

# GALATIANS

Paul's Magna Carta of Spiritual Freedom

Study Guide by Daniel Ortner

## OBJECTIVES

Paul's Letter to the Galatians is one of the lesser-known books of the New Testament for many Latter-day Saints. But it has had a history-changing impact. This is a revolutionary letter that sparked the Protestant Reformation and has brought millions to saving faith in Christ.

This book is only given one week in Come Follow Me every four years and falls on the week leading up to General Conference making it even less likely that this epistle is studied carefully. I hope to encourage you to read Galatians and to give this inspired book of scripture the care and attention it deserves.

## THEME

Paul writes to Churches in Galatia that he helped to establish and had only recently left. He has become aware of a serious heresy that was creeping its way into these Churches. A group of people that are often referred to as "Judaizers" had come into the Church. These Judaizers were (or claimed to be) followers of Jesus who nevertheless taught that strict observance of the law was required in order to belong fully to God's chosen people. They likely emphasized three requirements: 1) Circumcision; 2) Strict Sabbath observance; 3) Observance of dietary and food laws.

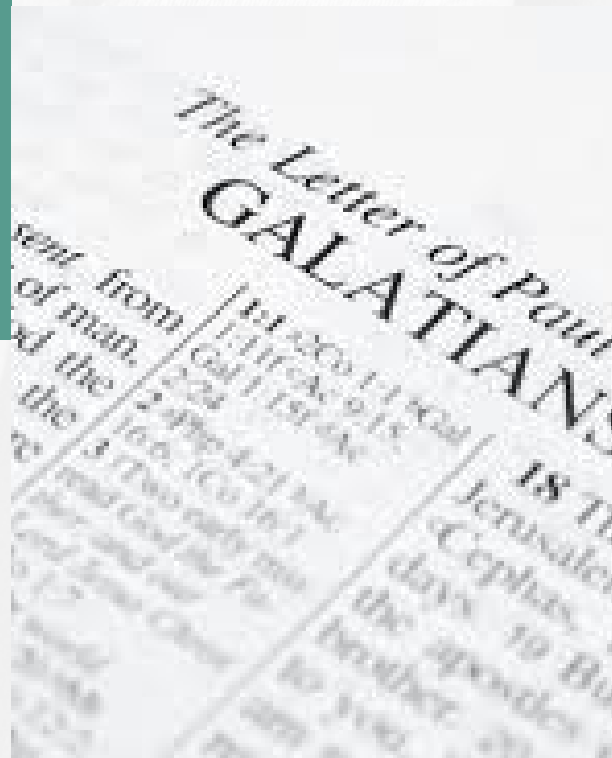
Paul responds with a sharp letter that does not pull its punches. He is not holding back his criticism of the Judaizers. He unleashes on them with sharp and even heated rhetoric.. Paul is single-minded in his focus on salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul leaves no doubt that we are saved by grace alone and not by our works.

"Galatians is a masterpiece of liberty in Christ. It is the Magna Carta on why legalism does not work.. It is a theological declaration of independence. It is the Mona Lisa of liberty. It is a masterpiece." (Pastor Curt Harlow)

## BENEFITS

Paul's powerful words were written nearly 2,000 years ago, and yet the Book of Galatians still contains incredible spiritual power. As we read it, the spirit of God will convict us and inspire us to rely more fully on the grace of Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

For me personally, the Book of Galatians changed my life. Reading this book opened my eyes to the ways that I had become too reliant on my own worthiness, works, and personal righteousness rather than the grace, merits, and mercy of Jesus Christ



## AT A GLANCE

### ORIGIN

- Galatians is universally accepted as written by the Apostle Paul
- The majority of scholars believe this was the very first Pauline Epistle written around 49 BCE.
- The Letter was likely written to recent converts in cities in Southern Galatia (Central Turkey) that Paul visited on his first missionary journey



# PAUL, AN APOSTLE GAL 1: 1-5

**"PAUL, AN APOSTLE, (NOT OF MEN, NEITHER BY MAN, BUT BY JESUS CHRIST, AND GOD THE FATHER, WHO RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD)" (V. 1)**

Paul begins many of his letters by emphasizing his calling as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. But what is unique in the book of Galatians is the extent to which Paul emphasizes that his calling came “not of men” but directly from Jesus Christ and God the Father.

Those Judaizers who had come to Galatia likely tried to emphasize that Paul was a junior Apostle and therefore subservient to Peter or James whom they claimed to represent.. Paul therefore emphasizes that his authority and calling did not come from Peter or James or anyone else, but directly from the Lord himself.

**"GRACE BE TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD THE FATHER, AND FROM OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." (V. 3)**

This is a common greeting that Paul uses in many of his letters. But it carries extra significance here. As Pastor R.C. Sproul explained, “Before Paul begins to expound the content of this epistle, he starts with the word grace, which is the very thing being undermined by the Judaizers in the Galatian churches. The Judaizers proclaimed a different way of salvation, a different gospel. They proclaimed a gospel that added works to grace. Paul reminds the Galatians of grace in his very greeting.”

**"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" (V. 4)**

Paul gives a short but powerful summary here of the Gospel message that he preaches. Jesus Christ came into the world according to the will of God and gave himself for our sins. In doing so he delivered us from the “present evil world” or “evil age” and from the grips of sin and death.

When Paul says that Jesus “gave himself for our sins,” he is emphasizing specifically the fact that Jesus died because of or on behalf of our sins in order to offer an atonement or propitiation for our sins.

By using the phrase “deliver us” Paul implies how greatly we needed rescuing. “After all, you don’t rescue people unless they are in a lost state and a helpless condition! Imagine you see a drowning woman. It doesn’t help her at all if you throw her a manual on how to swim. You don’t throw her some teaching—you throw her a rope. And Jesus is not so much a teacher as He is a rescuer. Because that’s what we most need.” (Timothy Keller).



## QUESTIONS

- Why do you think Paul wants to emphasize that his calling was independent of any other person?
- How does your understanding of grace grant you peace?
- What anxiety do you still feel in connection with your standing before God? How might this lack of peace flow from a lack of understanding of grace?
- How does understanding our need for rescuing change our relationship with God? With his commandments?
- In what ways do we try to turn the glory of salvation towards ourselves and our actions and away from God?

**"TO WHOM BE GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN." (V.5)**

Christ’s work of salvation and his conquest over sin and death is all ultimately to the glory of God. It excludes all boasting on our own part.

Pastor Timothy Keller explained: “This is the humbling truth that lies at the heart of Christianity. We love to be our own saviors. Our hearts love to manufacture glory for themselves. So we find messages of self-salvation extremely attractive, whether they are religious (Keep these rules and you earn eternal blessing) or secular (Grab hold of these things and you’ll experience blessing now). The gospel comes and turns them all upside down. It says: You are in such a hopeless position that you need a rescue that has nothing to do with you at all. And then it says: God in Jesus provides a rescue which gives you far more than any false salvation your heart may love to chase.”



# ANOTHER GOSPEL

## GAL 1: 6-10



**"I MARVEL THAT YE ARE SO SOON REMOVED FROM HIM THAT CALLED YOU INTO THE GRACE OF CHRIST UNTO ANOTHER GOSPEL" (V. 6)**

Paul is amazed that the saints in Galatia that he had taught are so quickly departing from the gospel message of grace that he taught them and embracing "another gospel." This was not just a minor point of theological disagreement on a secondary matter. For Paul, the heresy that the Judaizers brought in was a wholesale departure from the Gospel and from grace itself. The word he uses to convey amazement conveys not just concern but "Apostolic shock beyond measure" (R.C. Sproul).

**"WHICH IS NOT ANOTHER; BUT THERE BE SOME THAT TROUBLE YOU, AND WOULD PERVERT THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST." (V. 7)**

There is only one Gospel message of Jesus Christ. All attempts to add or supplement are a perversion of that Gospel message. Paul does not mince words here. Pervert in the King James or distort in other translations is very strong active and forceful language. I really like the translation of the New Living Translation here: "You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ."

Paul had taught them that Christ was their Savior and had died to reconcile them with God. But the Judaizers came and scared these new believers with a message that they needed to do more to be saved and a part of God's people.

For Paul, "The Good news of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, is the only gospel there is. Anyone who says anything different—Paul doesn't care who—deserves to go to hell! There is no other gospel, there has never been any other gospel, and there never will be any other gospel." (Philip Ryken)

**"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." (V. 8)**

Paul is emphatic that any message that is not compatible with the Gospel that he preached must be rejected.

Whatever the message and means, if it is a different Gospel we must reject it even if it is accompanied by spiritual manifestations or experiences. We cannot rely on angels or any other kind of revelation if it contradicts what God has already revealed, "even if the proclamation is defended by appealing to a heavenly source or a heavenly revelation." (Thomas Schreiner). Neither he nor any other Apostle can receive revelation contrary to what God has already revealed.

I love what Martin Luther wrote about this fundamental principle: "Therefore neither am I to be believed, nor the Church, nor the Fathers, nor the Apostles, no, nor an angel from heaven, if we teach any thing against the Word of God; but let the Word of the Lord abide for ever."

## QUESTIONS

- Why was the "other" Gospel that the Judaizers taught so problematic?
- How might human beings want to add to the Gospel message of Christ? How can we guard against this tendency?
- What do Paul's words here say about the notion that a prophet or apostle can never lead believers astray?
- What are the implications of Paul's message for how we are meant to know what is true?
- Why would those who departed from the Gospel be anathema or cursed?

**"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" (V9)**

The term accursed in both verses 8 and 9 is the word Anathema which means being condemned and under God's curse. Paul repeats this dramatic warning twice for emphasis.

Departing from the Gospel of Grace is something that results in eternal condemnation because someone who rejects grace will not receive mercy but will instead remain judged under the law.

"Now we can see why Paul adopts such intense and even severe language. The stakes are high—our knowledge of Christ, the truth of the gospel, and the eternal destiny of people's souls. These are things worth fighting for; worth speaking out over; worth reminding ourselves and others of over and over again." (Timothy Keller).

# CALLED BY HIS GRACE

## GAL 1: 11-17

**"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." (V. 11-12)**

Paul explains that the Gospel message that he preaches is not after the ways of man's wisdom or understanding. Paul was highly learned in the ways of the Jewish people, but he was utterly hostile to the Christian message. "There was no gradual process of consideration, discussion, revision. There was no way that Paul's Christian message was the product of his own line of thinking. Rather, it was the exact, polar opposite of where he had been going." (Timothy Keller)

**"AND PROFITED IN THE JEWS' RELIGION ABOVE MANY MY EQUALS IN MINE OWN NATION, BEING MORE EXCEEDINGLY ZEALOUS OF THE TRADITIONS OF MY FATHERS" (V. 14)**

Paul was "at the very zenith of his success along the path of Pharisaic legalism" when it was revealed to him that he was persecuting the Messiah in the person of his followers and was therefore in rebellion against God." (Ronald Y. K. Fung). This must have contributed to Paul's quick embrace of the doctrine of salvation by grace alone. If he, a pharisee among the Pharisees was distant from God even while complying zealously with the law, then it stood to reason that no person could be justified by keeping the law.

**"BUT WHEN IT PLEASSED GOD, WHO SEPARATED ME FROM MY MOTHER'S WOMB, AND CALLED ME BY HIS GRACE" (V 15)**

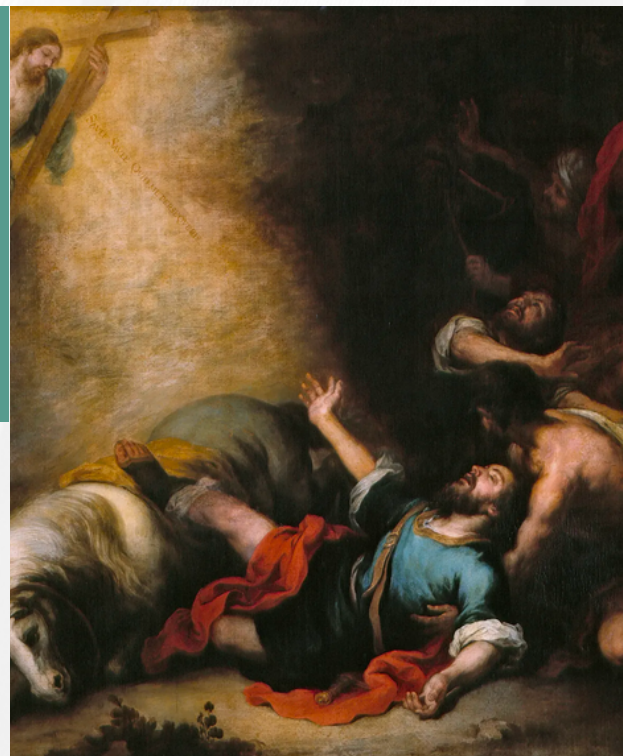
Paul explains that he was called "by his grace." This answers the question of why Paul was chosen. It wasn't because of any great righteousness or faithfulness on Paul's part. It was an act of favor or mercy that was not merited and indeed was unmerited in that Paul was a wicked sinner at the time of his call.

As Timothy Keller explained: "God set His loving grace on Paul not because he was worthy of it, but simply because God took delight or pleasure in doing so. This is how God has always worked." Paul's declaration should give us great confidence that God has a plan and direction for our life even if we cannot see the path that he will ultimately have us take.

**"TO REVEAL HIS SON IN ME, THAT I MIGHT PREACH HIM AMONG THE HEATHEN" (V 16)**

There is great irony in the fact that the zealous advocate of religious Judaism became the greatest teacher of Jesus Christ to those that he previously would have despised. But because his conversion came not because of his merits but because of God's grace, Paul understood that in his religious zeal, he was just as deeply in need of God's atoning mercy as the heathen who was living a life of sin and debauchery.

This is likely what Paul means when he says that God called him "[t]o reveal his Son in me," as Paul's life and his conversion is itself a demonstration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the need for all mankind, no matter of zealous or righteous in their religious observances, to come to Christ in order to be saved.



## QUESTIONS

- How does Paul's conversion story help to teach us about God's grace?
- What do we learn about the Gospel from Paul's mission to the Gentiles?
- How will God use your past experiences and your weaknesses to further his work?
- Why does Paul emphasize that his message did not come from the other Apostles but from Christ himself directly?
- What did you find most unexpected in these verses? How does Paul's preaching challenge your expectations?

**"[I]MMEDIATELY I CONFERRED NOT WITH FLESH AND BLOOD: NEITHER WENT I UP TO JERUSALEM TO THEM WHICH WERE APOSTLES BEFORE ME; BUT I WENT INTO ARABIA, AND RETURNED AGAIN UNTO DAMASCUS." (V. 16-17)**

Paul emphasizes very forcefully here that his understanding of the Gospel of Christ came not from consulting with others. The Judaizers were trying to suggest that Paul's message was derivative of Peter and the other Apostles taught. Paul is emphasizing here the independence of his calling and mission.

Arabia was seen anciently as a place of spiritual growth and contemplation. Many years earlier, the Prophet Elijah went into Arabia for comfort, enlightenment, and communion with God. It is also possible that Paul may have gone to preach about Jesus in the Nabataean Kingdom.



# UP TO JERUSALEM

## GAL 1: 18-GAL 2:10

**"THEN AFTER THREE YEARS I WENT UP TO JERUSALEM TO SEE PETER, AND ABODE WITH HIM FIFTEEN DAYS. (V 18)**

Paul had spent three years preaching the Gospel message of Christ before he went to Jerusalem. By the time he met with Peter, he was a seasoned preacher with a strongly developed message of grace. He also only spent a relatively short amount of time with Peter (and no time with other Apostles). Fifteen days was certainly enough time for enlightening conversation and discussion, but not for Peter to radically change the message that Paul was preaching. Paul emphasizes that his message was not derivative and remained unchanged.

**"THEN FOURTEEN YEARS AFTER I WENT UP AGAIN TO JERUSALEM WITH BARNABAS, AND TOOK TITUS WITH ME ALSO. AND I WENT UP BY REVELATION AND COMMUNICATED UNTO THEM THAT GOSPEL WHICH I PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES." (CHAPTER 2 V1-2)**

Fourteen years later, Peter goes to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus. Barnabas and Paul were mission companions during Paul's first mission. Titus was a Greek gentile and therefore uncircumcised. But Judaizers had come claiming that circumcision was required and that converts like Titus were illegitimate

Paul went up by revelation with a specific mission. Paul purpose was not self-validation. Rather, "his concern was to assure that they would recognize his converts as genuine Christians and members of the Church. He was concerned, in other words, with officially securing the freedom of the Gentiles from the requirements of the law and their equality of status with Jewish Christians." (Ronald Fung).

**"BUT NEITHER TITUS, WHO WAS WITH ME, BEING A GREEK, WAS COMPELLED TO BE CIRCUMCISED"(V. 3)**

This visit was a major victory for Paul and the Gospel.. The Apostles in Jerusalem endorsed Paul's approach that "an individual becomes spiritually clean and acceptable through Christ, and not through any deeds or rituals." The Apostle's "acceptance of Titus was a radical public statement of the implications of the gospel.." (Timothy Keller).

**"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" (V. 4)**

This verse is unclear in the King James Version. Here is the CSB translation : "This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus in order to enslave us."

For Paul, the mission of these false brethren was not benign or a mere misunderstanding. Instead, Paul sees them as trying to enslave the gentile converts that Paul had taught and to bring them into bondage. If he allows these falsehoods to creep into the Church then the truth of the gospel may be lost and a destructive legalism may take away Christian liberty and replace it with bondage.

It is extraordinary that Paul "who had observed the Torah his entire life, now views such as a requirement as the imposition of slavery." (Thomas Schreiner).

# QUESTIONS

- What can we learn from Paul's emphasis on his independence from Peter?
- Why was it so important that Titus not be circumcised?
- Why does Paul see the demand to be circumcised or observe other aspects of the law as Bbdage? Why was it so dangerous?
- What laws or commandments or ordinances can play a similar role in our lives to circumcision for the Judaizers?
- In what ways can we be guilty of a celebrity culture with our leaders?

**"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" (V.6)**

This is another instance where another translation really helps. Here is the ESV: "And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me."

The Apostles in Jerusalem were highly influential and regarded with great esteem. "Paul did not reject the apostolic authority of the pillars, but he rejected an obsequious veneration of them." (Thomas Schreiner). Paul emphasizes that God shows no partiality or elitism. Paul is also suggesting that our leaders, however impressive or insightful, should not become celebrities or be seen as superior to others.

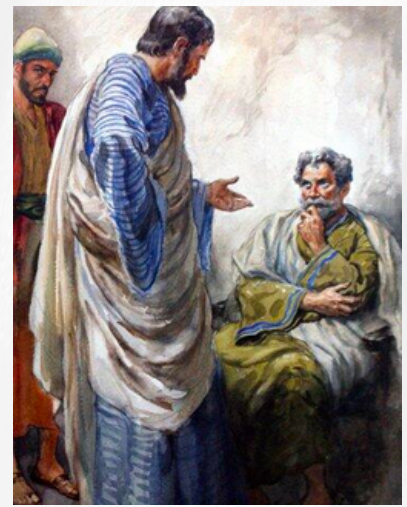
**"AND WHEN JAMES, CEPHAS, AND JOHN, WHO SEEMED TO BE PILLARS, PERCEIVED THE GRACE THAT WAS GIVEN UNTO ME, THEY GAVE TO ME AND BARNABAS THE RIGHT HANDS OF FELLOWSHIP; THAT WE SHOULD GO UNTO THE HEATHEN, AND THEY UNTO THE CIRCUMCISION." (V. 9)**

Peter, James, and John the chief leaders of the Church in Jerusalem fully endorse Paul and give him the right hand of fellowship. This was "a sign of friendship, co-operation, and approval" that "had the effect of isolating and discrediting the false teachers." (Timothy Keller). This was a significant victory for the Gospel.

The Apostles "agreed that it is faith in Christ alone, and not any other performance or ritual, that is necessary for salvation. Their acceptance of Titus was proof that they had accepted Paul's ministry and these radical implications of the gospel" (Timothy Keller). This message of salvation by grace rather than compliance with rituals and ordinances was not a fringe teaching of Paul the Apostle, but one endorsed by all of the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

# PAUL CONFRONTS PETER

## GAL 2: 11-15



**"BUT WHEN PETER WAS COME TO ANTIOCH, I WITHSTOOD HIM TO THE FACE, BECAUSE HE WAS TO BE BLAMED." (V. 11)**

This section of the Book of Galatians may be particularly jarring to Latter-day Saints used to the appearance of unanimity among leadership. We see a more junior apostle publicly calling out the senior-most apostle for his actions and teachings that were incompatible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If you imagine Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf standing up and rebuking President Russell M. Nelson in the middle of a Stake Conference then you would not be far from the mark.

And the shocking thing about this confrontation is that Paul was 100% right and Peter was completely wrong. His actions were hypocritical and cowardly. And if Peter's actions went unrebuked, they could have undermined everything that the Apostles had worked for in building the early Christian Church. This was important enough for Paul had to speak up and rebuke Peter in public;

**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. (V.12)**

When Peter first came to Antioch, he ate with the gentiles. This means he was 1) Not keeping Kosher laws; and 2) sharing a table with Gentiles. This wcontrary to Jewish traditions but consistent with Peter's vision recorded in Acts 10-11 (See Acts 11:2). The reference to "eat with the Gentiles" may just refer to ordinary meals, but it also likely "includes a reference to participation in the Lord's Supper." (Ronald Fung). In other words, Peter was partaking of the sacrament/communion alongside Gentile converts. This was a powerful symbol of the equality and unity of all believers.

But this ended when Jewish Christians from Jerusalem came. Peter may have feared a backlash in Jerusalem or even increased persecution. He may have had good motives. But whatever his reasons, Peter was wrong to undermine Gospel unity in order to appease these Judaizers.

**"AND THE OTHER JEWS DISSEMBLED LIKEWISE WITH HIM; INSOMUCH THAT BARNABAS ALSO WAS CARRIED AWAY WITH THEIR DISSIMULATION"(V. 13)**

Other Jews converts were greatly impacted by Peter's example. Indeed, even Paul's right hand man Barnabas begins to follow Peter's bad example. This highlights how a leader teaching false teachings or acting in a hypocritical fashion can lead the whole Church astray. Jewish converts likely fell back into old patterns or habits. which led to the exclusion and division of Christians based on racial or ethnic lines. This was a major crisis for the unity of the fledgling Church and for the grace and freedom contained in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul immediately sees what Peter is doing for what it is, not just a faux paix or a matter of culture and tradition, but an action that could undermine the whole Gospel of Christ. As Tim Keller explained, "Paul does not primarily see his fellow apostle's behavior as rude, or unmannered, or unwelcoming, as we might. Fundamentally, he sees that something deeper is going on. Peter is "not acting in line with the truth of the gospel" (v 14).

## QUESTIONS

- Why does Paul feel the need to confront Peter publicly? Was he right to do so?
- What was the root of Peter's error? Why was confronting it so important?
- How can we compromise the Gospel in an attempt to reduce offense?
- What surprised you most about the confrontation between Peter and Paul?
- How have you seen cultural or social expectations serve to divide groups of believers? Is such division consistent with the Gospel of Christ?

**"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? WE WHO ARE JEWS BY NATURE, AND NOT SINNERS OF THE GENTILES," (V. 14 & 15)**

Paul publicly confronts Peter and calls him out for his hypocrisy. Peter had been living as a gentile, eating foods that were seen as "unclean" and sharing meals with non-Jews. But now when under the spotlight, Peter pretended to be more righteous than he was and to demand that standard from the gentiles.

"What was so insidious in the separatism of Peter and his associates was the fact that they were acting as if their Gentile Christian brothers and sisters were still sinners while they, because of their ritual purity and obedience to the law, stood in a different, more favorable relationship to God. Yet Jews and Gentiles alike had been redeemed by the same Christ, regenerated by the same Holy Spirit, and made partakers of the same fellowship." (Timothy George)



# JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

## GAL 2: 16-18

**"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" (V.16)**

Paul now arrives at last at the center of his declaration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul places the doctrine of justification by faith and not by works of the law at the very center of his message of salvation. The great reformer Martin Luther likewise called this doctrine "the heart of the Gospel."

Latter-day Saints often speak of justification and sanctification as if they are basically the same same thing, but there is an enormous difference. Justification concerns our standing before God and whether we are under condemnation or not. The key metaphor that Paul uses for justification is that of standing before a judge in a courtroom. If we are justified in Christ, then we receive a verdict of acquittal. Otherwise, we will stand condemned. Justification is not a process but an event. Sanctification, by contrast is a process of gradual spiritual growth to actually become more like Jesus.

The Reformation Study Bible, a popular study bible, offers a succinct definition of the doctrine of justification: "Justification is God's act of pardoning sinners and accepting them as righteous for Christ's sake. In it, God puts permanently right their previously estranged relationship with Himself. This justifying sentence is God's bestowal of a status of acceptance for Jesus' sake

**"[F]OR BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED." (V. 16 CONT)**

Paul emphasizes here that there are two ways that any human being can attempt to be justified before God. One possibility is through our own works. The problem is that if we are trying to justify ourselves based on works of the law, then we must perfectly live up to every commandment and covenant and obligation of the law. But that is not possible. Even the best and most righteous among us falls far short of the perfect glory of God. "No one means nobody. No one could ever possibly be justified by works of the law." (R.C. Sproul)

Some have tried to argue that "works of the law" here and elsewhere in Paul's writings refers only to the specific ceremonial requirements of the law of Moses like circumcision. But Paul's argument here and in his other writings is broader. None of our works contribute to our cause our salvation and justification. All that we bring is a realization of our need and open hands to the cross.

Moreover, "if even the works prescribed by the holy law do not contribute to justification, then ... other works certainly do not." (Ronald Fung). If the commandments that God gave to Moses were not necessary for justification, then why should we believe that whatever works we have to offer are necessary for justification?



## QUESTIONS

- What is justification? How is it different from sanctification?
- In what ways might you be trying to justify yourself rather than relying fully on Christ's grace?
- If you died today, do you have confidence that you would be found not guilty by God? Why?
- How would you answer if God asked you, "why should I let you into my presence?"

**"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. FOR IF I BUILD AGAIN THE THINGS WHICH I DESTROYED, I MAKE MYSELF A TRANSGRESSOR" (V17-18)**

Paul here inverts his opponents' arguments against them. They claim that by failing to live the law, Paul is a transgressor. But in reality "[i]t is those who live under the law who are revealed to be transgressors." (Thomas Schreiner) By contrast, Christ is the minister of salvation for all those who recognize that they are sinners in need of redemption in him.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION ON JUSTIFICATION

Something that I have personally found particularly powerful is to imagine myself standing before God in the final judgment and being asked "why should I let you into my presence." In that day, if I try to point to the things that I accomplished such as the callings I held in the Church or the service that I rendered, then I will ultimately stand condemned. On the other hand, if I fall to my knees and admit that I cannot make it back based on my own deeds and thoughts, then I will be able to rely fully on the merits and mercy of Jesus Christ as my redeemer. I will be found not guilty by God not because of how good and righteous I am, but because of how good and righteous Christ is. That is the power of the doctrine of justification.

# THEN CHRIST IS DEAD IN VAIN GAL 2: 19-21



**“FOR I THROUGH THE LAW AM DEAD TO THE LAW, THAT I MIGHT LIVE UNTO GOD.” (V 19)**

God’s law points us to our inability to keep all of its commands perfectly. It reveals to us our inability to be justified on our own merits. It therefore turns us to Christ and to salvation. It is therefore through the law that we become dead to the law and come to “live unto God.” Christ offers us freedom so that the law stops being a straight jacket or an anchor that weighs us down. Instead, we come to live in Christ. His commandments become a guide that allows us to truly “live unto God.”

Timothy Keller explained, “ Because Paul died to the law, he can now ‘live for God.’ The implication is that before he came to faith, while he was trying to save himself through keeping the law, Paul never really lived for God. He was being very moral and good—but it was all for Paul, never for God. When Paul was obeying God without knowing he was accepted, he was obeying to get a reward—for what he could get from God, not out of sheer love for God Himself. Now that he is justified and accepted, Paul has a new motive for obedience that is far more wholesome and powerful.”

**“I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST: NEVERTHELESS I LIVE; YET NOT I, BUT CHRIST LIVETH IN ME” (V. 20)**

I love how Paul declares that “Christ liveth in me.” When we are Christ’s, we are not our own. We live life so that Christ can shine through us. Our life stops being about working to earn or remain in God’s good graces. Instead, we live for Christ.

As Timothy Keller explained, “[w]hen the gospel comes along, you stop obeying law to procure things from [] God. and you begin to obey the law in order to please [] God whom you delight in for himself.”

**“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” (V 20 CONT).**

Ancient Christian author John Chrysostom noted the intensely personal nature of Paul’s words here: “his language teaches that each individual justly owes as a great debt of gratitude to Christ, as if He had come for his sake alone, for He would not have grudged this His condescension though but for one, so that the measure of His love to each is as great as to the whole world.” (John Chrysostom)

As Paul did, I declare that Christ “loved me and gave himself for me.” He died to give me true Christian freedom. He died to liberate me from the need to rely on my own worthiness for salvation and exaltation. He died so that I could be dead to the law and truly live in him. My heart rejoices in knowing this truth!

## QUESTIONS

- How has the law humbled you and made you seek grace?
- What is your motive for obedience?
- What does it mean for Christ to live in us?
- Why does trying to justify ourselves make Christ’s death in vain?
- Have you prayed to God to ask him to save you? If not, would you consider doing so today?

**“I DO NOT FRUSTRATE THE GRACE OF GOD: FOR IF RIGHTEOUSNESS COME BY THE LAW, THEN CHRIST IS DEAD IN VAIN.” (V. 21)**

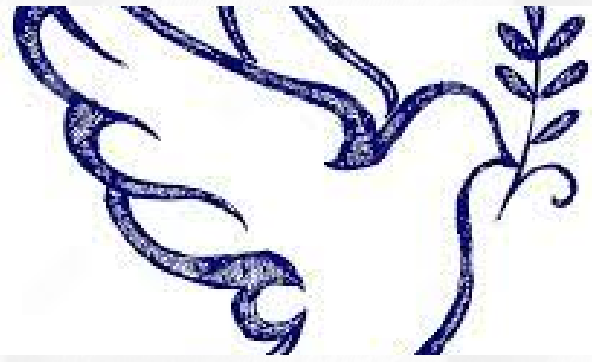
Paul does not mince words here. If we are trying to seek righteousness and justification before God through any law of performances and ordinances, then we are saying that Christ has died in vain and is not enough to save us. “The minute you add any works to faith, you’re saying that in the final analysis faith isn’t enough. What decides your fate ultimately and eternally is what works you do.” (R.C. Sproul)

It is human nature to want to contribute works to our salvation. “As human beings, we derive our worth from what we accomplish, whether it is in our work, our families, or even our athletic ability. The gospel teaches us, however, that nothing we do renders us righteous before God. There is nothing we can contribute – nothing at all.” (Thomas Schreiner)

Timothy Keller explained, “If we could save ourselves, Christ’s death is pointless, and means nothing. If we realize we cannot save ourselves, Christ’s death will mean everything to us. And we will spend the life that He has given us in joyful service of Him, bringing our whole lives into line with the gospel.”



# HAVING BEGUN IN THE SPIRIT GAL 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?” (V.1)**

Paul does not mince words here calling the Galatians foolish and wondering who has cast a spell over them. He is shocked that they are departing from the true message of Christ crucified. “It is as if a magician has cast a spell over them, preventing them from seeing what is blatantly obvious, i.e. the significance of the cross of Jesus Christ.” (Thomas Schreiner)

The focus of the message that the Galatians heard was not about how to live a righteous life, but specifically about the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus: “Notice that the essence of this message is not how to live, but what Jesus has done for us on the cross. The gospel is an announcement of historical events before it is instructions on how to live. It is the proclamation of what has been done for us before it is a direction of what we must do.” (Timothy Keller)

**THIS ONLY WOULD I LEARN OF YOU, RECEIVED YE THE SPIRIT BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW, OR BY THE HEARING OF FAITH? (V.2)**

The obvious answer that Paul expects that they will respond with is “by the hearing of faith.” The Holy Spirit did not come to these Christians because of any work or ordinance that they performed. Instead, it came to them as a result of “the hearing of faith.”

**“ARE YE SO FOOLISH? HAVING BEGUN IN THE SPIRIT, ARE YE NOW MADE PERFECT BY THE FLESH?” (V. 3)**

This is a crucial verse in Paul’s argument. It is very common for people to say that their initial conversion to Christ was an act of faith, but that the only way that they can be sanctified or become more like Christ is by strictly observing commandments and ordinances. In this way they say that they are saved by Christ but perfected by their actions.

Paul completely refutes and rejects this type of performance based Christianity. It is only by the spirit that a believer can be sanctified and changed. Attempting to rely on the works of the law is like trying to rely on our own flesh to be sanctified. It simply will not work. It is like “taking an Olympic gold medal and having it bronzed! The good news of the cross and the empty tomb cannot be improved; it can only be destroyed.” (Philip Ryken) Anyone who tells a Christian that they need to keep certain additional commandments or to subject themselves to additional works and ordinances in order to be sanctified is preaching contrary to the Gospel.

As Timothy Keller put it, “The gospel is the way we enter the kingdom of God. But now, Paul will show that the gospel is much more than that. We are not only saved by the gospel, but we also now grow by the gospel. Paul is saying that we don’t begin by faith and then proceed and grow through our works. We are not only justified by faith in Christ, we are also sanctified by faith in Christ. We never leave the gospel behind.”

## QUESTIONS

- How can we become “bewitched” by messages that distract us from the message of Christ crucified?
- Why can’t we add works for sanctification?
- How does grace and the Gospel related to sanctification?
- How can you live in the “hearing of faith” today?

**“HAVE YE SUFFERED SO MANY THINGS IN VAIN? IF IT BE YET IN VAIN” (V. 4)**

Paul’s listeners had suffered persecution and opposition as a result of their faith in Christ. But they are now relying on the works of the law, the he suggests that all of that suffering and persecution was futile and pointless.

Paul ends this verse with a note of hope. He does not truly believe that the conversion and faith of the Galatians is in vain. They just need to be stirred again into remembrance of the true Gospel Message and reminded of the truth that they have been taught.

**“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?” (V.5)**

Paul appeals to the work of the spirit among the Galatians. If the Galatians had already experienced the ministry of the Holy Spirit including miracles when Paul preached salvation by faith to them, then why should they think that they now need works of the law?

The way forward for a Christian believer is always “by the hearing of faith” and by continual reflection and application of the message of the death and resurrection of Christ. (Timothy Keller). Indeed, “[t]he way to progress as a Christian is continually to repent and uproot these systems in the same way that we became Christians—by the vivid depiction (and re-depiction) of Christ’s saving work for us, and the abandoning of self-trusting efforts to complete ourselves. We must go back again and again to the gospel of Christ crucified, so that our hearts are more deeply gripped by the reality of what He did and who we are in Him.” (Timothy Keller)

# ABRAHAM BELIEVED GAL 3: 6-12



**“EVEN AS ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (V.6)**

Abraham was one of the most important figures in Judaism and Paul refers to him frequently in his Epistles as a paragon of faith. Here is quoting Gen 15:6.

Because Abraham had faith in God, it was “accounted to him for righteousness.” As Thomas Schreiner explained, the use of the term “counted” “indicates that righteousness is not native to human beings, that it is granted to them by God.” So in other words, we receive the righteousness of Christ and are imputed his perfect righteousness even though we do not merit it. If we put our full trust in Jesus Christ, then his righteousness is “accounted to” us as if we had lived the perfect life that he lived.

This has some radical implications. As Tim Keller explained, “[t]his flies in the face of all traditional religion, which tells us that either we are living righteously and are therefore pleasing and acceptable to God, or we are living unrighteously and are therefore alienated from God. But Paul (and Abraham) are showing that it is possible to be loved and accepted by God while we are ourselves sinful and imperfect”

**“KNOW YE THEREFORE THAT THEY WHICH ARE OF FAITH, THE SAME ARE THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM (V.7)”**

The Jews were very proud to be descended from Abraham. But Paul emphasizes that it isn't being a biological descendant of Abraham that matters. Nor is the ritual of circumcision the key.

“What is required to be part of Abraham's family, to be counted as his sons? Not circumcision or the other works required by the law. Those who belong to Abraham's family believe just as Abraham did, for Abraham lived before the law was even given.” (Thomas Schreiner)

We are not part of God's people based on birth or lineage. We are Abraham's children and inheritors of his promise if we have the same kind of faith in God's promises that Abraham had.

**“SO THEN THEY WHICH BE OF FAITH ARE BLESSED WITH FAITHFUL ABRAHAM.” (V. 9)**

Paul notes here that God gave Abraham the promise that all nations would be blessed through him (and his seed) even *before* the law of circumcision was given. That blessing would come through the Gospel of salvation by faith that Jesus would provide through his death on the cross

Paul also wants us “to see that righteousness by faith is taught in both the [Old Testament] and the [New Testament]. It is not as if [Old Testament] saints were right with God on the basis of their works, while [New Testament] saints are righteous by faith. Faith in God and in his promise of deliverance were always the keys of salvation.” (Thomas Schreiner)

**“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” (V.10)**

Paul here quotes Deuteronomy 27:26 which laws out the curse for failing to live out the Law. Those who are under this law must observe the law continually or be under a curse. If you break any part of the law, then you are under that curse. James put this point quite sharply as well: “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.” (James 2:10).

## QUESTIONS

- How can we be loved and accepted by God?
- What does it mean that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us?
- In what ways are you striving to earn favor with God through your works?
- Are you experiencing any of the symptoms of the curse that Tim Keller Describes?
- How does embracing grace free us?

**“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.(V 11- 12)**

Paul's point in these verses is that there are two possible ways that mankind could seek to be justified by God, earning it by works, or

As John Calvin explained, “The law justifies him who fulfills all its precepts, while faith justifies those who are destitute of the merit of works, and who rely on Christ alone. To be justified by our own merit, and to be justified by the grace of another, are two schemes which cannot be reconciled”

If we attempt to be justified by law, then we will be cursed because we cannot live up to the demands of the law and the effort to do so will crush us. and leads to “curse and condemnation” (Timothy Keller):

“To be blessed by God instead of cursed by Him, we would have to look at the law and satisfy its every demand. And that cannot be done. Objectively, attempting salvation-by-law-observance means we are cursed”

This curse comes in very practical ways. “[A]ttempting to be saved by works will lead to profound anxiety and insecurity, because you can never be sure that you are living up to your standards sufficiently, whatever they may be. This makes you over-sensitive to criticism, envious and intimidated by others who outshine you. It makes you nervous and timid (because you are unsure of where you stand) or else swaggering and boastful (because you are trying to convince yourself of where you stand). Either way, you live with a sense of curse and condemnation.”

Living under grace liberates us from the curse of the law and gives us true freedom.



# REDEEMED FROM THE CURSE

## GAL 3:13-18



**“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” (V. 13)**

The Law of Moses came with both promised blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. But Israel had failed to live up to the law and was under the curse. Christ took upon himself the curse. He was the propitiation or ransom for our sins. He died a shameful death on the cross so that he could fully take away the wrath of God and the curse that was due to us. He could exchange our sins for his perfect righteousness.

This is a pretty radical concept that we sometimes miss when we think about Christ providing us forgiveness for sins. “Salvation means much more than forgiveness. We do not simply have our slate wiped clean; we also become perfect in God’s sight. And we stay perfect in God’s sight.” (Timothy Keller) Indeed, because of Christ “we are regarded by God as if we are perfectly righteous and flawless.” (Timothy Keller)

**“THAT THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM MIGHT COME ON THE GENTILES THROUGH JESUS CHRIST; THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT THROUGH FAITH (V.14).”**

If we have the spirit, then we have a “promise” of eternal life. One of the remarkable things about the doctrine by justification as taught by Paul is that it is something that is immediately active in our life from the moment when we accept Christ. We do not have to wait until we are sanctified or perfected in order to be pronounced “not guilty” based on the imputed righteousness of Christ. Because our status by God depends not on our own righteousness but on the righteousness of Christ, that verdict is pronounced once and for all on our behalf. “Justification by faith means that the minute you become a Christian God loves you as much now as he will a billion years from now when you are perfect. He brings the verdict in now.” (Timothy Keller)

**“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 (V. 15)”**

Paul now attempts to explain the nature of the covenant of grace and the covenant of works in a different and more practical way by using a human example. He points specifically to the example of a will. Once a will is made, it is not canceled or added to. The same is true for other contracts or agreements as well.

**“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 (V. 16).”**

The promise to Abraham had been interpreted as a promise that his descendants (the people of Israel) would bless the whole world. But Paul notes here that God’s promise referred to a single seed (Jesus Christ) and that it would be this one seed that would bless the whole world.

## QUESTIONS

- How does Christ redeem us from the curse?
- How secure are you in Christ’s promises to you?
- How trustworthy are God’s promises according to Paul?
- In what ways are Christ’s promises to us unconditional? Is that different from what you once thought?

**“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.”**

**“FOR IF THE INHERITANCE BE OF THE LAW, IT IS NO MORE OF PROMISE: BUT GOD GAVE IT TO ABRAHAM BY PROMISE. (V. 17-18)”**

Just like a human promise cannot be canceled or added to, the same is true for God’s promises to Abraham. Hundreds of years before the Law of Moses was introduced, God had already promised to Abraham that through his seed (Christ) the whole world would be blessed.

Paul sees “promise” and “law as mutually exclusive.” “If I give you something because of what I have promised, it is not because of your performance. If I give you something because of what you have done, it is not because of my promise.” (Timothy Keller). If we keep the law, we “earn” blessings. We no longer need to rely on God’s promises.

Paul wants his readers to avoid the enticing error that “that God promised to bless His people, but that this blessing was achieved or kept by law and obedience.”

Instead, God made an unconditional covenant or promise to Abraham that was not based on Abraham’s performance or righteousness. In Genesis 15, God took upon himself all of the obligations and penalties of failure to live the covenant. It was an unconditional promise extended to Abraham and his posterity. And the Law of Moses did not alter or eliminate that unconditional promise.

# THE LAW - A SCHOOLMASTER GAL 3: 18-25



**WHEREFORE THEN SERVETH THE LAW? IT WAS ADDED BECAUSE OF TRANSGRESSIONS, TILL THE SEED SHOULD COME TO WHOM THE PROMISE WAS MADE (V 19)**

Paul teaches here that the law was intended to help to reveal our need for redemption. As John Calvin explained, “He means that the law was published in order to make known transgressions, and in this way to compel men to acknowledge their guilt. As men naturally are too ready to excuse themselves, so, until they are roused by the law, their consciences are asleep.”

Paul’s radical point here is that the law given to Moses was always intended to be in force only until Christ (the one “to whom the promise was made”) came.

**AND IT WAS ORDAINED BY ANGELS IN THE HAND OF A MEDIATOR. NOW A MEDIATOR IS NOT A MEDIATOR OF ONE, BUT GOD IS ONE. (V. 19 CONT-20)**

The notion that the Law of Moses was given by angels likely derives from Deut 33:2 which is ambiguous in the Hebrew text, but more explicit in the Septuagint (the Greek New Testament translation that was extremely widespread in Jesus’s day). It is also referred to by Stephen in Acts 7:53 (“Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.”) as well as in Hebrews 2:2. The law was also mediated at Mount Sinai by Moses who went up to receive and bring down the law. Paul points to these aspects of the law to show that it was inferior in certain respects to the promises made directly by God to Abraham.

**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. (V 21)**

If the law was inferior, then was it contrary to what God had promised? This was the conclusion that several early Christian heretics like Marcion reached leading them to completely reject the Old Testament or even see the God of the Old Testament as evil. But Paul sharply rejects the idea. The law was given by a loving God and served a good and righteous purpose. It just could not of itself bring eternal life. Indeed, no law or set of commandments can do so given our natural inability to keep God’s law with the perfection needed to stand on our own righteousness.

**“BUT THE SCRIPTURE HATH CONCLUDED ALL UNDER SIN, THAT THE PROMISE BY FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST MIGHT BE GIVEN TO THEM THAT BELIEVE” (V 22)**

Paul’s words are quite a bit more vivid in Greek than in King James English: “Scripture imprisoned all the world to sin”.

When we read the scriptures (likely referring here to all of the Old Testament), we recognize our own utter failure to live up to the standard that God demands and our need for a savior. The law and the prophets pointed forward to the coming of Christ and his fulfillment of all of God’s promises. Christ fulfills the promises made to Abraham because he is the seed that would bless the whole world. He fulfills the promises made to Moses by being the perfect sacrifice that the Law of Moses looked forward to. And he fulfills the promises made to David by being the perfect and eternal Davidic king.

“The law drives people to the promise, so that they are righteous by faith in Christ.” (Thomas Schreiner)

## QUESTIONS

- How does the law prepare us for Christ?
- Why does it matter that we are all condemned by sin?
- What is the difference between living under a schoolmaster and being free?
- How does Christ free us from the demands of the law? What does that look like?

**“BUT BEFORE FAITH CAME, WE WERE KEPT UNDER THE LAW, SHUT UP UNTO THE FAITH WHICH SHOULD AFTERWARDS BE REVEALED” (V. 23)**

Paul compares the law to a prison guard that keeps us imprisoned. When we are living under the law we feel obligated to live it perfectly. We cannot see anyway out of the obligations of that law. We do not understand the purpose of faith or how God can deliver us. We are bound and in need of deliverance.

Pastor John Stott explained that “No man has ever appreciated the gospel until the law has first revealed him to himself. It is only against the inky blackness of the night sky that the stars begin to appear, and it is only against the dark background of sin and judgment that the gospel shines forth.”

**WHEREFORE THE LAW WAS OUR SCHOOLMASTER TO BRING US UNTO CHRIST, THAT WE MIGHT BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH. (V. 24)**

The KJV’s translation of schoolmaster to our ears today suggests a caring but strict teacher. Paul’s meaning here is considerably harsher. A better analogy might be a drill sergeant.

**BUT AFTER THAT FAITH IS COME, WE ARE NO LONGER UNDER A SCHOOLMASTER. (V 25)**

Once we are living under faith, there is a significant change. We are no longer living under a disciplinarian that imposes rigorous rules upon us to compel obedience.

Does that mean that we are free from any rules or guidelines? Absolutely not! But “we no longer view [the law] as a system of salvation. It no longer forces obedience through coercion and fear. The gospel means that we no longer obey the law out of fear of rejection and hope of salvation-by-performance. But when we grasp salvation-by-promise, our hearts are filled with gratitude and a desire to please and be like our Savior—and the way to do that is through obeying the law.” (Timothy Keller).



# CHILDREN OF GOD BY FAITH GAL 3: 25-GAL 4:6

**FOR YE ARE ALL THE CHILDREN OF GOD BY FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS.” (V. 26)**

When we have faith in Jesus Christ, we become adopted children of God through that faith. This is not the same as being “children of God” who are made in his image. It means that we become heirs of God in a direct, immediate and intimate sense.

**“FOR AS MANY OF YOU AS HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST HAVE PUT ON CHRIST” (V. 27)**

Those who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ and received adoption by his name. Here Paul may be speaking of water baptism, but he is also certainly speaking of a spiritual baptism that occurs when we have faith in Christ and are transformed in his name. Water baptism is an act that we take as a symbol of that inner transformation. Putting on Christ implies a close intimate relationship and that results in our transformation into the image of 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.(V. 28)**

There are no second class citizens among God’s people. No one has more or less access to the blessings of Christ’s new covenant. This is a remarkable declaration that would have been unthinkable for Paul the Pharisee. But these are the radical implications of the Gospel of Christ. If we are all saved by the faith in Christ and not based on our own efforts, pedigree, or accomplishments, then there is no room for rank or distinction in Christ. These remarks are radically inclusive and egalitarian. Women would generally not have been able to inherit property in the ancient world. But men and women alike are fully equal in Christ and the eternal blessings that he promises us.

**AND IF YE BE CHRIST'S, THEN ARE YE ABRAHAM'S SEED, AND HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE. (V. 29).**

Paul links back to his earlier discussion of Abraham yet again to emphasize that what determines whether we belong to Abraham and are heirs of the promise God gave to Abraham is not our birth lineage or genealogy, but whether we are found in Christ. If we are found in Christ, then we belong to Abraham’s seed and received all of the unconditional promises of God to Abraham.

**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: (GAL 4: 1-3)**

A royal heir would be raised under the tutelage of tutors and governors until the child came into maturity. Such a child might not seem different from a servant in how he was raised even though he is in reality the lord of all. The child would then be called up and made an heir. Likewise, Paul emphasizes that those who are now heirs to the promise of Christ were in bondage to the things of the world before Christ came. ut now we have been called and chosen.

These verses cannot be referring to the Law of Moses since they refer to both Jews who had the law and Gentiles who never did. Instead, “ Paul must mean that all human beings are spiritual ‘slaves’ before coming to Christ. ... Because we are all desperately trying to live up to some standards. We are anxious and burdened. Our relationship with the divine is remote or non-existent.” (Timothy Keller)



## QUESTIONS

- What does it mean that we are adopted as God’s children?
- Why can the Gospel be so inclusive? Why do we fall short of this ideal?
- What does it mean to be able to call God Abba?
- How does knowing Christ redeemed us fully from the law matter?

**BUT WHEN THE FULNESS OF THE TIME WAS COME, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON, MADE OF A WOMAN, MADE UNDER THE LAW (V4)**

Christ came at exactly the moment when he was appointed to come into the world. He was born under the law so that he could fulfill it. The mention of being born “of a woman” might be an indication of Paul’s awareness of the Virgin Birth.

**TO REDEEM THEM THAT WERE UNDER THE LAW, THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION OF SONS (5) .**

“To redeem here “means to release a slave from his or her owner by paying the slave’s full price. (Timothy Keller) Jesus paid the price to free us from our bondage to the law by completely fulfilling all of its demands on us. He redeems us from the law and make us part of his family.

**AND BECAUSE YE ARE SONS, GOD HATH SENT FORTH THE SPIRIT OF HIS SON INTO YOUR HEARTS, CRYING, ABBA, FATHER (V. 5)**

The Holy Spirit that is received by the believer at the time when they come to believe in Christ and are born again serves many purposes, but Paul is pointing to one of its more beautiful and poignant ones. The “Spirit of his Son” comes into us welcoming us into the family of God. The Holy Spirit comes within us and connects us to the Father in an intimate way.

As Tim Keller explains, “The Son’s purpose was to secure for us the legal status of our sonship. By contrast, the Spirit’s purpose is to secure the actual experience of it.”

The term “Abba” is a highly significant one. It is the highly familiar name that a child calls his father similar to the terms “daddy” or “papa” in English. It was what I used to call my dad even when I was an adult. It is also the term for God that Jesus used in the Garden of Gethsemane. The use of this term suggests the degree of closeness and security that we can have when we are in Christ:

# IN BONDAGE AGAIN? GAL 4:7-16

**WHEREFORE THOU ART NO MORE A SERVANT, BUT A SON; AND IF A SON, THEN AN HEIR OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST (V. 7)**

Immediately at the moment of adoption a son receives "all the financial and legal privileges within the estate and outside in the world as the son and heir." (Timothy Keller). The same is true for us. When we are adopted in Christ, our whole relationship with God changes. Before, we are like servants trying to earn our wages. Afterwards, we become sons who are promised a glorious inheritance without the need to work to earn it.

Latter-day Saints often focus on how Christ forgives us of our debt such as in Boyd K. Packer's famous parable of the Mediator. But this is only really half of what salvation by grace entails. "Paul wants to show the Galatians, and us, that not only did Christ remove the curse we deserved but He also gives us the blessing He deserved. God's honor and reward are just as secure and guaranteed as our pardon." (Timothy Keller) Knowing this can bring great comfort and reassurance to the weary saint: "Our sonship removes the fear of missing fulfillment or losing approval that is at the root of much of our disobedience." (Timothy Keller)

**HOWBEIT THEN, WHEN YE KNEW NOT GOD, YE DID SERVICE UNTO THEM WHICH BY NATURE ARE NO GODS.**

When we do not know the one true God, our hearts are far from him. We, whether by design or inadvertently serve things that are not truly God. We serve idols of our own creation. We also may inadvertently at times serve darker Satanic forces

**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? (V. 9)**

Paul makes an alarming observation here that should startle all of us. The Galatians have been tricked back into observing the law through observance of holy days and other Jewish traditions. We might think that there is no big harm in doing more to worship God. But for Paul, these Galatians have gone back to worshiping things rather than the one true God. And perhaps even worse, they have turned back into bondage to these requirements. For Paul being more devout or observant to God is not a good thing if we have lost sight of the Gospel of Grace. Doing more, even with a desire to serve God, can put us under bondage once again.

"Paul is saying that earning one's own salvation through scrupulous biblical morality and religion is just as much enslavement to idols as outright paganism and all its immoral practices! In the end, the religious person is as lost and enslaved as the irreligious person. Why? Both are trying to be their own savior and lord, but in different ways." (Timothy Keller).

**YE OBSERVE DAYS, AND MONTHS, AND TIMES, AND YEARS.(V. 10)**

As non-Jewish Pagans the Galatians likely observed a variety of rituals and traditions connected to the Greek worship of Gods. Now, they are once again being instructed to observe the "days, and months, and times, and years" of the Law of Moses such as new moon festivals, strict sabbath observance, and other requirements of the law.

**"I AM AFRAID OF YOU, LEST I HAVE BESTOWED UPON YOU LABOUR IN VAIN."(V.11)**

Paul is worried that all of his efforts to direct the Galatians to salvation in Christ is in vain. The speed with which they have turned away from grace and back towards servitude alarms Paul as he wonders whether these individuals had ever truly come to know Christ. When we have tasted the freedom and joy that comes from divine grace, we should not be tempted to go back under bondage



## QUESTIONS

- What is the difference between being a servant and a son?
- Has reading this section challenged any misconceptions you had? Which ones?
- How can trying to do more "good" things lead us away from God?
- In what ways might you still be trying to "earn" your salvation?

**"BRETHREN, I BESEECH YOU, BE AS I AM; FOR I AM AS YE ARE; YE HAVE NOT INJURED ME AT ALL." (V.12)**

Paul urges the Galatians tenderly to be as he is, a servant of Christ freed from the bondage of the law by grace. He emphasizes that they have not hurt him personally even though he is obviously deeply concerned for their well-being and salvation.

**"INFIRMITY IN THE FLESH"(V.13-15)**

We do not know exactly what "infirmity" or "temptation" of the flesh Paul is speaking of. Based on v 15 some speculate it may have involved Paul's eyesight. Elsewhere, in 2 Corinthians 12 Paul speaks about his thorn in the flesh that he petitioned God to remove but was told no. Whatever it was, it is clear that it was a serious impairment. Nevertheless, the Galatians had received Paul and his message passionately as if he were an angel of God or Christ Jesus himself. In v 15 the NLT translates "blessedness" as a "joyful and grateful spirit." When we are saved by grace and our eyes are opened to the truth, we cannot help but praise and glory God for his mercy and kindness.

**"AM I THEREFORE BECOME YOUR ENEMY, BECAUSE I TELL YOU THE TRUTH?" (V.16)**

Paul is afraid that those that he loved and served will not see him as an enemy because he is telling them the truth and warning them of the heresy of the judaizers.

The consequences of sharing the Gospel of grace can be unsettling or even upsetting. Our natural man longs for the comfort and bondage of rules and laws and rituals that convince us that we are earning God's favor.



# ZEALOUSLY AFFECTED GAL 4:17-21

**"THEY ZEALOUSLY AFFECT YOU, BUT NOT WELL; YEA, THEY WOULD EXCLUDE YOU, THAT YE MIGHT AFFECT THEM." (V. 17)**

This is another verse where a more modern translation sheds a ton of light: "Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may have zeal for them." Or as Tim Keller renders it, "They are flattering and making much of you, so that you will flatter and make much of them."

The Judaizers ultimately want to convert the zeal that the Galatians had for Christ into a zeal for them and their rules and commandments. They do not have the salvation of these saints at heart. Instead, they want to alienate them from Christ and from the people of God so that they become dependant on the Judaizers for guidance and approval.

Pastor Stephen Armstrong explained powerfully how the motivation of the Judaizers was ultimately power, prestige and control: "The true motivation for the Judaziers imposing Law and the obscurity of Jewish practice, custom and regulation upon the Gentile was a matter of power. Knowledge is power, and these men were interested in honor and power. They knew that by teaching that Law was required, they could set themselves up as Pharisees over the church. Then those in the church would feel a need to seek after them for access to that wisdom and approval. Of course, these men would not give up their secrets and approval easily. And that's where their opportunity to obtain power and control came from."

In other words, the Judaizers set themselves up as keepers of knowledge, ordinances and comments that they claimed the Galatians saints would need to follow. They did so in order to divide the Galatians from the universal Church of Christ and to turn them into followers of the Judaizers own teachings.

Paul's teaching here reveals why we should be very cautious anytime religious leaders claim to have unique access or privilege or knowledge about the ways of God. All too often, these types of claims are a way to exert power and control.

**BUT IT IS GOOD TO BE ZEALOUSLY AFFECTED ALWAYS IN A GOOD THING, AND NOT ONLY WHEN I AM PRESENT WITH YOU. (V.18)**

Paul clarifies that zeal is not a bad thing. Indeed, it is good to be passionate about the Gospel of Christ. But we need to be careful that our zeal does not get misplaced as it appears that the Galatians' zeal had. We can become very passionate about the wrong things especially when we embrace additional laws, ordinances, and covenants that take us away from the pure and simple worship of Christ.

**"MY LITTLE CHILDREN, OF WHOM I TRAVAIL IN BIRTH AGAIN UNTIL CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU" (V. 19)**

Paul tenderly refers to those in Galatia as his little children. Paul has given birth to them as believers in Christ. Now, however, he is realizing that perhaps some of them had not truly been fully born again because Christ was not "formed" in them. He therefore has to labor again to lay down the foundational truths of the Gospel of Christ to help his readers be formed in Christ.

When Christ is "formed in [us]," we will not be easily swayed by alluring voices that lead us back towards legalism and the law and away from Christ.



## QUESTIONS

- What does Paul say motivated the Judaizers? What do you learn from this?
- How can we be zealous for the wrong cause?
- What does Paul's care for the Galatians teach us about Christlike ministry?
- If Christ fully "formed in you?" What does that mean to you?
- Why do we sometimes desire to be under "the law?" How can we resist that tendency?

**I DESIRE TO BE PRESENT WITH YOU NOW, AND TO CHANGE MY VOICE; FOR I STAND IN DOUBT OF YOU. \*(V. 20)**

Paul wants to be there to see for himself what has happened to his beloved Galatians. He has a lot of anxiety over their spiritual well being.

He would love to "change [his] voice" back to being one of tender encouragement rather than sharp correction.

**TELL ME, YE THAT DESIRE TO BE UNDER THE LAW, DO YE NOT HEAR THE LAW? (V. 21)**

We might wonder, why would anyone want to be placed back under the law? But truthfully, there is something within us that loves to be governed by comprehensive rules and standards and to feel like we are made righteous before God through our obedience.

Pastor John Stott noted "There are many such today. They are not Judaizers to whom Paul was writing, but people whose religion is legalistic, who imagine that the way to God is by observance of certain rules."

Paul suggests here that those who desire to be bound by the requirements of the law have not truly heard or understood the full extent of consequence of being under the law.

# ISAAC AND ISHMAEL GAL 4:22-31

**"FOR IT IS WRITTEN, THAT ABRAHAM HAD TWO SONS, THE ONE BY A BONDMAID, THE OTHER BY A FREEWOMAN." (V.22)**

To further highlight what it means to be under the law, Paul returns to the theme of Abraham. His argument is that Isaac Abraham's heir and son of the promise was born to the freedom of grace while Issaac the son of the servant was born a slave to the law.

"It is a brilliant argument. The basic point of the false teachers was: Yes, it is good that you believe in Christ, but you will have to obey the whole law before you can be considered the children of Abraham. Paul's basic point is: The moment you believed in Christ, you were the children of Abraham, the heirs of all the promises of God! And the moment you start thinking you have to obey the whole law, you are not the children of Abraham at all!" (Timothy Keller)

**"BUT HE WHO WAS OF THE BONDWOMAN WAS BORN AFTER THE FLESH; BUT HE OF THE FREEWOMAN WAS BY PROMISE." (V.23)**

Abraham was promised a son through Sarah. But Abraham and Sarah did not fully trust in God's promises and therefore they came up with the idea of Abraham marrying Hagar and having a child for Sarah through her. This was "after the flesh" and not after the promise of God.

"By sleeping with Hagar, Abraham was choosing to rely on his own capabilities. He was opting to 'work' and gain his son. He was acting in faith: but the faith he had was in himself, as his own 'savior'" (Timothy Keller) On the other hand, God provided Isaac for Abraham and Sarah not through the labors of the flesh, but in a miraculous manner because of his gracious promise.

**"WHICH THINGS ARE AN ALLEGORY: FOR THESE ARE THE TWO COVENANTS; THE ONE FROM THE MOUNT SINAI, WHICH GENDERETH TO BONDAGE, WHICH IS AGAR." (V.24)**

Paul allows Hagar and Sarah to represent two different covenants, one of works and bondage and the other of faith and freedom. Just as Abraham's relationship with Hagar did not produce the heir that God had promised, our self-righteous efforts can likewise not fulfill God's covenant promises.

"Abraham did not rely on God's grace through His supernatural action in history but rather on his own ability. ... As Abraham needed to switch his faith from his own efforts to God's supernatural work, so these Galatian Christians need to look back to Christ's work, rather than at their own law-keeping efforts." (Timothy Keller)

**FOR THIS AGAR IS MOUNT SINAI IN ARABIA, AND ANSWERETH TO JERUSALEM WHICH NOW IS, AND IS IN BONDAGE WITH HER CHILDREN. BUT JERUSALEM WHICH IS ABOVE IS FREE, WHICH IS THE MOTHER OF US ALL. (V.25-26)**

This would have been shocking to the Judaizers or anyone with Jewish background. They would have equated Mount Sinai, Jerusalem, and the Law with Isaac the child of the promise. But Paul is saying here that those things are actually associated with the bondage and slavery of Hagar and Ishmael. The law creates obligation and bondage in a manner that is analogous to Hagar and Ishmael. On the other hand, the spiritual freedom in Christ is equated with the spiritual Jerusalem

## QUESTIONS

- What do Isaac and Ishmael represent for Paul?
- How would Paul's message have been unexpected for his listeners? How was it unexpected for you?
- When has God provided for you in a miraculous fashion as he did for Abraham?
- What gives you confidence in the promises of God?
- What is keeping you in bondage?

**"FOR IT IS WRITTEN, REJOICE, THOU BARREN THAT BEAREST NOT..." (V. 27)**

Here Paul is quoting Isaiah 54:1 which promises to the desolate and barren growth and increase. We see time and again that God repeatedly reverses status. The younger child becomes the heir, the poor of spirit inherits the kingdom, etc. This was true with Sarah and Hagar and it is true with us as well. the message of the Gospel is one that should bring great comfort to those who feel lowly, destitute, or barren,

**NOW WE, BRETHREN, AS ISAAC WAS, ARE THE CHILDREN OF PROMISE.**

Isaac was born as a result of God's covenantal faithfulness and not as a result of labor or toil or work of Abraham. Likewise, believers in Christ inherit a promise that is fixed and immovable and not the result of our labors.

**BUT AS THEN HE THAT WAS BORN AFTER THE FLESH PERSECUTED HIM THAT WAS BORN AFTER THE SPIRIT, EVEN SO IT IS NOW.**

In Genesis 21:9-10 we hear of Ishmael mocking Isaac, Paul sees this as a metaphor for the persecution of those who are now born again in Christ by those who are still under the legalism of the law just as Jesus was persecuted by the legalistic Pharisees of his day. "Religious people are very touchy and nervous about their standing with God. Their insecurity makes them hostile to the gospel, which insists that their best deeds are useless before God." (Timothy Keller)

**"... FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREEWOMAN. SO THEN, BRETHREN, WE ARE NOT CHILDREN OF THE BONDWOMAN, BUT OF THE FREE." (V. 30-31)**

Even though the son of the bondwoman (Ishmael) was born first, God decreed that he would not be heir with the son of the freewoman and in fact would be cast out. Likewise, those who are spiritually under the bondage of the law must be cast out and cannot inherit all that God wants to give us. Paul urges the Galatians who have come to Christ to remember that they are not children of bondage, but freedom and to live in that light.



# BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN GAL 5:1-6

**STAND FAST THEREFORE IN THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST HATH MADE US FREE, AND BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN WITH THE YOKE OF BONDAGE. (V.1)**

A literal translation of the Greek is even more emphatic “For freedom Christ freed you” Paul is saying that Christ died for us for the sake of making us free and giving us liberty. He liberated us from the bondage of the law that kept us from truly knowing and loving Christ. The greek form of the phrase “made us free” refers to a single, past action that is already completed, signaling the definitive and final nature of what Christ has done.

I find the contrast between this yoke of bondage and the yoke of Christ that he spoke of in Matthew 11 quite striking: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:29-30). We each need to examine ourselves and ask are we experiencing the peace and freedom and liberty that Christ promised, or are we being crushed by the weigh and bondage of the law that we have become entangled with? If we are experiencing guilt, shame, anxiety, and fear over our status with God, then something has gone awry, and we are not enjoying the fruit that Christ came to produce in us.

Tim Keller points out one radical implication of this verse. The Gentile Christians had once been unlawful pagans who did not know Gods law. The Judaizers are now calling them to strict observance of the laws of Moses. But to Paul these two errors are similar enough that he can warn the Galatians of falling back to bondage **again**: “Paul is saying that these boil down to the same spiritual slavery! Under circumcision, the Galatians will experience once again the anxiety, guilt and burdened life they knew before as pagans. They will never be sure that they are being good enough. Their lives will be as fear-based and proud and guilt-ridden as they were before; in fact, probably more so! They will fall into the touchiness, insecurity, pride, discouragement and weariness of people who are never sure that they have worth (ie: righteousness).” (Timothy Keller).

**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 ADEBTOR TO DO THE WHOLE LAW. CHRIST IS BECOME OF NO EFFECT UNTO YOU, WHOSEVER OF YOU ARE JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW; YE ARE FALLEN FROM GRACE. (V. 2-4)**

These are extremely stark words from Paul. There is no middle ground. We are either justified by faith or by works. If we try to add works on top of grace, then “Christ shall profit you nothing” and “is become of no effect unto you.” We only get the benefits and the blessing of Christ’s atonement if we rely solely on him.

If we are trying to justify ourselves through our works, then we become “a debtor to do the whole law.” The standard that God will demand of us at the judgment day is perfect continuous righteousness. An utterly impossible standard that we can not and will never satisfy no matter how hard we labor. We therefore really face a binary choice. Are we going to try to earn (and fail) to earn heaven through our performance, or are we going to rely fully on the grace that Christ provides us and not our own efforts?

As Tim Keller put it, Paul is saying “ No matter that you insist you’ve been converted or you say you feel Christ has changed your life. If by deciding your salvation rests in any way on your performance, you deny salvation by faith alone in Christ alone (which I’m confident you won’t), you can’t be saved by Him.”



## QUESTIONS

- In what way did the death of Christ provide us with freedom?
- Do you experience the yoke of Christ as light and freeing or as bondage?
- How can being too religious ultimately be just as problematic as not being religious at all?
- If circumcision doesn't matter, why was it such a big deal to Paul if the Galatians were circumcised?
- How can we have confidence in the spirit?

**“FOR WE THROUGH THE SPIRIT WAIT FOR THE HOPE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH.” (V. 5)**

Hope in greek does not suggest a wish or an uncertain desire as it sometimes does in English. Instead, it represents a “powerful assurance and certainty of something” (Timothy Keller)

If we are living in the spirit and have a hope in Christ, then we can have confidence in our salvation and glorification. We do not need to become anxious or unsteady. We will not be seduced by arguments like those offered by the judaizers that we just need to supplement our faith with the secret sauce that only they can offer.. We will not run after new revelation or secret knowledge or additional ceremonies or rituals. We can have confidence that, in the word of the beloved hymn Amazing Grace, “ ‘tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.”

**FOR IN JESUS CHRIST NEITHER CIRCUMCISION AVAILETH ANY THING, NOR UNCIRCUMCISION; BUT FAITH WHICH WORKETH BY LOVE (V.6)**

Circumcision was being offered to the Galatians as this great spiritual event that would lead to their sanctification and bring them closer to God. But ultimately religious rituals are not what save us. What matters is whether our faith is working within us by love.

As Tim Keller put it, “In the gospel, we see that Christ has died for us and valued us not for what we bring Him. We are of no profit to Him! We have been loved for our own sakes. And to the degree we see that in gospel faith, we respond in kind. Now we can serve God not for what He brings us, for we already have everything guaranteed, but for who He is and what He has done for us. Finally, we can love God for who He is.”



# CALLED UNTO LIBERTY GAL 5:7- 13

**YE DID RUN WELL; WHO DID HINDER YOU THAT YE SHOULD NOT OBEY THE TRUTH? (V. 7)**

The Galatians were moving forward in their faith in Christ, but now they have been hindered. The Judaizers have diverted them away from the truth by encouraging them to add to and distort the true Gospel.

**THIS PERSUASION COMETH NOT OF HIM THAT CALLETH YOU. (V. 8)**

The Judaizers claimed that their rituals and commandments would bring the Galatians closer to Christ. But Paul declares here quite forcefully that this was NOT from Christ. No matter how persuasive the arguments of those who add works on top of grace, we cannot yield. No matter how much works righteousness can puff up our egos and give us a feeling of superiority, we cannot allow it to dominate in our heart.

**“A LITTLE LEAVEN LEAVENETH THE WHOLE LUMP.” (V. 9)**

Just as adding a little bit of yeast to some dough will cause all of the dough to rise, adding a little bit of works to the mix of faith will cause our transform our reliance on Christ into a reliance on grace. We must continually be careful to avoid even the slightest bit of contamination from the leavening influence of works righteousness.

**“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.” (V. 10)**

Despite all that he has heard about the Galatians falling for the Judaizing heresy, Paul is still confident in them and that they will hearken to his message. The person or persons who have come unto them will ultimately be held accountable for teaching heresy.

**“AND I, BRETHREN, IF I YET PREACH CIRCUMCISION, WHY DO I YET SUFFER PERSECUTION? THEN IS THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS CEASED.” (V.11)**

The Judaizers claimed that what they taught about the need for circumcision was what Paul would have taught them had he been able to stay with them longer. Paul refutes this argument by pointing out that if he taught circumcision then he would not be suffering persecution at the hands of the Jewish people as he had wherever he traveled on his missionary journeys. The message of the cross was so scandalous precisely because it offered salvation and membership in the people of God without the need for circumcision. On the other hand, if circumcision could save, then the cross was superfluous.

**“I WOULD THEY WERE EVEN CUT OFF WHICH TROUBLE YOU.” (V. 12)**

The KJV hides the full extent of Paul's meaning. Paul declares that he wishes that the Judaizers “would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!” (NIV). Paul's sharp words reveal how seriously he takes the Judaizers error.

Paul believes that the error of encouraging Christians to add ordinances and works onto of grace is sufficiently serious that those who support it should be cut off from the people of God. This is truly a damnable heresy that needed to be dealt with accordingly.



## QUESTIONS

- How can we be diverted from moving forward in our faith?
- What does Christian freedom mean to you?
- Do you experience Christian Freedom in your Church and your life?
- How does understanding grace and the Gospel help us to love and serve one another?
- Why is Paul so sharp in his criticism of the Judaizers? Why did he this disagreement as so important?

**“FOR, BRETHREN, YE HAVE BEEN CALLED UNTO LIBERTY; ONLY USE NOT LIBERTY FOR AN OCCASION TO THE FLESH, BUT BY LOVE SERVE ONE ANOTHER.” (V. 13)**

Christians are called to liberty. This means that they are freed from the obligations of the law of Moses or any other ceremony code as a test of salvation. Their salvation would no longer rest on whether they were circumcised or abstained from pork, or strictly kept the Sabbath, or any other obligation of the Jewish law.

This does NOT mean, however, that Christians are free to indulge the flesh and sin freely. Not at all. Instead, a Christian must be led by the love and the desire to serve others. “The gospel frees us from the law, for the law. It does away with our old, selfishly motivated and unloving law-obedience. And it motivates us to obey the law out of love.” (Timothy Keller)

Christian liberty is intended to allow us to better serve each other. The Pharisees were very concerned that contact with those who were less righteous would contaminate them in some way, and the Law of Moses protected against that kind of defilement. By contrast, because the Christ is truly free in Christ, he or she can love with greater intensity and without fear of being tainted by exposure to sin.



# FULFILLED IN LOVE

## GAL 5: 14-21

**FOR ALL THE LAW IS FULFILLED IN ONE WORD, EVEN IN THIS; THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF. (V. 14)**

Love is the ultimate point and purpose of the law. All of the law is intended to point us towards truly loving our neighbor as ourselves with the same kind of Christlike love that God shows towards us.

We want to make things much more complicated. "Reason takes offense at the brevity with which Paul treats the Law." We get "worked up over ceremonies, meats, days, places, and such things" But Paul is saying "Leave off this foolishness and listen to me. The whole Law is comprehended in this one sentence" (Martin Luther).

**BUT IF YE BITE AND DEVOUR ONE ANOTHER, TAKE HEED THAT YE BE NOT CONSUMED ONE OF ANOTHER. (V. 15)**

When we begin to quarrel and clash with each other, that only leads towards misery. Salvation by grace moves us away from a need to compete with one another to be more righteous or worthy than others. When we all recognize that we are sinners in need of a Savior and that he freely redeems us, it takes away any need to be better than someone else. Instead, we want to love and support them.

**"THIS I SAY THEN, WALK IN THE SPIRIT, AND YE SHALL NOT FULFIL THE LUST OF THE FLESH. (V. 16)**

Paul emphasizes that as Christians who follow Jesus, we must walk in the Spirit of God and not give in to the lust of the flesh. It is only by following the spirit that we actually have the capacity to overcome the natural and sinful lusts and desires within us.

**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. (V. 17)**

Flesh here refers "to the sin-desiring aspect of our whole being as opposed to the God-desiring aspect" while the Spirit refers to "the renewed Christian heart, made new by the Holy Spirit." (Timothy Keller) Keller, Galatians for You.

Paul here is reflecting on the fact that Christians are born again by the spirit and yet also remain subject to the sinful demands of the flesh. While we live in this world we continue to wrestle with these two competing forces that war within us. Sin maintains a hold over us preventing us from doing all that we know that we feel called by the spirit to do. See *Romans 7*.

Martin Luther in his commentary on this verse explained, "For we are not yet dead, but we still live in the flesh; which, because it is not yet pure, continually lusteth against the spirit ... Wherefore the natural vices that were in us before we received faith, do still remain in us after that we have received faith: saving that now they are subdued to the spirit, which hath the upper hand to keep them under, that they rule not; and yet not without great conflict." (Martin Luther)

**BUT IF YE BE LED OF THE SPIRIT, YE ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW.**

When we are led by the spirit, we are free from the obligations of the law. But we will not be led towards wickedness or carnality. To the contrary, we will be led to fulfill the higher and deeper purpose of the law.

Timothy Keller points out some interesting parallels between verses 16 and 18 which suggest a link between being led by our flesh and being under the law:

"The sinful nature is that within us which wants us to be our own savior and lord.

... it rejects the free gift of Christ's righteousness and salvation, and continues to seek its own. Therefore, the sin underneath all sins—the motive for our disobedience—is always a lack of trust in God's grace and goodness, and a desire to protect and guard our own lives through self-salvation."

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

**Galatians 5:14**



## QUESTIONS

- How does love fulfil the law?
- How can our religious activities get in the way of fulfilling the law of love?
- What does it mean to walk in the spirit?
- Why do we continue to wrestle with sin throughout our lives? How can we not get discouraged with this ongoing struggle with sin?
- How does walking in the spirit help us to combat the negative fruits of the flesh that Paul lists in v. 19-21

**NOW THE WORKS OF THE FLESH ARE MANIFEST, WHICH ARE THESE; ADULTERY, FORNICATION, UNCLEANNES, LASCIVIOUSNESS, IDOLATRY, WITCHCRAFT, HATRED, VARIANCE, EMULATIONS, WRATH, STRIFE, SEDITIONS, HERESIES, 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. (V. 19-21)**

There are broadly several categories here: 1) sexual immorality; 2) occultic or false worship practices; 3) destructive attitudes; and 4) substance abuse.

The word translated as "do such things" in the KJV is referring to a pattern or practice of wickedness. Other translations translate it as "practice such things" or "live like this."

Paul is not saying that those who are led by the spirit will be completely free of things like "hatred" or "wrath" during our lives. However, these things will not characterize our pattern or practice of life. "Paul is not looking to undermine Christian assurance here; but he is aiming to banish complacency." (Timothy Keller)

Tim Keller has an astute observation about this list that I would have otherwise missed, that "some of the sins are characteristic of religious people (selfishness, envy, jealousy, factions), while others are more characteristic of non-religious people (immorality, drunkenness)." Galatians for You. Paul is therefore not suggesting that the remedy is simply more self-discipline and religiosity. The remedy to these negative attributes is not doing more religious things, but being led instead by the Holy Spirit himself.

# FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT GAL 5:22-6:2

**BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE: AGAINST SUCH THERE IS NO LAW. (V. 22-23)**

Paul's emphasis is on how these Christlike attributes will be the fruit of the spirit in us. If we are living in the spirit, then he will be producing these divine attributes within us just like a seed will gradually and invariably produce fruit. We will be refined over time and conformed to the image of Christ.

All of these fruits come not through our own efforts but through the spirit. Renowned pastor Charles Spurgeon explained "Every growth of spiritual life, from the first tender shoot until now, has been the work of the Holy Spirit.... The only way to more life is the Holy Spirit. You will not even know that you want more unless He works in you to desire it.... "

These verses are sometimes used by Latter-day Saints to refer to what we feel when the spirit testifies to us of truth. In context that isn't what Paul is teaching here.

**AND THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH WITH THE AFFECTIONS AND LUSTS.**

This is a powerful verse. When we become Christ's we put our flesh to death and with it we crucify our lusts and evil desires. These lusts and evil desires do not go away altogether as Paul himself has explained in this very chapter. However, we are able to live a new and spirit-filled life free from our bondage to these things.

Crucifying the flesh implies a deeper change than just adjusting our behaviors. It is "about strangling sin at the motivational level, rather than simply setting ourselves against sin at the behavioral level .... We have to ask ourselves not just what we do wrong, but why we do it wrong." (Timothy Keller)

**IF WE LIVE IN THE SPIRIT, LET US ALSO WALK IN THE SPIRIT.**

Some other translations translate walk in the spirit as "keep in step with the Spirit" and I like that reading.

Christians who have the spirit of God in them have a sure guide to living a Christlike life and to producing fruit. We need to "keep in step with the Spirit" by closely following his spiritual instructions and directions for our life. The spirit will guide us to the false idols, behaviors and beliefs that we need to abandon. He will direct us to the things that we need to fill our lives with. We can trust him as our ultimate guide to sanctification. As we do so, "we will find that fruit growing, changing us more and more into the people we long to be, and God desires us to be." Keller, Galatians for You.

**LET US NOT BE DESIROUS OF VAIN GLORY, PROVOKING ONE ANOTHER, ENVYING ONE ANOTHER.**

Vain Glory is a bit of an archaic term. Some more modern translations translate this as being "conceited" or "boastful."

We should not be puffed up and think ourselves better than fellow Christians. This kind of boasting only comes about when we lose sight of the Gospel message and the fact that we are all sinners in desperate need of a Savior. Competition, pride, and envying are the natural consequence of following the Judaizers' works centered message. On the other hand, if we live in the Christian freedom that grace provides us, then we will not be conceited or boastful and will not feel as much need to envy or compare ourselves with others.



## QUESTIONS

- How does salvation by grace come before the fruits of the spirit?
- How are the fruits of the spirit produced in us?
- What does it mean to walk in the spirit?
- How does pride interfere with walking in the spirit?
- How can we crucify the flesh?
- What is the Law of Christ that Paul describes? Is it difference than what you expected?

**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.**

When we see faults in others, we are quick to want to correct them. But if we are not careful correcting others can make us feel good about ourselves and lead us to feel complacent about our own sins.

**BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS, AND SO FULFIL THE LAW OF CHRIST.**

In John 13:34 Christ gives his disciples a "new commandment" focused on love: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." He reiterates the same commandment in John 15:12 "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

These commandments sum up the "law of Christ" that Paul refers to here.

Christians live free from the obligations of the "law of Moses" with all of its ceremonial and ritual requirements. They are free for instance from dietary prohibitions. No foods or drinks are considered unclean to the believer. The Judaizers wanted to subject the Galatian Saints to these lesser laws.

Paul instead urges the Saints in Galatia to live up to the higher "law of Christ" that they are now able to follow in spirit and in truth.



# BE NOT WEARY IN WELL DOING GAL 6:3-10

**"FOR IF A MAN THINK HIMSELF TO BE SOMETHING, WHEN HE IS NOTHING, HE DECEIVETH HIMSELF." (V.3)**

We must be extremely cautious to not think too highly about ourselves. If we think of ourselves as particularly spiritual or righteous, then we are going to deceive ourselves and be led to pride.

**BUT LET EVERY MAN PROVE HIS OWN WORK, AND THEN SHALL HE HAVE REJOICING IN HIMSELF ALONE, AND NOT IN ANOTHER. (V.4).**

Paul is recommending that rather than being concerned with the spiritual status of others we focus on our own selves. If we do this, we will be able to rejoice in our own spiritual growth and progress rather than focusing on others to the neglect of ourselves.

Paul's instructions here reminds me of the Savior's instructions in the Sermon on the Mount that we should not focus on the mote that is in our brothers eye when we have a beam in our own eye. We have a natural tendency to call out the sins we see in others but to ignore our own sins that may be far larger and more disruptive. We tend to focus on sins that are different from the way that we sin or that are more overt and splashy. Meanwhile we give a pass on the onward sins of the heart that lead to a lot of devastation and destruction.

**"FOR EVERY MAN SHALL BEAR HIS OWN BURDEN." (V.5)**

At first glance, the instruction that every man "shall bear his own burden" may seem to conflict with the instruction to "bear ye one another's burden." But there is a difference between helping to lift burdens and being a spiritual busybody that is concerned more with whether someone else is sinning than with one's own spiritual state. (Ronald Fung)

**LET HIM THAT IS TAUGHT IN THE WORD COMMUNICATE UNTO HIM THAT TEACHETH IN ALL GOOD THINGS. (V. 6)**

The KJV here is ambiguous or unclear. Most scholars and more modern translations see this as an instruction from Paul that those who are called to be teachers of the Gospel should be compensated for their labors by those who are taught the Gospel. See e.g., "Let the one who is taught the word share all his good things with the teacher. (CSB). The term that is translated as "communicate" in KJV elsewhere describes generous giving (Rom 12:13, Phil 4:15)

**BE NOT DECEIVED; GOD IS NOT MOCKED: FOR WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWETH, THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP 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." (V. 7-8)**

Paul is concerned that those hearing him will misunderstand his instructions and think that they need not live in a sacrificial and Christ centered fashion. But God is not mocked. If we claim to follow Christ, but live a stingy and wicked life, then we have not truly been transformed by the grace of Christ.

We can look to the fruit that we are producing to reveal what we are sowing. If we are sowing earthy and fleshy seeds, then the fruit that we will produce will be corrupt and sinful. On the other hand, if we are planting spiritual seeds then we will produce spiritual fruit and ultimately reap life everlasting.



## QUESTIONS

- How can focusing on the flaws of others detract from our own spiritual growth?
- How can we be confident that we will reap spiritual fruits?
- How can we avoid growing weary in well doing?
- How can we find rest in Christ as we continue to labor?
- What changes have these verses inspired you to make in your life today?

**AND LET US NOT BE WEARY IN WELL DOING: FOR IN DUE SEASON WE SHALL REAP, IF WE FAINT NOT.**

I have always loved Paul's invitation to "not be weary in well doing."

It can be easy to get burned out and to "faint."

Ultimately understanding the message of grace that Paul lays out in Galatians provides us with confidence and assurance that allows us to keep doing good without becoming weary.

If we are sowing in a state of anxiety over whether we have planted enough or done enough to reap a reward, then we are going to burn ourselves out with anxiety or fear. That is the mentality that we have when we are under the law and must rely on the fruits of our own righteousness to secure salvation.

On the other hand, if we are under grace, then we can have confidence that we will ultimately reap a spiritual reward because it is the spirit of God within us that is active and producing fruit. We do not need to be fearful or anxious about whether we are doing enough.

**AS WE HAVE THEREFORE OPPORTUNITY, LET US DO GOOD UNTO ALL MEN, ESPECIALLY UNTO THEM WHO ARE OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.**

The remarkable message of Christianity is that Jesus Christ died for all mankind whether they are part of our family, tribe, religion, nation or not. We should therefore have a great desire for the well-being of all mankind. However, Christians have a special brotherhood as adopted sons and daughters of God, and therefore are also going to have a special concern for each other.

# THE GRACE OF OUR LORD GAL 6:11-18

**SEE WITH WHAT LARGE LETTERS I AM WRITING TO YOU IN MY OWN HAND.**

This is better translated as “See with what large letters I am writing to you in my own hand.” It is unlikely that Paul wrote the whole letter to the Galatians in his own handwriting as the KJV seems to suggest. The common practice in the ancient world was for letters to be written by the hand of a scribe, but for the author to add some words or a signature in his or her own handwriting towards the end of the letter to authenticate the letter. Paul employs this in several of his letters (1 Cor 16:21; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17; Philemon 19). But this postscript in Galatians is Paul’s most extensive which illustrates his personal and pastoral care and concern for those that he has written to.

**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.**

Paul returns one more time to condemn the Judaizers and to urge the Galatians to follow the Gospel of Christ and live under Christ’s grace.

The Judaizers advocated for circumcision is order to make a “fair shew” or a “good show” in more modern translations. They want the Galatians in other words to go through the motions and appear to be following the law of Moses.

Paul suggests that the Judaizers also had a motive of avoiding persecution at the hands of the Jewish people. Christians were deemed heretical and persecuted by the Jews in part because they did not require circumcision. This was such a sensitive subject that in Acts 21 the people of Jerusalem instigate a riot based on the belief that Paul brought an uncircumcised Christian into the temple complex. Requiring all Christians to be circumcised might reduce persecution and make Christians more acceptable among the Jewish people.

But Paul is not having it. As he has already explained, if Christians are circumcised then they are no longer under grace but under the law.

**FOR NEITHER THEY THEMSELVES WHO ARE CIRCUMCISED KEEP THE LAW; BUT DESIRE TO HAVE YOU CIRCUMCISED, THAT THEY MAY GLORY IN YOUR FLESH.**

The Judaizers came and talked about the importance of keeping the law, but Paul indicts them here of being hypocrites and not themselves keeping the law. It isn’t clear whether the Judaizers were actually disobeying the requirements of the Law of Moses, or if they were keeping the law but with improper or corrupt motive. But either way, the Judaizers acted not out a sincere desire to keep the law, but so that they could glory or boast in the fact that they had persuaded the Galatians to be circumcised.

**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.**

I like Thomas Schreiner’s translation here: “But may I never boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I am crucified to the world.”

Paul’s boast and his glory is focused solely on the cross of Jesus Christ and him crucified. His only goal and desire is to point the Galatians to Christ. He does not boast in his own accomplishments or the number of people he has persuaded to follow him. All of these things have been crucified in Christ and become irrelevant. What matters is the salvation of those in Galatia and the advancement of the cause of Christ and nothing else.

## QUESTIONS

- What have you learned about Paul from this section and from the letter?
- What does grace and peace mean to you? Has your understanding changed as you’ve read this letter/guide?
- What has the Holy Spirit taught you as you’ve studied Galatians? Write down how you will act on what you have learned

**FOR IN CHRIST JESUS NEITHER CIRCUMCISION AVAILETH ANY THING, NOR UNCIRCUMCISION, BUT A NEW CREATURE.**

As Paul has already explained, circumcision itself does nothing for us either positively or negatively. But if circumcision comes to mean submission to the demands of ordinances, covenants, and rituals, then it must be rejected. For Paul, Grace is far too precious a thing to lose.

**AND AS MANY AS WALK ACCORDING TO THIS RULE, PEACE BE ON THEM, AND MERCY, AND UPON THE ISRAEL OF GOD**

Paul started his letter by invoking grace and peace and he returns to this theme in closing. Those who walk according to grace will experience peace and mercy. They will be part of the true Israel of God whether they are Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female (Gal 3:28).. On the other hand, any one who tries to walk according to the rule of works will have no part in God’s chosen covenant people. Christ has offered a new and everlasting covenant through his blood shed on the cross. All other covenants that do not depend solely on his grace cannot provide peace and mercy and cannot make us part of the Israel of God.

**FROM HENCEFORTH LET NO MAN TROUBLE ME: FOR I BEAR IN MY BODY THE MARKS OF THE LORD JESUS.**

Paul draws a powerful final contrast here. Those who are urging circumcision are urging believers to mark up their body through circumcision. But as Paul has explained, circumcision is irrelevant before God and does not point to Christ. By Contrast, Paul has been persecuted and beaten in the name of Christ and his wounds point to the suffering and death of Jesus Christ.

**BRETHREN, THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOUR SPIRIT. AMEN.**

Paul calls the Galatians his brothers. This must have been reassuring after Paul’s sharp letter. He still considers them brothers in Christ and part of God’s family.

Above all, Paul’s prayer is that the grace of Jesus Christ be with his readers. That prayer uttered nearly 2,000 years ago extends to us as well. Paul’s promise of grace, mercy, and peace can be others if we accept the Gospel of Christ.



# CONCLUSION AND WORKS CITED

## MY PRAYER IN CONCLUSION

I hope that something that you have read in my commentary or more importantly in Paul's words has stirred up within you a desire to embrace the grace that Christ offers. If you have felt the Holy Spirit convicting you that you have focused too much on your own works and righteousness and not enough on the grace and mercy of Christ, then I urge you to not ignore those feelings but to allow them to bring you to your knees in submission. Cry out to God and tell him that you want to rely solely and fully on his grace. I promise that if you do so, your life will be changed and that you will find greater peace, assurance and rest in Christ than you have ever known. This is my prayer for you just as it would have been the Apostle Paul's deepest and most urgent wish.

## WORKS QUOTED OR REFERENCED

I hope through the quotes that I included that I have been able to introduce you to some of the men of God that I have fallen in love with while writing this commentary. I am providing a thorough list of all of the works that I have consulted while studying Galatians. My highest recommendations have a \* next to them

Timothy Keller, Galatians for You \*

Timothy Keller, Galatians: New Freedom, New Family, <https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/galatians-new-freedom-new-family/>

R.C. Sproul - Galatians an Expository Commentary

Thomas R. Schreiner, Galatians, Zondervan Expository Commentary on the New Testament \*

Ronald Y.K. Fung The Epistle to the Galatians, New International Commentary on the New Testament

Charles H. Spurgeon, Our Urgent Need of the Holy Spirit, Sermon Delivered on Jan 7, 1877, available at <https://ccel.org/ccel/spurgeon/sermons23/sermons23.ii.html>

Kurt Harlow, Bayside Church Galatians Bible Study Session 1, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThdBDtBZpng> \*

N.T. Wright, Galatians, Commentaries for Christian Formation

Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, Martin Luther 1535, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1549/1549-h/1549-h.htm#link2HCH0004> \*

Phiip Graham Ryken, Galatians (Reformed Expository Commentary)

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John Piper, When Not to Believe an Angel, Desiring God (Feb 6, 1983), <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/when-not-to-believe-an-angel>

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Timothy George, Galatians, Christian Standard Commentary

Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians

John Chrysostom, Homily on Galatians 2

Bridgeway Christian Church, Roseville CA, Sermon Series on Galatians. Aug-Oct 2016, <https://www.bridgeway.church/sermon-archives/>