatian brothers and sisters in Christ, Paul said...

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

“Paul already had provided a benediction of peace in v. 16. Here he concluded his letter with a second benediction, this one a prayer for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to be with the Galatians, whom he again called his brothers and sisters. Paul began his letter with a customary salutation of grace (1:3), and he closed it with this final formula again.” (George, 2020, pp. 481-482)

Romans 16:20 - And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Romans 16:24 - The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

2 Corinthians 13:14 - The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

2 Timothy 4:22 - The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

Philemon 1:25 - The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

### **Application**

Just as Paul prayed for God's peace and mercy and grace to be upon the Galatians as they stood firmly in the gospel and walked in the Spirit, may the same blessings come down upon us as we seek to walk that same path.

May we stand firm in the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free, and may we use that freedom not as an occasion to indulge the flesh, but rather as an opportunity to walk in the Spirit.

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