

Chapel Pulpit

Galatians

The Gospel Transforming

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Revision # 236 as of April 2, 2013
Doc: Galatians.DOCX

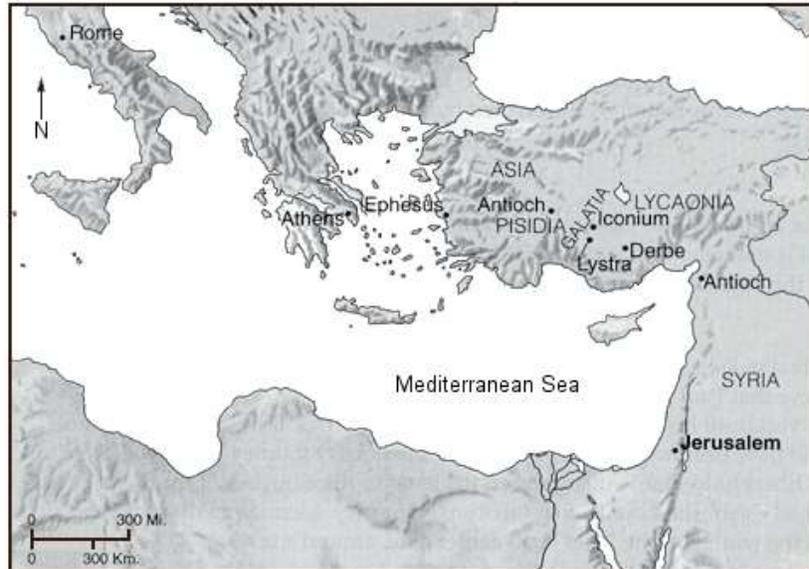
Introduction

The Gospel

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Postman Arrives

It is a late morning sometime around 50AD. A servant quietly knocks on the door of the study. It must be important to interrupt. They know that the past months have been difficult. The church has been going through a difficult struggle. Respected teachers, approved by the church at Jerusalem, have come and are helping us think through some of the contemporary theological issues. But it seems worrisome. There seems to be a low level but steady push away from what we had been taught



in the early years. I know that other churches around us here in the Phrygian region, including Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe have also had these guest conference speakers in their pulpits.

It has been helpful to us that skilled and gifted teachers can help us after our founder has moved on to new areas of ministry. We have been encouraged by the favorable response to our contributions for the poor in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1). We are very proud here in Lystra, that one of our own, Timothy, is being mentored by the Apostle Paul (Acts 20:4) and is often entrusted with significant responsibilities.

So, important mail has arrived today. Yes, a letter from Paul would be something that needs my immediate attention. So, here it is. Many churches have received these. But look, instead of a polite opening he sounds angry. This is a letter of blame. There is no praise, just hard words in a sharp tone. Let's sit down a minute, gather my thoughts and listen to what he has to say.

So shall we. From Paul, through Galatia, to us this sharp tongued book comes. It speaks with real and pointed power exposing our deadly drift into false gospels. In the wisdom of God, we are shown how failing to recognize the movement of God's redemptive history can lead us astray. It is still the same old reliance on the ways and works of the world. No matter what modern clothes old errors appear in, they are never the less still dangerous and deadly.

This morning, I would ask you to close your Bibles (terrible thought, that is) and listen to the book. Hear the Word of God. Speak, O Lord. This is what God's Word says.

The Letter Opened

*The following is the unmarked text of the letter in the English Standard Version.
Please read it all the way through in one sitting.*

Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—and all the brothers who are with me, to the churches of Galatia. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they glorified God because of me.

Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery—to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. 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. On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and

me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?

Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong. You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. What then has become of the blessing you felt? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.

For it is written,

“Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!
For the children of the desolate one will be more
than those of the one who has a husband.”

Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. But what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.” So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion is not from him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view than mine, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load.

One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

This is the gospel – say it with me as we close.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Defecting from the Gospel

Galatians 1:1-10

Russ Kennedy

Introduction We have all had times where we knew a friend or a spouse was aggravated with us. Sometimes we know what we have done that has upset them. Sometimes, not. But often we can tell. We see it in their body language. We can sense the tenseness. There is a coldness, a sort-of intense quietness, that is forceful and unmistakable. Other times, it is a growing and gathering anger with rising tones. The sense of astonished outrage at the silly or serious thing we did hurtles toward us.

Paul is like that here. There is a deep sense of an approaching storm that swells from the opening and breaks with thunderous force through the center of the epistle. The apostle is not a happy man. He is deeply disturbed. He sees a dire catastrophe about to overtake much loved ones and he is forceful in his speech. His are no meek words as the poisonous snake is about to strike. They are sharp and true, designed to cause his hearer to draw back to safety.

At times, this preacher and his preaching will sound the same way. In our own time and for people I love much, there are disturbing and dreadful dangers that lurk just outside. Here, the gospel is loved, learned and lived. But we are awash in false gospels. If we understand the dire consequences of failing to hold the line in the gospel, then we will be passionate about these things as well. I have determined to take Galatians as a spotlight and shine it on the creeping and crawling roaches fouling God's people with the false gospels of this day.

His Assertion of Authority for the Gospel (v.1-2)

The epistle opens with an abrupt and attention getting greeting. It can hardly be called a greeting. His righteous indignation oozes from the first sentence. He is an apostle, not by humans standing but by Divine sending.

In the Denial of Human Standing

He is not sent from a merely human agency. His being an apostle was not commissioned through man. He is not carrying around a certificate that shows a church or group setting him aside and authorizing him as an apostle. The gospel he preaches is not the consensus of a group who appointed him and which can be challenged or overturned.

He is not sent through a merely human agency. His being an apostle is not certified through man. He is not accountable to some human agency.¹ He is responsible to be faithful to the Scriptures (the Old Testament) and to the revelation he has received. But his credentials in the gospel and the content of his gospel are Divinely given.

In the Declaration of Divine Sending

So, His apostleship is through the Triune God. Challenging Paul's credentials is challenging God's commissioning. He is sent by the Father and Son. The Father and Son are one in authorizing His ministry. There can be no undermining the ministry by dividing the Godhead. The gospel message and messengers are Triune.

His apostleship centers on the resurrected Christ. This is the only direct mention of the resurrection of Christ in the epistle. It emphasizes the importance of that event to Paul's apostleship, for he was not called during the earthly ministry of the Lord but by the resurrected Christ. [*Bible Knowledge Commentary*]. Further, it locates the source of his ministry and message in the new creation. His commission from God was given from heaven through the resurrected Christ. Only the true apostles can say this. Those challenging him cannot say this.

The implication here for them and for us is that the messenger and the message are genuine. He faced the constant insinuations and accusations designed to undermine his ministry. We do to. But it tends to come through teaching and through commentaries that do not accept the authorship or final authority of the epistle itself. Paul's assertions here are not just to counter the particular opponents he faced in his day, but those who would undercut the gospel today by eroding our confidence the apostolic deposit of truth, the Scriptures.

His Summation of the Essence of the Gospel (v.3-5)

Summaries are great things. Prize brevity; speak clearly, say things richly. That is what we have here where Paul stresses the self-sacrifice of Christ, a theme that anticipates several powerful passages (*e.g.* 2:20–21). He also rings the note of deliverance, which is given a strong eschatological flavor. There is a great contrast between the *present evil age* and the new coming age as the fulfillment of God's promises. God's will is behind these events. So, the greatness of Christ's work leads to a doxology, something absent from the opening of every other letter. [*New Bible Commentary, adapted*]². But let's pause to expand and explain.

Its Divine Source

Divine favor giving enabling power and bringing relational peace centers salvation on God.

It is His free favor towards us in grace. Grace is the center piece of the gospel. God saves His people as an act of His free favor. He saves His people by giving them the desire and the ability to believe and repent, to pursue Him in Christ all without detracting from His glory.

It is His settling His own wrath and reversing our enmity so that we, the sinner and the Sovereign may be at peace. God's wrath is assuaged as it is poured out on the Substitute. Our hatred and rebellion of God is turned so that we are reconciled, we are brought back to God.

A modern shift in the gospel is subtle and dangerous. It makes salvation primarily a wholeness of people, spiritual healing and health. It shifts from our terrible rebellion against God, our horrific sins against Him and His dreadful anger against us with the ghastly punishment awaiting the unrepentant. It shifts weight from our being the supplicant and makes God the petitioner. So we need a restoration of God to the center whose grace sovereignly draws us unto Himself and whose peace welcomes those so brought near by the cross.

Its Voluntary Sacrifice

One of the wonders of the gospel is Jesus' voluntary giving of Himself as the sacrifice. He was not dragged to the cross against His will. He gave Himself to the cross. He placed Himself under the Father's will and in front of the Father's wrath. He was a substitute. His death was the acceptable sacrifice.

The sacrifice of Jesus is for sins. It is payment for our sin. It is bearing the punishment due our sin. It is washing away the stain and guilt of our sin. The cross does not show the worth of man. The cross is a public demonstration of the depravity of man, both in its necessity and in its execution. A life was given and a death experienced so that we who were dead might now have life. And in having life, our sins are forgiven. Our sins are cleansed. Our sins have no present power over us.

Its Delivering Strategy

Jesus' sacrifice for sins, the work of the cross delivers us from this present evil world. In this short phrase, Paul anticipates so much of what he will teach in chapters 2-4. In other words, there is an actual, present affect of the cross for us in this age. We often think of the phrase "this world" as primarily referring to a geographical location in the cosmos as though the author said, "this earth." This mistake then confuses and minimizes what Paul is getting at.

The world here is the realm or the sphere of sin. It is where sin dominates and controls. It is the place where sin's power ruthlessly ruled. Paul distinctly thinks of this as wrapped up in this fallen order. But we have been transferred from it into the realm where God's Son rules, the Kingdom of God.

This grand salvation strategy also has a forward, not yet aspect. Thus believing the gospel sets your hope on heaven where Christ is and forward to the new heavens and new earth wherein righteousness dwells. The gospel teaches us a present deliverance from the power of sin by our transition to a new realm, the new creation. The gospel teaches us a future deliverance from the presence of sin by our arrival in the presence of God and the making of all things new.

Its Decisive Shaping

What has unfolded in redemptive history has been according to the determinative will of God. God is working out the details of His eternal plan within time and space. This is not just pointing to a purpose for the cross. It surely includes that, and much more. The flow of history from creation, through the fall, patriarchs, Israel and to Jesus is all decisively determined by God so that His purposes will be fulfilled. This establishes the foundation for later arguing that Old Testament history, the events and their order, are a pattern for our experience.

Its Doxological Scope

All things are for the glory of God. This what our Bible says. This is what our confession says. And with it we formally agree. But when it comes to the practical reality of what most actually think the gospel is about, they are glory challenged. Most think that salvation makes much of them; that it shows their worth and value and importance, their central place in the universe. Nearly everything you hear on religious media and in religious books and pulpits will leave you with this distinct impression if not outright affirmation.

But it is not so. The aim of the gospel is ultimately the glory of God.

This is an ought – this is what the gospel ought to do. So it shapes the message and the methods. Any way of saying the gospel and any context for the giving of the gospel that lowers the cross and elevates man is already missing the mark. It functions as a standard – this one way to know are we hearing the gospel in all its truth.

This is a surety – this is what the gospel will do. The true gospel will in the present and in future, bring glory to God. His weightiness, brightness and largeness is clearly seen when the gospel is taught, received, believed and lived. So, make no mistake – God will be glorified in the gospel.

So, we have an important question: is the way you think of the gospel full of glory? How can we know when it is not?

When we cannot speak it clearly. What you do not know you cannot glorify God with. What you cannot write or say clearly you do not understand. Would you be able to write it out this morning? Can you articulate the gospel in a way that is consistent with the Bible?

When we cannot speak it confidently. Many of you hesitate in evangelism because you are afraid you will not communicate it correctly. So, if you cannot say the gospel to someone else clearly enough for them to be saved, how is then that you can believe yourself for your own salvation?

When we do not live it consistently. Is the gospel something that got you into heaven but hasn't gotten you out of the world? Do you, having been saved by the gospel now try to live by the flesh and the world? Has your salvation saved you from sin?

So, this is the gospel. If we believe it this way, then, what follows will not shock us unless we find ourselves in their shoes.

His Indignation over their Abandoning the Gospel (v. 6-9)

This is the place in a normal letter where Paul usually sounds of a note of thanksgiving and commendation. He usually sets the tone of his letter in his thanksgiving and begins to point to the central theme of the epistle. Here, there is neither thanksgiving nor commendation. It certainly sets the tone and points to the central problem; but his agitation and astonishment are visible and vocal.

Its Surprising Consequence (v.6a)

What they are believing and doing is shocking. They are deserting Christ so soon after professing Him. The Lord had summoned them to salvation, had called them in the realm of grace. In Christ's grace alone is their salvation, both at conversion and throughout their transformation. But having been drawn to Christ, now they are actively moving away from Him. This is couched in terms of *a desertion*. They are committing high treason by turning their backs on their gracious King, their glorious groom.

Its Turning Course (v.6b)

How are they doing this? They are embracing a different gospel. Now this is qualified as not being a true gospel. It is another of a different kind. It is a false gospel. It is a flirtatious gospel. It is alluring them away from their beloved.

This is shocking to Paul. But frankly, to us, this is shocking in a different way. We simply do not see changing the gospel as a desertion of Christ. Pagan Christendom is filled with false gospels. Some are grace-plus; that is, they add works or Law or baptism or Popery or Mariolatry or *whatever* to the gospel. Others are gospel-minus; that is, they dilute the call of the gospel to holiness and substitute false promises in the gospel. When you embrace any of these as being true, you leave Christ. This is what the Bible says. Paul says that those who go back to Judaism or who add the Law to saving or transforming grace are not merely mistaken. They are committing high treason. They are deserting Christ. Movement towards error is movement away from Jesus.

Its Troubling Cause (v.7)

How does this happen? There are those who want to the gospel. This is a fascinating statement that I want to look at closely.

First, Paul sees what is happening as causing trouble. He is deeply disturbed about this. He underscores it in the top and tail. Look at Galatians 6:17, "From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus." So those who want to distort the gospel are causing the churches and the apostle trouble. The word often means to persecute, to trouble with abuse and affliction. In other words, the false teachers bringing the false gospel are actually abusing, troubling, persecuting God's people. This is no less true today. Great has been the trouble introduced into the church by those who distort the gospel. Even this morning, some of you may be uncomfortable at the stridency of my tone here. I believe I am reflecting Paul's tone.

Second, Paul points to their motivations. They desire to distort the gospel. Now they may not be conscious of this desire. Many people go through life oblivious

to their motivations. However, people largely function oriented by their desires. The opponents to Paul's gospel were often overt in their desire to enhance, improve, enlarge or give further essential truths necessary for a full gospel. But what they offered was a distortion. What they believed was wrong. Because they believed it, they desired others to believe as well. Those who received their distortions of the gospel deserted Jesus. I am sure no one intended to leave Jesus through enhancements to the gospel. Nevertheless, that was consequence for them.

Its Damning Condemnation

(v.8-9)

The betrayal is condemned in both its teachers and in its hearers. Now the thunderclap falls. The distant and growing rumble of the tornado of Paul's words now roars through their souls. Let those who preach a gospel different from what Paul taught and what they received, let them be accursed. Let them be, anathema. It is not too strong to say, let them be damned. Because, they are!

Why is this repeated? It is stated twice both for emphasis and for focus. This is what God thinks about those who trouble the church, whose distortions of the gospel cause people to desert Christ and embrace error. They are an anathema. A passion for the purity of the gospel and the glory of Christ fuels the emotions in this denunciation. While we must be careful of being strident over our own agendas and thoughts, strong words over soul damning errors is often warranted.

But notice the shift in focus. First, he places himself under the same stricture. If he, Paul, moves away from the gospel that they were taught, he is accursed. If an angel appears and preaches another gospel, he is accursed. Understand this, the gospel of the grace of God by faith alone in the work of Christ alone as taught in the whole Bible alone is the gospel. Second, if anyone teaches a gospel contrary from the one which they received and thus, by which they were saved, they are accursed. They are to be anathemized by the church and are accursed before God.

His Application of his Service in the Gospel

(v.10)

Briefly, because it is such an important implication from what he has said and because it closes what was opened in verse 1, consider how what he has said impacts his motives and his methods.

In the Examination of His Motives

He answers a charge often laid to his account. His opponents said, "He has moved away from Judaism in his gospel of grace because he wants to please the Gentiles." In other words, he is accused of altering the message in order to please a target audience. But that is not his motive at all. While ministry may adapt to a culture, the message must never. He is not interested in having anyone's approval. He is not preaching or persuading according to man, but according to God. The ambiguity here I think is intentional. He knows that one's motives will shape one's message. He is intentional in seeking God's approval. After all, would someone merely trying to please the Galatian churches (who supported him financially!) hurl such denunciations at them?

In the Evaluation of His Ministry

Here is the crux of the matter. One cannot be a man pleaser and be Christ's servant. As one who is sent from God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ, he must at all points please God. He is God's servant. It is God's approval he must have. His ministry is served in God's kingdom. He is the servant of Christ.

The battle line is being drawn in the sand. People who crave man's approval will compromise the gospel. They will water down its call and distort its message so that people will accept it. The first half of the book of Galatians is going to narrate how this can happen to even the most surprising of people. But he, Paul, will not stoop to be a people pleaser. He will seek to be the servant of Christ and to serve in the gospel with such motives and methods that keep the message pure and glorify God.

Conclusion So, we must not allow any distortion of the gospel to go unopposed. Anyone teaching what is contrary to the Biblical, Pauline gospel is to be identified, named, called out and rebuked. It does not matter who it is. We must do so, not because we are trying to defend our own version of a creed, but because the Biblical gospel is clear and it is necessary. *When the gospel is corrupted, the way of salvation becomes confused and people are in danger of being condemned.* [*The Bible Knowledge Commentary, adapted*]³.

Believing error will send souls to hell. If you do not believe the gospel, or you believe a false gospel, you will go to hell.

This is the gospel Christ gave, Paul preached, was recorded in Scripture, we received and now we preach. Say it with me:



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

So, I beg you in Christ's stead, to turn to Christ in the gospel. Believe in Him. Repent of your sins and your rebellion. Trust in the cross and the resurrection, in Christ's work alone. Rest in His work, not yours. Do not trust in past professions. Do not trust in past decisions. Do not trust in the good you have done and are doing. Do not trust in your religious works or affections. Close with Christ today, now. Pray to Him. Plead with Him. Petition Him to save you and to receive you through Christ alone.

Notes

¹ This is not to say that other office bearers are not accountable to human review. Luke recognized the value of the Berean's examining what Paul was teaching against the Scripture. Everyone, including Paul, is under the Word of God.

² D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*, Rev. Ed. of: *The New Bible Commentary*. 3rd Ed. / Edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

³ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:591.

Confronting with the Gospel

Galatians 1:11-2:21

Introduction Do you believe people will distort history in order to achieve their own ends? Politicians are amazingly adept at this, either about their own records, or even more famously, about the records of their opponents. The upcoming presidential primaries and elections (Nov, 2008) promise to be full of amusing and awful distortions of fact and history for the sake of winning. While this is almost expected in politics, we are now finding that we cannot trust scientists or historians. The facts of research are often distorted to serve ones' theory.

Global warming is an interesting distortion aimed to serve an agenda. The alarm over the supposed increase in the average temperature of the earth has been exposed on many fronts as having an environmental and political agenda. The facts of science simply do not hold up. Creighton has written two, science-myth busting novels which he says are "fiction, except where they are true."

It is also fascinating to watch the history of the Muslim world being rewritten to tame down and tone down a violent and vicious religion. It has been a religious culture that has produced amazing mathematics and awful murders. But you would hardly know that from listening to the peaceful palaver passing for insightful analysis.

One of the challenges for leadership is learning to disagree with integrity. What I have often seen is a failure to accurately represent those who think differently. This is dishonest and disabling of real interaction toward resolution. Our political leadership needs to think about this. We need to think about this in areas where we have honest differences of opinion. For example, I believe the use of the debate technique of a straw man must be shunned by Christians. To intentionally misrepresent your opponent in order to cause him to defend what he does not actually believe is wrong.

So Paul is setting the record straight. He has been misrepresented and lied about. So here we are with real story of confronting with the gospel.

His Responsibility for the Gospel Message (1:11-24)

His Response to the Accusations (v.11-12)

Paul's assertions here are a response to an accusation made against him. The false teachers, the Judaizers, were saying that what Paul taught was man-made. It was not according to the traditional reading of the Old Testament. He had changed what the Bible taught in order to make it easier for Gentiles to be saved.

Paul responds that the gospel he preaches is not a human gospel. It is neither according to human standards nor according to human giving. What he teaches he has received by direct revelation from Christ.

It is not of man – not compiled by human authority, reasoning, logic (v.1, 11).

It is not from man – was communicated to Paul by Christ alone (v.1, 12).

His Reception of the Gospel

(v.13-17)

A pack of wolves are trailing along behind Paul. Everywhere he went and established a church with Gentile converts, membership and ministry, these wool suited hounds have come in behind to defame the minister and distort the message of the gospel. They have been emboldened by minor successes and are now seeking to win converts to their sect all through out Galatia. Apparently, they are attacking Paul by inventing stories and interpreting facts wrongly. They have accused him of secret trips, hidden agendas and private aspirations to covertly move the center of the church from Jerusalem to Antioch.

In order to counter the false claims and accusations made by his opponents, he sets the facts straight. At the center of this narrative of his conversion is the insistence that he received the gospel directly from Christ. Further, due to the simple facts of history, he could not possibly have received the gospel he preached from anyone at Jerusalem.

His testimony begins with his persecution of the church. He had obtained authority to find, prosecute and kill anyone who taught the gospel of Jesus Christ. He did so as a result of his growth and standing in Judaism and as a Jewish leader. Note what he is saying. His zeal for the rabbinical traditions, the Pharisees interpretation of the Old Testament, his passion for a legalistic, Mosaic righteousness motivated a hatred for the true gospel. He has effectively just indicted his opponents. He persecuted the church physically; they are persecuting the church doctrinally. They are doing so for the same reasons.

He relates how God, in sovereign grace and mercy, had chosen him, called him, saved him and sent him to preach. He, that former most righteous of Pharisees, was to now preach the gospel of salvation among the Gentiles. His conversion and assurance came through a disclosure of Christ in Him. He, by faith, had Christ disclosed to him

He does not then consult with anyone around him nor does he go up to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles there. Instead, he went alone into Arabia and returned to Damascus. Other texts tell us that during this period, he received by revelation the truths about Christ and the church that shaped his apostolic interpretation of the Old Testament that we read in the epistles.

So, he was terribly wicked as a righteous Jew. God had saved and sent him. What he preached was directly from God and authoritatively for the church.

His Relationship with the Jerusalem Church (1:18-2:10)

Now he begins to clarify his relationship with the Jerusalem church. This is extraordinary in that it gives the time between events that appear at first glance from the book of Acts to be close together. We are often in a hurry to move into leadership. Listen, Paul, sent to preach the gospel, waited for around 11 years until called to Antioch. That does not mean he was not ministering; but it is extraordinary patience in waiting for God's providence to move him from local into global ministry.

His Call on Peter (v.18-24)

Paul relates his visit to the church in Jerusalem three years after his conversion (v.18-19). He is deeply concerned that people understand that he has no personal animus against Peter. His defense of the gospel is not intended to be an attack on the church at Jerusalem nor on its leadership. He spent two weeks visiting with Peter. He does not remember seeing any of the other apostles except for James, the Lord's brother. This assertion must be contrary to what his opponents are saying. Look at this exclamation in verse 20, "I am not lying..." Others must have accused him of misrepresenting what he had done.

In spite of visiting with the apostles there, he still was largely unknown in the churches in Judea. They had heard of him, as you can well imagine. Yet they came to not only accept him but to glorify God because of him (v.22-24). Imagine if Osama Bin-Laden suddenly emerged and began meeting with trusted, prominent Reformed Christian leaders and professed Christ among them, asking to be baptized as a Christian. Such an announcement would be met with certain skepticism. But suppose he met with the Elders here and the Fellowship of Reformed Evangelicals and it was clear from his testimony that he was converted and following Christ. Then, there would be amazing joy and great glorifying of God.

His Concerns with the Leadership (2:1-3)

Fourteen years later, Paul goes up to Jerusalem accompanied by Barnabas and Titus. He is bringing a Jewish and a Gentile ministry partner. He went because God had told him directly to go. In a private meeting with the church's leadership, he laid out the gospel as he preached it (v.1-2).

Now, the question is: did Paul do this in order to have his teaching approved by the church at Jerusalem? I do not believe so. Paul goes up to Jerusalem to confront the leadership with the problems of legalism there. His concern is not to have them approve what he taught. He is confronting them about their own theological drift.

Where do I get this? The phrase, "To make sure that I was not running or had run, in vain," Paul uses this phrase here in Galatians (4:11) and in 1 Thessalonians (3:5) when he is concerned about other's failures. He sees himself as laboring in vain when people begin to stray in doctrine or in life. That he and the apostles were on the same page is evidenced by the fact that no one there compelled Titus, an uncircumcised Greek, to be circumcised (v.3). Now we have the first mention of the core issue. Having come to Christ for salvation, does a Christian return to Moses for transformation or sanctification⁴? We will be following the

issue through the book. But even at this point, it is evident that since we have been sanctified at our conversion, since we have been delivered from this present evil age, then we do not need and should not require the works of the Law. *Gentiles neither need to be circumcised nor to become Jews because of the Law in order to be saved or in order to grow in Christ.*

His Confrontation with the False Brothers (v.4-6)

However, sitting among the leadership of the church, were those of the Judaizers sect. These were false brothers, unbelieving men who were in the church and were slipped into the meeting in order to see what Paul was teaching and to oppose it. Their efforts were underhanded and sneaky. They did not act with integrity. They did not come with clear, reasoned honesty to wrestle with the issue at hand. Their tactics then were no different than what Paul faced at Galatia and what we face today. It is quite evident that even in many evangelical churches there are those who act as these did and teach what they taught.

But Paul is not finished. They were there to spy out the glorious freedom we have in the New Covenant and to bring professing Christians back into bondage or slavery under the Old Covenant. So Paul would not submit to them. They may have been influential and respected in the church, but Paul was not going to yield to them. The gospel granted grace to Jew and Gentile alike. He was not going to allow anyone to be brought back into the old realm again. They were not going to be allowed to add anything to the gospel he taught (v.4-5).

Notice how he characterizes them. They slip in to spy out. They enslave. They demanded submission from Paul. But Paul was fighting to maintain the integrity of the gospel. And he still is. He is certainly saying that these people have little changed. They are secretive and underhanded. They use influence and position to try to force others to yield to them (v.6). They are seeking to enslave people to the Old Covenant and Judaism. And he will not yield to them, not ever, not at all. Neither will we. We will hold fast to the gospel. We will preach and practice the saving grace of God which has delivered from our sins and this evil realm. We will see the Old Covenant fulfilled in Christ. We will live in the newness of the new. We will resist all attempts to take us back to Moses.

His Confirmation by the Apostolic Leadership (v. 7-10)

Finally, the false teachers and their error were exposed. Their phony attempts at unity which were actually dividing the church were over turned. The apostles affirmed the gospel that Paul had taught. This would be the watershed council. From here, no one may preach or practice a gospel contrary the whole of Paul's teaching. They saw the saving and enabling grace that God had given Paul and Barnabas and Titus. They partnered together with them in the gospel.

Evidently, the Judaizers were attempting to divide Paul and Peter. They were saying that they were teaching different gospels. This was not so. Peter had received a direct vision sending him to preach the gospel to a Gentile, Cornelius. Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles. However, there was not and is not a difference in the gospel. There is no Petrine gospel and there is no Pauline gospel. There is no Jewish gospel and there is no Gentile gospel. There is simply the gospel. Now, God's grace primarily enabled Peter to take the gospel to the Jews.

Paul was primarily enabled to take the gospel to the Gentiles. But it was the same message through the same method. The difference was the primary ministry target. Peter would go to the Jews and Paul to the Gentiles. And all would remember to preach the gospel to the poor, something already dear to Paul's heart.

So, the council concluded. There is only one gospel. It is for all people. It brings us into the freedom of grace and delivers us from the slavery to Law. This is what Paul taught. This is what the Bible records. This is what we believe and teach. Now, many labels down through history have been slapped on people who teach that we are neither justified nor sanctified (transformed) by the Law. What we teach is sometimes labeled Antinomianism. This charge is commonly lobbed at us from deep in the Reformed camp. I attended a conference in 1994 where one prominent pastor and theologian, expounding on the Sermon on the Mount, no less, said; "Moses bring us to Christ for salvation. Christ takes us to Moses for sanctification." This is heresy. This is exactly the error, if applied consistently in daily living, that the circumcision party in Jerusalem taught. We are of the grace group! We believe the gospel – we will live in the freedom of the New Covenant. We will live holy lives under grace.

His Rebuke of the Apostle Peter

(2:11-21)

But the story does not end there. One must not only argue for being justified by grace, but one must live out the gospel personally, practically and publicly. Sadly, Peter did not. Unhappily, Paul had to confront him and rebuke him.

Its Need because of Peter's Actions

(v.11-13)

It was a great scene at the church in Antioch. Hundreds had come to know the Lord, most of them Gentiles. Barnabas was helping to organize the church and had brought Paul in as to teach. The church was growing and flourishing. Peter came to visit the church. Though not recorded by Luke, Paul here narrates it for us. They gathered for the potluck dinner they called the agape feast where the Lord's Table was normally served. Peter joined right in, fellowshiping with all the believers. It was great to see the cross-cultural, cross-ethnic fellowship.

But then, at another service and dinner, other guests came to join. They were there having been sent by James. Peter suddenly had a problem. What if they reported back to James and somehow it got out that Peter was joining in with the Gentiles, violating the ceremonial food laws. The circumcision party in Jerusalem might find out and his ministry would suffer harm. He was very concerned.

So, he withdraws from the meal and the fellowship. Others leave to see what is going on. He explains his concerns. By the time it is over, the Jews from Jerusalem and the Jews in the church at Antioch have followed Peter's example and are on their way out. Paul watches as this unfolds and then, to his dismay, even Barnabas joins in the exodus. They are, by their actions, saying that the gospel does not truly unite them into one.

Paul steps out and in front of them all, confronts Peter. Ah, the power of a well crafted and convicting question! His question is locked and loaded. The first shot exposes Peter. He has been living as though he is a Gentile. In other words, Paul is not going to let him hide what he has been doing. He has been fellowshiping

with and eating with the Gentiles. He, a Jew, has been living like a Gentile. So, everyone now knows including the men from James.

The second shot destroys his opponent's position. How can Peter, James, the circumcision party – how can anyone force the Gentiles to live like Jews? Peter is acting out of fear, not conviction. He cannot claim conscience; he has already eaten with the Gentiles. He cannot claim conviction; he was a member of, a signatory to and in agreement with the council declaring the gospel for all. So, on what ground is he now going to stand?

What brought Paul up out of his seat to confront, this most outstanding of apostles? He saw that they were not walking in step with the truth of the gospel. The word perceive indicates an insightful and incisive finding. He recognized someone being out of step with what the gospel taught and implied. For Paul, the gospel shapes our right standing and our right conduct. He does not divide them. He can distinguish them. But what one claims in justification must impact ones conduct.

Its Nature Rooted in Christ's Work

(v.14-21)

Paul then goes on to expound the gospel for the sake of those who stood around and writes his argument down for the sake of all of us who read it. I believe that verses 14-21 are the summary of sermon Paul preached to those hypocritical Jews.

Justification - Their Standing in Salvation

(v.14-16)

Paul opens with a bit of sarcasm. He says, "We all know that you and I and the rest of the Jews standing around here are not sinners like the Gentiles. However, we are sinners none the less." No one can be justified by the works of the law. Period. No one ever was saved by the works of the Law. The works of the Law are by nature something we do, not something we receive or something imputed to us. Righteousness is not transmitted or imputed by law-keeping. We all are standing on the same ground. We are justified through faith.

Now, we have all believed in order to be justified by faith and not by works. Paul is showing that saving faith consciously rejects good works, even the works of the Law, as the grounds of justification. The constant question all men ask, "What must I do to be saved?" The clear, consistent and clarion response in the Scriptures is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." Believe is the response to the "do" question. You can only have a right standing before God by believing in Jesus Christ. Nothing you can do: no works of the law, no religious duty, deep religious feelings, expressions nor even mighty works of power can save you. Have you consciously turned away from works and turned to a Person, to the Lord Jesus. What are you trusting in: a decision? Baptism? The good you've done? No, believe in Christ. This is the call.

Three times Paul repeats that no one can be justified by the works of the Law. Now this cuts in several ways. It is not possible that law works can justify

because of the nature of those works. It is not possible to be justified by law because you cannot keep it – one simple violation condemns. It is not possible to be justified by law because it demands death. In a sense, Paul is leaning over into Peter's face and into ours say, do you get this?

Crucifixion - Their Supply for Transformation (v.17-21)

Justification and transformation are interwoven (v.17-18). Those who are justified by faith in Christ must not return to sin. If we abandon Jewish observances and law, is Christ then serving the cause of sin? If we revel and rejoice in our justification in such a way that we permit sin, have we then made Christ the servant of sin? May we live sinful lives since we have been justified? No certainly not! Must we have law in order to live holy lives? No. Certainly not! So, what is the gospel's provision for justification and transformation?

It is the cross. It is the sacrificial work of Christ in his death and resurrection. Here, it is focusing on the provision wrought by his crucifixion.

In a short pity statement, Paul says the following. God demanded death for violating His commands. In the law God made that clear. Under the sentence of the Law, Jesus died. When He died, He satisfied the demands of the Law. Therefore, through the Law, by faith in Christ, we have died to the Law. Now, don't think of death as a cessation, or an ending. Think of it as a separation from. The Law goes on, as we will find out. But through the crucifixion of Christ, I have been separated from the realm where the Law is in force (v.19). Furthermore, I have now been brought to life so that I might live in the realm where grace is in force. Separated from the Law by the death of Christ I am now alive to live for Him. The trajectory of transformation is not under law but towards Christ. This same argument is expanded and explained more fully in Romans 6-8.

Since we have died to the Law and are now alive in Christ, we must renounce law righteousness and live unto Christ (v.20). The life we now have in union with Christ is His own life imparted to us and residing in us through the Spirit. We have been united to Christ so that we are in Him and He in us (John 17:23). So, the life we now live in the flesh, this life we continue to live here and now, we live *by faith* in the One who loved us and gave Himself for us. *To go back to law is to not live by faith. It is to snub and shun the one who loves us. It is to deny the full effect of why He gave Himself for us.*

Verse 21 is the final charge against his opponents and answer to their error. As one has put it: [*New Bible Commentary*, D.A. Carson, Editor]

The apostle makes crystal-clear what has motivated him to speak so strongly. It is the value of the death of Christ, and therefore the principle of grace, that is at stake. If we live to God, it is only because we have been united with Christ crucified. He gave himself for us, and he makes possible the life of faith. If the Judaizers were right—if we could receive righteousness by observing the law—there would be no need for grace, and Christ's self-giving would have been a waste.⁵

The gospel in its truth is to be believed and lived.

Conclusion

It must be received from the Scriptures alone. There is no other source for the gospel. This book is truth. It does not matter what you think about it, what you feel about it. This is the truth. If you do not believe the gospel that the Holy Word of God teaches you will die in your sins forever separated from God in eternal judgment of hell. Will you not believe the gospel and bow to God today?

It must be lived in our lives. We must know and understand the gospel in such a way that it shapes everything. We must be discerning with it. We must guide and guard our relationships with it. We must fight sin with it. We must turn away from any teaching that grounds our righteousness in anything except the work of Christ.

Believe all that the gospel teaches. You have been crucified with Christ, yet you live. You have been cut away from the old and are now alive in the new. You do not live by law but by the grace of God. You live now by faith in Christ. You are responsible to work this out in every area of life.

Finally, be so committed to Christ and confident in the gospel that you will confront others with it. Know what is at stake. Hold the line. Glorify Christ.

Here is the gospel we have been taught, we have received and we hold fast to:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Notes

⁴ Some will notice that I am intentionally using the word transformation instead of sanctification. Sanctification is, with one or two exceptions, used almost exclusively of the once for all setting apart work at our conversion. The idea of transformation, growth and maturity is, in my view, often mis-labeled, progressive sanctification. Confusing our once for all sanctification when we are cut off from the old we used to be and placed into the new we are becoming and transformation, the outworking of our salvation in practical holiness will make understanding Galatians much more difficult. The completed work of sanctification by the Spirit at our conversion *is* what circumcision pointed to and was the foreshadowing of. What circumcision indicated, sanctification has done. Thus, the call for returning to Moses, the need for Gentiles to become Jews by circumcision and to live by the Law all distorted the gospel which taught that Jesus gave Himself to deliver us from this present evil age.

⁵ D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*, Rev. Ed. of: The New Bible Commentary. 3rd Ed. / Edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), Ga 2:1.

The Law and the Gospel

Galatians 3:1-22

Introduction What a strong and striking opening! The Galatians are foolish and bewitched. Why does he say this? They are moving away from the essential teaching of the gospel. In the last paragraph of chapter 2, he has highlighted the power of Christ and the provision of the cross.

When we lived in Germany, I saw many things that made me wonder why we continue to do things the way we do. For example, hanging a door on hinges. A German door hinge is very simple pin and socket. The pin screws into frame. The socket screws into the door. Very simple to install and to adjust. Our hinges are quite a bit more complicated. However, both hinges will work only if the pin is right. The pin holds everything together and allows the door to open. So, the closing bit last week is like the pin in a hinge. So, before we work with hinge I want to remind us of the pin.

So, just as a reminder from last week:

In a short pity statement, Paul says the following. God demanded death for violating His commands. In the law God made that clear. Under the sentence of the Law, Jesus died. When He died, He satisfied the demands of the Law. Therefore, through the Law, by faith in Christ, we have died to the Law. Now, don't think of death as a cessation, or an ending. Think of it as a separation from. The Law goes on, as we will find out. But through the crucifixion of Christ, I have been separated from the realm where the Law is in force (v.19). Furthermore, I have now been brought to life so that I might live in the realm where grace is in force. Separated from the Law by the death of Christ I am now alive to live for Him. The trajectory of transformation is not under law but towards Christ. This same argument is expanded and explained more fully in Romans 6-8.

Since we have died to the Law and are now alive in Christ, we must renounce law righteousness and live unto Christ (v.20). The life we now have in union with Christ is His own life imparted to us and residing in us through the Spirit. We have been united to Christ so that we are in Him and He in us (John 17:23). So, the life we now live in the flesh, this life we continue to live here and now, we live *by faith* in the One who loved us and gave Himself for us. *To go back to law is to not live by faith. It is to snub and shun the one who loves us. It is to deny the full effect of why He gave Himself for us.*

The relationship between the gospel and the law has been one of the most difficult in Christian history⁶. What is the place and role of the Law in this New Covenant age? Now that Christ has come, what is the right and true function of the Law? This passage in Galatians is one of the most definitive and clear statements of the past and present temporary and subordinate purpose of the Law and the grand preeminence of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

For the sake of your faith in Christ for salvation and transformation, hear the gospel this morning.

The Contrast to Faith**(v.1-9)**

Here is the problem, they ought to know better. In his preaching, Paul had openly displayed the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, as crucified. He asserted the historical fact and applied the theological implications. He did so as an Apostle. Now, the intersection of their foolish hearts and mesmerizing false teachers is causing a spiritual car wreck.

An Examination of their Experience of Faith**(v.1-6)**

Deeply probing questions expose their inconsistency. How did they come to experience the New Covenant, gospel realities? Did they experience them through the Law or by faith? Did they receive the Spirit by the works of the Law? No, they received it by the hearing with faith. Does Christ do miracles among them by the Law? No, they are done by the hearing with faith. So, if the Spirit and miracle of salvation come by the hearing with faith, then we should not expect to go on by Law.

Are we saved by the hearing of the Word mixed with faith? Yes. Notice that it is a mixed with faith hearing. The Scriptures are not magic. The powerful work the done by the Spirit of God is in conjunction with and accomplished via believing. Even the suffering we experience to grow in grace and be transformed will be void if it is by the works of the Law and not by the hearing with faith.

In verse 6, Paul then goes to Genesis 15:6. Paul used this text in Romans 4 to argue the same point. The purpose of Genesis 15 is to establish that salvation is for all who believe. So, Abraham is going to be featured in several sections. This is because the false teachers were arguing that only sons of Abraham could be saved and only the circumcised were sons of Abraham. Understand that if this argument is true, then we are lost. We are not saved. I doubt that anyone in the hearing of my voice has consciously and intentionally become a Jew in order to be saved.

Abraham is the example of salvation by faith. He believed what God promised. He trusted God to bring about that promise. His hearing of the promise was mixed with faith to believe the promise. Through believing God and His Word, God put His own righteousness to Abraham's account. This is the doctrine of imputation. This is the Biblical teaching that we have a right standing with God because God has put His righteousness on our account and accepts based on that alone. He does not accept based on His righteousness mixed with our own. He does not accept based on His righteousness and even the righteousness He causes in us. Like Abraham, we put our faith in God alone and receive His righteousness and are justified on that basis alone.

An Explanation of the Man of Faith**(v.7-9)**

Here is the key issue: who are the sons of Abraham? All those who believe are Abraham's sons. So, Paul grants that to be saved one must become a son of Abraham. This is not an issue for him. He is not here just talking about those following the example of Abraham, but that in some way all God's people are Abraham's children. All those who believe are Abraham's sons.

Why is this important? Looking back to Genesis 12:3, Paul sees two important ideas in the text.

In the words of the text, the Scripture is foreseeing the salvation of the Gentiles. In the promises made to Abraham is embedded the idea that even the Gentiles will be justified by faith. Here is a New Covenant reading of the book of Genesis. The words meant that Abraham's blessing would be to all. The Jews and many commentators consistently misunderstood what that blessing is. It is the great blessing of being justified by faith.

In the words of the text, the Scripture is preaching the gospel to Abraham. So the gospel, the good news about salvation, is also good news about who can believe. It announces before the Law⁷ that anyone who believes in the God of the Bible can be justified, can have a right standing with God.

This is really good news. You and I can be saved. We are so used to the idea that Gentiles can be saved that this being good news almost sounds odd. It has a "well, of course" sense. That is true for us because Paul and others have withstood all attempts to make our salvation and transformation a law-centered thing. It is a Christ-centered thing. It is a faith obtained thing. It is a grace granted thing. It is for anyone who will believe. The last sentence places us all, Abraham, Jew in the Old Covenant, Jew and Gentile in the New Covenant all on the same footing. We all receive the blessing of justification by faith alone.

The Condemnation by the Law

(v.10-14)

Now we turn to why the Law is not how we are justified (and later, transformed/sanctified). He is dealing with the argument by the false teachers that the Law, since it describes righteousness, but be able to produce it.

Its Realm under the Curse

(v.10-12)

In verse 10, Paul appeals to Deuteronomy 27:6 to show to show that the Law does not save, it curses. It can only describe sin and sin's punishment. It cannot and does not provide the remedy for sin. Those who rely on the Law put themselves under the curse of the Law. In the realm where the Law governs, one must do everything single thing the Law requires, both in attitude and action. This is hopeless. There is no one who can, in every thought or deed, keep all the Law. Paul is here saying that you cannot, for the sake of this discussion, carve the Law up into sections, apply some and ignore others. Submitting oneself to the Law for righteousness, whether positional at our salvation or practical and progressive in our transformation, brings us back to where we must obey every bit of it *ourselves*.

But Paul goes on to show that this is not even the worst problem. No one is justified, has a right standing with God, by the Law. Being justified is only by faith alone. Paul is emphatic that this is what Habakkuk 2:4 is saying. Three times in Paul's writings he quotes from this verse. He understands its meaning as being the same. He applies to three different situations as he emphasizes different words in the verse. Here the emphasis is the Law not being of or originated by faith. It is in the realm of the Old – that is, the Old Covenant and the old creation. So citing Leviticus 18:5 and clarifying it in Romans 10:5, Paul shows that the

Law is a unity in itself and is a unity as it is applied – to attempt to do them is to make yourself responsible to live by them.

Our Rescue by the Cross

(v.13-14)

Finally, appealing to Deuteronomy 21:23, Paul asserts that the curse of the Law and its demand for punishment by death has been met. Becoming our curse on the cross, Jesus satisfied the requirements of Law as it relates to our sin and as it relates to our righteousness. Christ has accomplished what we could not. He perfectly kept the Law and so fulfilled what was required. But, here the focus is on His bearing the punishment demanded by the Law. He had to bear the curse of the Law. The Law declared in Deuteronomy 21:23 that anyone who hung on a tree was cursed. This Old Covenant text pointed to Christ who would hang on the cross and bear the curse for us. What a blessing for us. We are no longer under the Law nor under its curse. It has been taken for us. The principle of substitution is also clearly important here. Christ took our curse so we can receive Abraham's blessing. Christ stood as a sinner in our stead so that we might receive the blessings of Abraham in Him.

This last phrase is very interesting. Paul equates the blessing of Abraham with our receiving the Spirit. There is a receiving of the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant that is defining and distinct. It marks the New Covenant people and age as much as receiving a new heart or all New Covenant people being saved. So we are receiving the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant sense both as being brought into the New Covenant and as being Abraham's sons.

The Covenant with its Inheritance

(v.15-22)

So, since we are recipients of the Holy Spirit by faith as Abraham's sons in faith, then we are receiving the Spirit as part of our inheritance. This is what Paul moves on to now.

The Promise to the Heir

(v.15-18)

God made a direct promise to Abraham about a descendent who would receive the inheritance. That promise was given first. In fact, it was given while Abraham was still a Gentile, before he himself was circumcised. That promise cannot be canceled by the Law, which came later. We know this because, using a human illustration, once a contract is written, signed and ratified, it cannot be changed. The Law then cannot change how the inheritance is passed on to sons.

However, Paul notes that in the promise, the word descendent is singular. This stands out in the Genesis text because otherwise it is plural. Paul then argues that the descendent must be Christ. Jesus is the One who receives the blessing of Abraham and the full inheritance God promised. He is the seed, the descendent, the son. We receive the inheritance by virtue of our being in Christ. The Law has nothing to do with this. The Law cannot annul the promise. It cannot change the promise. It cannot redefine who the heir is or heirs are. It is powerless in this regard.

Further, the inheritance is not created nor constituted by the Law. It does not come through the Law. The blessings of Abraham do not come through the

promise and through the Law (v.18). They are mutually exclusive. So the Law was not given to enable the reception of the inheritance promised to Abraham.

This was a stunning blow to the Judiazers. They were arguing that both justification and the blessings that we receive having been justified are Law-centered. According to them, the Law existed to show us what the blessings were and how they were to be achieved and received. Paul has just shown that a covenant people are justified by faith and receive their inheritance through promise, not through Law.

The Purpose of the Law

(v.19-20)

So, what is the Law for? Why was the Law given? Here is the clearest statement in all the New Testament about the purpose and duration of the Old Covenant Law. I am going to pause here a bit and parse this sentence, for it is essential to answer all who would reinterpret justification or return us to the Law.

The Law *was added*, was given to supplement and complement. There is a distinct sense in which Paul is saying that it was not included as a part of the original promise/blessing to Abraham. It was added, not as the inheritance itself, not as a part of the inheritance, not to pass along the inheritance, not to define or qualify the recipients of the inheritance, but for another reason.

The Law was given *because of transgressions*, because of the multiplying of sin in the world and among the physical descendents of Abraham. So the Law is oriented towards sin and designed to expose and punish sin. It has a descriptive and prescriptive function. But it cannot cause what it calls for. No law or law principle can. The speeding limit only tells me where the boundary is. It does create the boundary and it cannot cause me to keep to the boundary. The Law was added then because both Gentiles and Jews kept pushing the boundaries of sin. So it was added to show what sin is and what the consequences would be.

The Law was added *until the Lord Jesus* came. When the heir came, when the offspring came into this world, time of the Law came to an end. Now that Christ has come, He has shown what righteousness is both within and outside the Law. He has fully obeyed God and displayed both the Law and the life. So, there is distinct sense here in which the Law is thought of as coming to an end with the coming of the Lord Jesus.

The Law was put into place *by angels through an intermediary*, Moses. The Law then is mediated. However, the promise is given directly, first to Abraham and then to Jesus. There are no angels between God and Abraham and God and Christ. The Law then is valuable for its purpose, but nevertheless, it is has lesser standing than the promise. I believe Paul says this here to bring to the table all of his teaching in Romans, Ephesians and what was preached in Hebrews.

So the Law is added. It came because man was such a terrible sinner. It was in force until Jesus came. It is less than the promise because it was given indirectly.

The Provision through Faith

(v.21-22)

Once again, we have to understand what Paul is saying in such a way that the next objection is natural. Paul anticipates that people reading and listening to this will then say, “Paul is teaching that the law is contrary or contradicts the promises.” (V.21). This is stunning. The logic that constructs implications may lead to conclusions contrary to the Scripture. Some form of this objection sends many commentators to go back and look for ways to tone down what Paul has just said. If it sounds to you like I have said that the Law and Promise are in conflict then I have taught this passage close to the way Paul meant it.

Several important assertions are being made here.

The Law is not contrary to the promises. The Law cannot bring what the promises do. The Law cannot fulfill the promises. But the Law is not against the promises. So it has a right and proper function in its place.

The Law by its nature cannot give life. The law has a merely descriptive function. But it cannot impart the life that it calls for and that is required. It is primarily an instrument of death, as Paul asserts in 2 Corinthians.

Righteousness is a matter of life, not rules. The failure of the Law is in its nature. It cannot impart life so it cannot give righteousness. Righteousness and being alive spiritually are intertwined. The righteousness we receive by faith is the result of life given in the new birth. It causes a restored relationship with God.

Finally, in closing this section and preparing for the next section, Paul shows that what he teaches is rooted and grounded in Scripture. His Christ-centered interpretation of the Old Testament texts was just as startling then as it is now. It is curious to me that many expositors and commentators have the same functional way of understanding the Old Testament as the scribes, Pharisees and Judiazers.

So, the Scripture says that everyone was imprisoned and guarded under sin, in the realm where the Law has force. This is both a historical reality in the function of the Mosaic Law and is the spiritual reality for those who have not yet believed. This important, but temporary function of the Law is so that the promise by faith in Christ may be given to those who believe. The subordinate place of the Law highlights the grand preeminence of believing in Christ, of hearing with faith.

Conclusion This text speaks powerfully to us today. We need to hear Paul saying these things lest we to become bewitched by false teachers claiming to give us deeper truth.

Let us believe the gospel. Hold fast to Christ and Him crucified. He has been preached and publicly displayed through our words and our worship to be the crucified one through whom you are saved and transformed.

He was crucified for you and you have been crucified with Him. Yet you have been made alive so that now you live, not by keeping the Law, not by extra Biblical techniques, not by deeper life secrets, not by casting out sin-demons, not by anything but by the hearing with faith.

Stand in the spiritual blessing of being a son of Abraham. All your identity and inheritance is in Christ. He is the One through whom all God's good for us comes. All the promises are fulfilled in Him. In Him, you receive the promises. Don't let anyone rob you of your blessing and your spiritual inheritance by adding to or taking away from the centrality of Christ in our faith.

The Law has its place and purpose. We will be seeing more about that as we continue to follow Paul's thinking two weeks from now. But the Law cannot define, destroy or diminish the promises, the covenants that God has made. We are the recipients and participants in the New Covenant. We have been brought out of the realm of sin where the Law reigns and now are in the realm of life where righteousness reigns through grace.

Reject all forms of self-righteousness. Turn by faith to believe the gospel, to put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus. You cannot have a right standing with God by works. You cannot weigh out your sins with good. You cannot be received by God through anything except abandoning all self-reliance, self-righteousness and self-improvement. It is your sin and your sins that separate you. It is your Savior who redeems, reconciles and restores you. It is His righteousness that is put to your account. Believe in Him and bow to Him, today.

And it is no less for those of you who have already been regenerated and thus have repented and believed in Christ. You also must reject any law righteousness and rely solely on the one who has loved you and has given His life for you. You not only have been saved by faith, but you will live by faith. As you believe God's Word and close with Christ, His transforming Spirit and grace change you until the day we all awaken and our faith becomes sight as we gaze on Him whom we love because He has first loved us.

Here is the gospel that we are to hear with faith, to believe in order to be saved:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Notes

⁶ For some who are students of historical theology, this message is going to frustratingly ignore several strands of theological thinking. This is not out of ignorance of them, but out of an exegetical rejection of them. Those who want to limit the Law to the ceremonial and civil aspects and try to make the “Moral Law” permanent and binding, this text is aimed directly at your error. I have similarly rejected the variegated use of “nomos” popular in many circles. It seems to me that what Paul is referring to in any text by the word “Law” is either what the commentator wants him to be saying or what his framework demands he be saying. If we let the text speak for itself as I try to do here, all this difficulty simply goes away.

⁷ The way Paul speaks here convinces me that the references to the Law through this section of Galatians are not to the Old Testament as a book, nor just to the civil or ceremonial code contained within the Law, but to the Law as the whole of the governed relationship between Israel and God. The 10 Words form the foundational principles for the rest of the ceremonial and civil law. But they are limited in their scope and deeply intertwined with the culture and community of Israel as a nation. From Galatians, Romans and Hebrews, New Covenant Christians must resist any attempt to make the church equal to, a replacement for or a needful return to Israel. Dispensationalism as a system has generally failed to see that the church is connected redemptively to the old Covenant through Christ. Covenantalism has generally failed to see that Israel and the church have their primary locus in Christ, not in each other. As a New Covenant believer, I see Christ as the descendent to whom all the promises aim and in whom all the promises are fulfilled. Then, all those who believe, are placed into Christ and thus, by virtue of being in Christ, receive the fulfillment of those promises.

Freedom by the Gospel

Galatians 2:23-4:11

Introduction

We are recipients of the promises of God by faith, by believing in Jesus Christ. This has been the burden of Paul's argument in Galatians 3. The promises to Abraham that were fulfilled in Christ were not countered nor nullified by the Law. The Law has its place in God's past and present economy. But once we put our faith in Christ and are united to Christ so that we are in Christ, we are no longer subject to the Law. We receive the promises in Christ. We receive the promises as heirs. The blessings promised are all that Christ has provided us including the promise of the Holy Spirit for every believer.

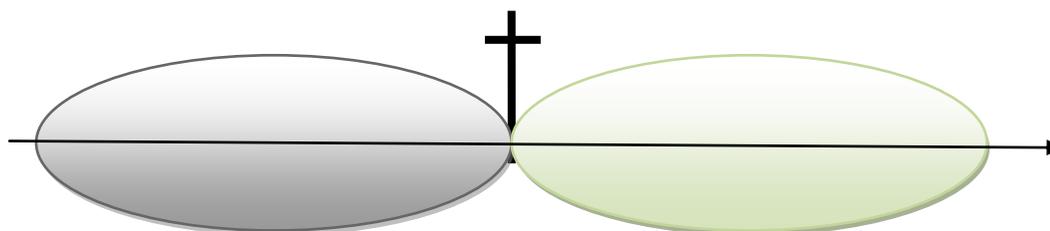
Two threads are interwoven through this text. These two threads are easy to observe and difficult to express. These two ideas I am going to represent through this drawing. Hopefully, you will be able to see as well as hear how the apostle connects these two threads.

The Redemptive History Thread

Woven through this text is redemptive history with Abraham, Moses and Christ coming. The cross is at the center of this line. The old is before the cross and the new is after the cross.

The Personal History Thread

Also woven through this text is the personal history of each believer. At the center is the coming of faith, or conversion. There is a parallel, or a correspondence with redemptive history. Before conversion, you are in the old under the Law. After conversion, you are in the new under grace.



Paul also illustrates from a common situation in their culture. While some of this is foreign to us, all of his original hearers and readers would know exactly what he was talking about. Young children were often placed in the care of nannies and guardians. They were responsible to train the children for their place and station in life. They gave them their basic education as well as were instrumental in forming their way of thinking. At a certain age, sometimes set by the culture, but more often chosen by the father, the heir would be given a party where he would be acknowledged formally and publicly as the heir. This public act of recognition and assignment was called by a Greek word usually translated, adoption in our English Bibles. After this point, the father usually took the son directly under his own care and tutelage.

So, while under the guardian, he was considered to be a child. Once he was placed into his position as an heir, adopted in Greek, he was then called a son. Why this illustration? It vividly conveys the deep sense of the before and after, the old and new.

So, hear verse 22 as we move into our text this morning.

But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. [ESV]

The Grand Change

(v.23-29)

Paul moves us into this paragraph with the surprising word, “imprisoned”. He then enlarges on that word as he considers the great change that has taken place. This great change has taken place in both redemptive history and in your personal history.

Under the Old

(v.23-24)

Under the old, the status and plight of all in the Old Covenant and all of us before conversion is given. Now remember, our two threads are interwoven here.

The first analogy is that of being imprisoned (v.23). The Law functioned, both in the Old Covenant and before our conversion, as a jailor. It kept people in custody. The “us” here refers historically to the Jews and personally to Paul. It was our jailor until the faith that was to come was revealed. When faith came and we believed, then we were set loose from our prison and released through our redemption.

This word “imprisoned” is helpful for it shows two important functions of the Law before Christ came in history and before faith came to you.

It shows that we were guilty as charged. We were sinners. The Law was judge, jury and jailor. It passed a verdict and a sentence which it was unable by design to settle.

It is a grace in that it had a restraining affect. The Law was given because of the multiplying of transgression. So it restrained Israel from sinking to horrific depths of the depraved practice of the pagans around them. It generally has the same affect on you personally. Growing up under Law restrains sinners so that society can exist with relative justice and peace.

Peter tells us, using this same word, that we are guarded, warded, kept in protective custody by God’s power through faith (1 Peter 1:5) until the day when the new is complete.

Paul's second analogy is that of guardians over children (v.24). The Law functioned as our guardian, our schoolmaster, our nanny until Christ came. Here, he is referring primarily to the historical thread. He is tell us a historical fact as well as a theological truth. The Law instructed sinners about sin until the sacrifice for sin came. Further, the Law did this so that, for this purpose, we might be justified by faith. In other words, the Law was limited in what it could do. But that limitation served well because God had designed that we be justified by faith, not by works.

In the New

(v.25-29)

Ah, but something grand takes place between verse 24 and 25. Faith has come. Now this certainly cannot mean, faith has come in history. He has just argued that Abraham was such a man of faith that we are to emulate him and his faith. No, this faith coming has to do with our personal history. So, until faith came, until it was given as an act of free and sovereign mercy and grace, each one of us was under the Law as our guardian. But when faith comes, when faith is given us⁸, then we are no longer under the guardian. Why?

We are no longer under the guardian because we are now in Christ. Just as the old covenant is gone and the new has come and all of us now live in the age of the new covenant, so we are now in Christ. We are now no longer in the realm where the Law rules; we are in Christ. And since we are in Christ Jesus, we are now fully acknowledged sons and heirs. Being united to and thus being placed into Christ moves us from the old into the new.

How does this take place? It takes place by the Spirit's act of immersing us in Christ at our conversion (v.27). For me, here is the one verse that is the strongest argument not to transliterate *batpizo* but to translate it. Our translations ought to convey the original meaning, not the current theological coin. So, verse 27 is saying that everyone who has been placed into, immersed into Christ has put on or has been totaled submerged in Christ. The Biblical rite of water baptism is NOT in view here. Water baptism is the public, physical type of this inward, spiritual reality. But Paul is simply saying that if you have been placed into Christ, you are now immersed in a new realm. When you were saved, one of the things that happened is that a great spiritual cutting away from and a grand spiritual union into took place. You were "circumcised" from the realm of the old and your were "immersed" into the realm of the new, into Christ.

Not only are we no longer under the old teacher, we are no longer spiritually identified in the creation order. In Christ, there is none of the creation, old order distinctions. We are simply in union with Christ and with one another. This is important for something Paul will argue later. But it does raise a question? Should we continue to recognize these distinctions? Yes; while we are spiritually in Christ (and according to Ephesians, spiritually in the heavenlies) we are still physically here in the first creation. So we live in the already and not yet. We live in this world while not being of it. While we live in this world in these physical bodies, these distinctions still hold true, just not ultimately. So, Paul will speak to men and women, to Jews and Gentiles, to slave and free. Until all things are made new, we are living spiritually in the new and physically in the old.

But here is the second great conclusion. If we are Christ's, then you are really Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. Here is the bookend to his argument. Christ is the offspring, the heir according to promise (v.1-14). You are in Christ by the act of God's Spirit. Therefore, by faith, you are the offspring, the heirs according to promise.

The Glorious Provision

(4:1-7)

So, why do we really care about this? We should pay attention to this because of the great privilege we have as sons and heirs, in Christ.

As Children under the Old

(v.1-3)

As we have mentioned, he refers here to the way children often were reared in his culture. Even through the child may be the future heir, until the appointed time comes, he is no better than a slave. He may be the owner of everything, but it does not matter yet. There are great privileges that he will one day enter into and enjoy. But not yet. He is still the child of his father. But until the day set by the father comes, he does not enter into the full ownership or enjoyment of his inheritance.

In the same way, we were like that child. Before Christ came, the Jews were imprisoned and enslaved to what he calls the "elementary principles of the world." Before faith comes, each of us individually are as well. These elementary principles are the guardians and managers who guide and guard us until the time set by the heavenly Father. It is evident that these elementary principles are the Law.

Just as a child who is an heir may live in his father's home and may even enjoy some of the good of that home, he is not the full heir until the proper time. So, the Jews before Christ and us before faith may enjoy some of the blessings and benefits reserved for later. The Law served to watch over Jews before Christ and over us before conversion so that we will be ready for the new.

As Sons in the New

(v.4-7)

Here is the great moment. At the right time, the time set by the Father, He sends His Son into the world. He was born of a woman and is thus identified with our humanity. He is born under the Law and is thus under its demand and rule. This is described as "the fullness of time." When it was just the right time, Jesus comes as the fulfiller of the promises, as the One to whom it all pointed. It is the exact moment that God ordained. That coming and His cross split redemptive history to before and after. His coming inaugurates the new.

He is born of a woman and under the Law in order to redeem those who were under the Law. Are just the Jews under the Law? No, all humanity is under the Law. Even those of us who were after the cross, are under the Law until we are converted. You can say it this way, only those under the Law can be redeemed. And they are redeemed from the Law.

But there is more. We are not just bought out of the world; we are also adopted as sons. This act of adoption brings those who are regenerate into full standing as sons. God knows who His sons and daughters will be for He has chosen them from the foundation of the world. And, in the logic that Paul has been develop-

ing, since we are now in Christ and full sons, heirs of the promise, we receive the Spirit. From the beginning of chapter 3 till now, Paul has argued that the Spirit is one of the distinguishing marks of the New Covenant. The Spirit being sent into our lives in regeneration is an effect of God having chosen us to be adopted as sons.

Now, notice that Paul is giving a logical order, but not a chronological order in verse 6. We receive the Spirit because, grounded in, based on this truth, that we are sons. That is the logic. The chronological order here is not in view. From many texts including 1 John 5:1, we know that “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, has been born of God...” So what happens in time and space to us, regeneration by the Spirit and then the gift and exercise of faith, happens because we are chosen sons, living in the world under law.

Now, notice this text carefully. Unlike the one in Romans where we cry, “Abba, Father,” here, it is the Spirit who comes crying, “Abba, Father.” There is no contradiction here. The Holy Spirit coming into our lives crying “Abba, Father” is how we respond in our souls to recognize and cry out to our heavenly Father, our Papa. Without the Spirit’s inward work, our outward words would be presumption. But the Spirit’s inward work, in the sons of God, authenticates that we are God’s true sons.

So, here is the grand conclusion. You are no longer a slave. You are no longer imprisoned under the Law or a conscience bound to works. You are son. You are not just a child. Children are under the guardians and tutors. You are now a son in full standing, adopted at your conversion. Now that you are a son in full standing, you are an heir. We are all heirs. We are all heirs of the promise to Abraham. We have been given one aspect of that promise, the Holy Spirit. Since we have received the Holy Spirit, we are now assured that God is our Father and we are His sons and daughters.

The Pointed Challenge

(v.8-11)

This is great truth to revel in. However, Paul is not just giving these truths to stir our souls. He is giving them as a medicine, as an antidote to counter the poison of works and Law keeping.

In Principle

(v.8-9)

Paul challenges them in principle. These words are primarily aimed at converted Gentiles, although the charge would stand against most Jews of his day. He points out that the Gentiles were double enslaved. They were imprisoned under the Law and they were enslaved to the false gods and religions. These false religions exist in the realm where the Law rules and demands obedience. These false religions are a part of the weak and beggarly elemental principles. In saying this, Paul has just put the Old Covenant Law keeping in the same category as false and pagan religions.

But now, they have come to know God, or rather, to place the cause before the effect, they are known by God. So, since they are no longer in the old, in the world, under law, why are they trying to go back to what is weak and worthless?

To return to religion, whether it is Judaism or whether it is any other false religion is to go back to what is weak and worthless.

In Practice

(v.10-11)

What does this “going back” look like in practice? They are observing the Mosaic feast calendar! Now, some think this may refer to celebrating the pagan holidays. But that makes no sense at this point. Paul has been laboring to show that we are no longer under the Law and works. What they are doing is not only being circumcised, they are returning to the ritual of the Old Covenant. This is the symptom, among many others that he will deal with later, of their beginning to depart from Christ.

In the same vein, listen to how Paul states this in Colossians 2:16-3:4.

¹⁶ Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. ¹⁸ Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, ¹⁹ and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

²⁰ If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—²¹ “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” ²² (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? ²³ These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. [ESV]

Paul’s grave concern for them is that His labor in ministry will be brought to naught. He will have labored in vain if they stop living as though they are in Christ, in the New Covenant and start living as though they are in the Old Covenant. Paul is emphatic. The very thing they are going to in order to be God’s sons and to live holy lives has not value in dealing with the temptations of the flesh. What they are being told to do will not accomplish what is hoped. Now that Christ has come, to go back to the rituals and practices of the Mosaic Law is just the same as going back to false religions. Live not in the shadows of the old, but rather in realities of the new.

Conclusion What does this freedom that the gospel announces and that Christ brings mean?

Know that Christ has come and freedom is proclaimed. This is the freedom the cross brings. It is the freedom our crucifixion and our resurrection with Him brings. It is freedom from works. It is freedom from Law works. It is freedom from religious works.

Know that salvation is by faith alone. Our salvation and the faith that brings it are the sheer grace and free gift of God. There is nothing you can do, no work, no religious duty, do ritual, no righteous acts, no works of faith, no law keeping, nothing you can do. The call of the Bible is to believe and bow, to hear with faith. It is not a natural belief, but rather one given by God.

Revel in the fact that since you are in Christ, you are in union with Him and receiving all that He receives. You are a joint-heir with Him. All the promises of God will be fulfilled for and in Christ. In your union with Him and in Him, you have all the blessings and bounty of all of God's covenants.

Be assured that those of you who believe have been made sons. You have been adopted and recognized as sons. How do you know this? Because the Word and Spirit have come to you. The Word is in your hearing and the Holy Spirit is in your heart. Through the Spirit's inward work you have an assurance in your heart and a confidence to call our heavenly Father, your papa.

Stand without wavering in Christ, in the New Covenant and in your sonship. Do not go back to the weak and worthless religions. Do not seek to be accepted by God by the Law or by works. Believe in Him.

Finally, there is a huge movement today to return to the Roman Catholic Religion or to Romish-like ritual in our worship and serving of God. As kindly as I know how to say this, if you, having started well by faith, go back to any other religion, you are in danger of damnation. Repent and return to your Redeemer. For the Bible says, "The just shall live by faith."

Hold fast to Christ. Rest in Him alone. Turn not away. Live truly as the sons of God.

Notes

⁸ Clearly Paul is consistent in his wording here. Faith comes the same as Christ comes. It is a sheer gift from God. Faith is not a natural, innate function. While many people talk as though unbelievers can “have faith”, this is not the way the Bible talks. The faith that saves is not mere human belief elevated by God. It is an ability given by God. Without it, one may have all kinds of belief that will not and does not save. This is the point of the gospel of John. The Word of God is both the message to be believed and the method by which saving faith is granted.

Illustrating the Gospel

Galatians 4:12-5:1

Introduction

Just this past week one of the great cartoonists and illustrators went home to be with the Lord on Saturday, April 7, 2007, at age 76 while working at his home in Nineveh, N.Y. Many of you read and loved the syndicated cartoon, 'B.C.' Johnny Hart was an outspoken Christian whose faith always shaped his Easter morning cartoon. Hart's 'B.C.' strip was launched in 1958 and eventually appeared in more than 1,300 newspapers with an audience of 100 million.⁹



Figure 1. Johnny Hart's Characters

The Gospel Johnny Hart embraced and exemplified is illustrated in our text today. The reality of what God has done for us is shown:

- In a personal relationship, the love between Paul and the church at Galatia;
- From a narrative text in the Old Testament anticipating gospel realities;
- With a potent application calling for gospel living.

Here once again is the gospel being illustrated. Affirm it together with me:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins *to deliver us from the present evil age*, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Anguish Troubling their Relationship (v.12-20)

Parents will recognize the feelings and the words here. There is a deeply felt love for these folks. There is a long history between them. Now, someone is threatening that relationship. There is that tearing mix of love and anger.

The Personal History Uniting Them (v.12-15)

They have a personal history together that should unite them. He appeals to them to become like he is, free as sons and not enslaved to the old creation. This sentence is meant to connect what he is teaching them in the letter to what he taught them when he was with them.

He reminds them of their care for him in the midst of his suffering while with them. He seems to be implying that he was with them for a longer time than planned due to some difficulty with his eyes. He was received then in spite of his illness causing difficulty for them. They did not reject him, but rather moved toward him with love and acceptance. They embraced as they would a messenger from God or even as the Lord Jesus Christ.

So what has happened? Why would those who were then willing to gouge out their eyes for him and counted it a blessing to be with him now refuse to hear and heed him?

The Purposeful Attack Dividing Them (v.16-17)

Listen to the pain in his voice? Has he now become their enemy because he tells them the truth? Here is a part of the subtle attack trying to divide them. The false teachers were doing two things to cut them off from Paul.

They seemed to have accused Paul of being against the Galatians themselves because he was against what they were being taught. In other words, Paul's attack on error was being construed to be an attack on the people. Thus, he was slandered as being their enemy because of what he was saying. The heart of the Galatian church was being turned against Paul. He was no longer their beloved friend and founder; he was now their enemy.

They were making much of the Galatians so that they would make much of them. They were enthusiastic and encouraging and praising of the Galatians. They were sucking up to them. They were flattering them in order to manipulate the people in the church. They would first make them the center of their attention and admiration. Then they would threaten to cut off friendship, to ignore and treat them poorly. They were playing on the human desire to be approved by people you admire.

This has little changed today. Many of the deadliest errors being taught today are coming from winsome, attractive people. They are interesting, engaging and enjoyable. They draw people into their orbit. They pretend to be shocked when people attack their errors and say that they are being attacked. They act as though they are above the fray. But what they are teaching will damn people to hell. This is particularly true of some the core leadership in the heretical New Perspective on Paul and the Openness of God.

Paul has no problem with exposing their motives and their methods. The reason he does so is to expose their message. These are intricately tied together. This is

why Paul in other texts will say that he what he is teaching is true; that how he teaches it is with integrity and that his motivations for teaching it are transparent to God and others.

The Perplexed Distress Grieving Them (v.18-20)

Yes, he acknowledges that it is a good thing to be admired and approved. It is a good thing when people encourage you and motivate you to continue to grow, learn and change. But it is a bad thing to act as though there is nothing wrong. It is a dangerous thing to give people moving toward error a false sense of security and wellbeing.

Imagine you are walking through your neighborhood with a friend from another part of town. There in a yard is a beautiful dog. He sits watching you go by, his tail wagging in the grass. Your friend comments on how beautiful the dog is and begins to move toward it. But you know the dog is dangerous. You know that dog is chained away from the sidewalk for good reason. You are safe on the sidewalk. But are you a friend if you say, "Go ahead. He's a beautiful dog. He loves people. Just go up and pet him." No, a true friend will reach out with words and a quick grasp to pull them back. "Look out, this dog looks friendly, but he will bite you."

But Paul is perplexed over them. He is like a mother in child birth who thought all was going well, but now some alarming pains have started. They are his beloved little children. He wishes he could be with them so that he could engage them and hopefully be able to change his tone. But for now, the danger that they will abort and not be truly God's sons is great and grave.

Here is what it means to truly be a shepherd of God's people. A deep and personal relationship is built over time. When someone attempts to teach error or drive a wedge, there is real pain and perplexity. For the true shepherds, there will be this mix of anguish and anger. Because eternal souls are at stake, there will be a rising tone warning of the danger and the deadliness of turning away from the truth of the gospel and embracing soul damning errors.

The Analogy Correcting their Error (v.21-27)

Now Paul turns from his relationship with the church as a whole to confronting those who were teaching and falling into error.

A Strategy to Confront Error (v.21)

We are given an example of how to deal with those who twist the Scripture to teach error.

Recognize that what one does flows out of heart beliefs and motivations. He locates their impetus in a desire for law (v.21a). Those who teach error when they have been instructed or confronted with truth are doing so out of a set of heart motivations and desires. He identifies them by this desire to be under the Law. So, a person who is teaching open theism (that is, that God does not know exactly which possible future will take place since God does not know what choice any person will make) does so out of a desire to protect the free will of man. Many people teaching the New Perspective on Paul (that is that

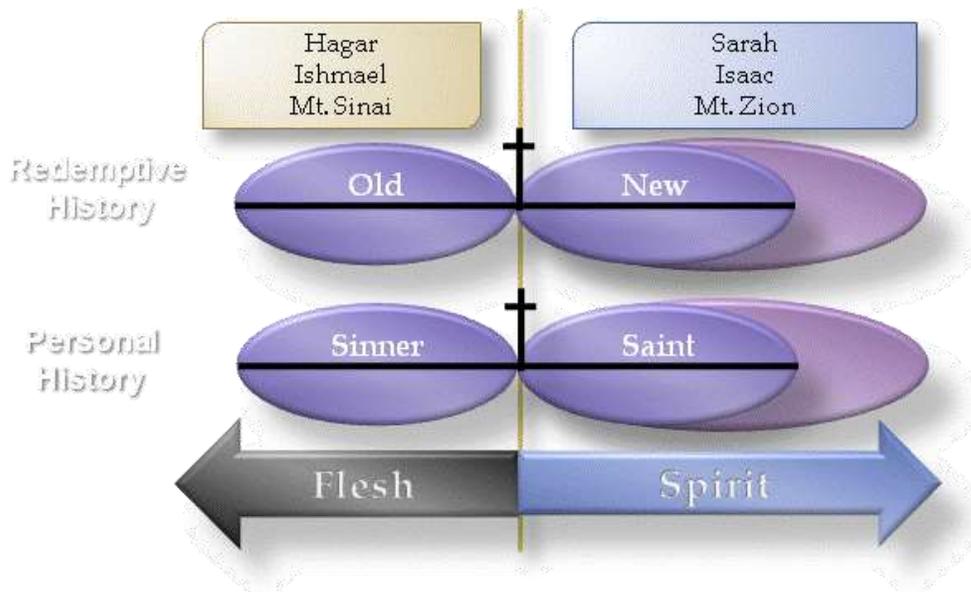
justification is not about our standing before God but rather our standing as a Gentile in relation to the Jews) does so because they are wanting to undercut the Reformation. Knowing these motivations helps uncover the hidden agendas and the end game of the error.

Challenge their reading and understanding of the Scriptures. Paul takes up one long narrative text and a prophetic text using them to answer and correct their error (v.21b). When someone is teaching error, generally they do so from texts. So, our response should be from texts including an even handed, honest handling of their own texts.

Expound and apply texts correcting their misuse of it (v.22f). I believe that Paul is using this text because the Judiazers are twisting it. How, we don't really know. But it seems that Paul is engaging the text in an "over against" way. He is laying out one element of a New Covenant hermeneutic. He simply says that the story of Isaac and Ishmael, Hagar and Sarah, are an allegory. They are intended to teach more than just the simple narrative would convey. How does he know that? He locates his understanding and use of the Genesis record in his quote from Isaiah 54:1.

A Biblical Argument to Clarify Truth (v.22-26)

To help us follow and understand Paul's thought here, I am taking a slide we used before and expanding on it. What Paul is saying is an example, an explanation and an elaboration on it drawn from this Old Testament narrative.



First, Paul locates them in the narrative he is concerned with and which they may be misusing. He has already argued from the idea of Abraham's heirs and Abraham's descendent, Jesus, as the foundation for our being sons. We know we are sons of Abraham and joint-heirs with Christ because we have received the promised Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the down payment on our inheritance. He is the inauguration of our inheritance, a foretaste of its future glories. Therefore, we are now in the realm of the Spirit and no longer under the realm of the flesh.

Abraham however had two children, Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was born as a result of relying on the ways of the world and thus is born according to the principles of the flesh. Isaac is born as a result of faith in the promises of God and thus is born according to the principles of the spirit. Paul shifts however to look at the mothers of these two children. There is little argument that Isaac and Ishmael all through the Bible represent these two realms, the one of the flesh and the other of the Spirit. But Paul goes on to expand that teaching. The illustration or allegory, as he puts it, can be extended to the mothers. Hagar represents the realm of the flesh, the fallen order in which Law rules. She is not the recipient of the covenant of promise. She has good done for her, but she is not the mother of the covenant. Sarah is the mother of the covenant. She has also been promised descendants and a son. So Hagar represents the realm of the flesh and Sarah the realm of the promise.

But those two also correspond to two mountains, Mount Sinai and Mount Zion. All through the Old Testament, these two mountains are filled with rich and elaborate allusions to truths greater than the physical locations. Mt. Sinai is the place the Law was received and immediately broken. It is there that God talked face-to-face with Moses. There the people hid and fled from the fearsome glory of God. Mt. Zion is usually the heavenly Jerusalem, even in the Old Testament. It is the ultimate dwelling of the glory God and is the homeland, the promised land, for all God's people.

Then Paul does a startling thing. He places Jerusalem in the realm of the flesh, in the trajectory of the Law. Now this would have been shocking to both Jew and Gentile. To the Jew, Jerusalem was the center of their Messianic hopes. To the Gentile Christians, Jerusalem was the location of the mother church. But Paul is making a point here. Remember in chapter two, where had the Judaizers come from? They were from a group *in the church at Jerusalem*. So he is warning them to look to their heavenly promises and graces, not to their earthly Jerusalem. Even though it is the location of the first church, it is not the source nor the mediator of the promise. We do not identify ourselves as citizens of Jerusalem. We are citizens of heaven.

The Biblical Grounds for Interpretation

(v.27)

Now, where does he get that? Is he reading his Old Testament in a way that we can as well? Is he authorized to do this purely because of he is authoritatively inspired by the Holy Spirit? I believe it is both. He is inspired by the Holy Spirit to read, understand, explain and apply the Old Testament narrative by a normal, New Testament hermeneutic. Now, this word "allegory" here has caused no small debate among Bible students and teachers. I think no better word has been said about this than the following:

... There is no question that the apostle here sees something that is not part of what we usually call 'the historical meaning' of a passage. The author of the Genesis narrative, as far as anyone can tell, was not seeking to distinguish between two covenants, nor was he trying to depict the relationship between Judaizers and Gentiles. Is Paul then mishandling the OT?

It is important to keep in mind that throughout the history of redemption one can see clear patterns in the ways events unfold. Perhaps the most obvious is the pattern of ‘testing resulting in disobedience’, seen clearly in Adam, and the Israelites in the wilderness, then broken by Jesus in his temptation. Especially important is the distinction between natural and supernatural, *i.e.* what humans tend to do in their own strength versus what they depend on God’s power to accomplish. That principle is communicated many times in the biblical history, and the story of Ishmael and Isaac is a particularly powerful example. Surely God was teaching his people to depend on him for their salvation. What could be more appropriate than to bring out that principle and apply it to the Galatian controversy?

Some scholars prefer to use the term typology (rather than allegory) to describe Paul’s method here. The point is that history, far from being minimized in the interests of theology, is seen as embodying that theology and thus anticipating later events as fuller manifestations of the principle in view... For Paul, it could not be a coincidence that the Genesis story had such important points of correspondence with the Judaizing issue. These correspondences are presented in the form of contrasts, as follows: Hagar/Sarah; slave/free; Sinai covenant/(new) covenant; present Jerusalem/Jerusalem from above; Ishmael/Isaac; ordinary birth (flesh)/birth through promise/Spirit; persecutor/persecuted; cast away/heir.¹⁰

Notice, what he says in verse 24-26 is because of what is said in Isaiah 54:1 which he cites here in verse 27. Isaiah 53 is the great suffering savior text. Immediately following the redeeming work of the Messiah and the promise that His salvation will be to all nations, we get this opening sentence to chapter 54. Who is the barren one? Who is the desolate one with no children? She is Sarah. He reads this text and sees that Isaiah speaks of Sarah as the mother of many children, not just in the tents of Israel, but throughout all people groups. God, through His redeeming work will fulfill His promise to His people and be their God and their husband (v.6-8). God establishes the covenant that brings peace (v.9-10; Romans 5:1). God will rule and reign from the heavenly city with His people gathered therein (v.11-12; Revelation 21-22). This will be the time promised by the New Covenant for Isaiah structures what he says in verses 13-17 on the promises of the New Covenant. Paul sees in flow of Isaiah 53-54 a pattern that helps him understand why the Genesis narrative says what it does.

There is much more that can be said about handling the Old Testament texts the way the New Testament does. We encourage you to listen carefully as we work out and demonstrate a Christ-centered, New Covenant based. New Testament guided and illuminated use of the Bible.¹¹

Finally, let me quote once again from D.A. Carson who summarizes what I have trying to say so very well.

Out of several interesting ideas implied by these contrasts, at least two require special attention. First, note the reference to the present Jerusalem over against the one from above (25–26). It is clear that Paul’s thought is strongly influenced by an ‘eschatological’ or ‘last-days’ view of biblical history, according to which the coming of Christ is said to bring in the age to come. The

point surfaced in 1:4 and undergirds such ‘fulfillment’ passages as 3:23–25 and 4:4 (*cf.* also 1 Corinthians 10:11).

Secondly, note the contrast between flesh and promise/Spirit in vs 23, 29. That contrast was first brought up in 3:4, so it is significant that this central section of the letter both begins and ends with such a reference. These terms are strongly related to the ‘last-days’ understanding of the gospel. The flesh—*i.e.* fallen human nature working in its own natural strength—is the distinguishing characteristic of the present age. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, inaugurates the coming age, so that Christians may even be said to be sitting in heaven (Eph. 2:6; *cf.* Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:1–4). The ethical significance of this contrast is developed in 5:13–26.¹²

The Assertions Applying the Gospel (v.28-5:1)

Now he comes to the point of his argument. In doing so he makes 5 assertions that apply the gospel. I want to state those assertions as truths for us to affirm.

We are children of the promise. (v.28)

We, like Isaac, are children of promise. We are not the children of Hagar, Ishmael and Mt. Sinai. Because we have been born of the Spirit, because we are in Christ, because we have to life through the miracle of God’s work, then we must assert our identity as children of the promise.

The flesh and the Spirit are in conflict. (v.29)

Just as Ishmael and Isaac were in conflict, so the realms and principles of the flesh and the Spirit will be in conflict. Those who are still in the old will persecute those who are living by the principles of the new. Paul is saying that the Judiazers are in the flesh, not the Spirit. So, just as the false teachers of their day were in conflict with Paul and all holding to the truth of the Word of God, it is like that in our day. We can simply expect, until Jesus comes, that there will be false teachers who are of the flesh and will glorify the flesh and try to bring people to live or ministry by the principles of the flesh.

Those in the flesh are removed from the household.(v.30)

Hagar and Ishmael were expelled from the household and sent on their way. They were not allowed to stay and cause more trouble. They were sent away as a symbol of their being outside the family and not the true children, not the true heirs. A distinct line was being drawn between Isaac and his descendants and Ishmael and his. This is applied then throughout the New Testament. Unrepentant false teachers are to be silenced and to be removed. They are not to be given a place to confuse people or corrupt what is believed. Paul is calling on the Galatians to remove the Judiazers from fellowship and to identify them as outside the faith. And so must we. While we speak the truth in love among those who are learning and growing, we must not tolerate false doctrine.

We are children of the Spirit and are free. (v.31)

Live, love and learn as children of the free woman. Speak to yourselves over and over again that Christ has set you free. He has redeemed you from slavery. He has brought you out of Egypt. He has broken the chains and power of Mt. Sinai. He has transferred you into the kingdom of Mt. Zion. Abraham is your spiritual father, Sarah your spiritual mother, Jesus Christ your brother and joint-heir. This is where true spiritual freedom is. The principles of the world, the Law, the flesh will bind you to your sin and have no power to deliver you from your sin.

We must stand in the truths of the gospel. (5:1)

Since we are children of the Spirit and not children of the slave, we must not go back to living under the principles of the fallen world, the realm of sin. We must not try to live by the Law. We must not minister by the principles of the world. We must not return to old. We are free in the new. Sometimes, returning to the world feels like it is freeing us. This is an illusion. Returning to the world's principles does return us to slavery. Going back to Egypt is going back to slavery. The delights and delicacies, the wisdom and works of Egypt do not further the Kingdom of God. They enslave the people of God. We are bound for the Promised Land as citizens of that country – Mt. Zion our mother, Isaac our brother, singing songs of freedom, pursued by the world and the devil. We will arrive safely one day because God has given us His Spirit proving that we are His children and His true heirs.

Paul gives two commands that I want to conclude with.

Conclusion

STAND IN YOUR FREEDOM. You know what the Bible teaches. You know that God has delivered you from the slavery of sin into the freedom as sons. So commit yourself to stand in that freedom. How do we do that?

Learn what the Bible says about who you are in Christ. You cannot stand in what you do not know. Read through the New Testament listening for your identity in Christ. You are a saint, a son, a soldier, a servant, a sheep.

Memorize key texts to repeat often in your heart. Meditate on your identity in Christ. Think about it. Talk about with others. Pray it back to God. Fill your soul with words of affirmation of the truth God has given.

Prize these truths as precious and powerful. You will not hold to and will be influenced much by what you do not prize.

Use these truths to discern and reject error. Be alert to the barrage of worldly principles and methods to try to achieve spiritual maturity and to do spiritual ministry.

DO NOT SUBMIT TO THE YOKE OF SLAVERY AGAIN. Notice the command that counters passivity. Do not submit. How do we do that?

Be willing to disagree with error. We not only affirm what is true, but we deny what is not. You must be kind and gracious to people, but firm and unswerving in your holding to truth.

Do not regularly spend time with those teaching error. This means whether you are doing it in person, in your reading, by your radio or TV. Be wise toward what is good and simple toward what is evil. Many people are being sucked into NPP or the Emergent Church by the constant reading of their materials.

Actively reject and refuse what will draw you away from the truth in Christ. Religious bookstores are full of how-to books that are based either on legalism or on secular philosophies and psychologies. Watch out for the latest key to spirituality, holiness fad, psychological insight. Do not become entangled in the slavery.

Brothers and sisters, grow to maturity in Christ through the marvelous means God has given. There is true life and real freedom. Say the gospel with me again:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins *to deliver us from the present evil age*, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria.

NOTES

⁹ Comics used in the PowerPoint used by permission.

¹⁰D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*, Rev. Ed. of: The New Bible Commentary. 3rd Ed. / Edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), Ga 4:21.

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¹²D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*, Rev. Ed. of: The New Bible Commentary. 3rd Ed. / Edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), Ga 4:21.

Warning from the Gospel

Galatians 5:1-14

Introduction Warning labels are interesting things:

Microwave warning – do not use to dry a wet cat.

Hair curler warning – hot, will burn if placed on skin.

Dog food warning – not for human consumption.

Router warning – this wood router is not to be used as a dental drill.

Baby stroller warning – remove baby before folding.

Finally, on a bottle of drain cleaner, the label reads: "If you do not understand, or cannot read, all directions, cautions and warnings, do not use this product." Do the warnings of the Bible sometimes sound like this to us? Do we get to the point that we don't even hear them any more?

What is the greatest danger you face?

A health danger? Is cancer your greatest danger?

A financial danger? Is losing your job, your savings or retirement frighten you?

A political danger? Does the current crop of politicians or liberals frighten you?

Danger from Muslims? Is Islam our greatest threat? Iraq? Iran?

From our text this morning, our greatest danger is none of these. The warning from the gospel is of something entirely different and for many, wholly surprising.

Two important commands form the backdrop for the rising alarm of our text this morning:

Stand firm in the freedom Christ gives. You must believe and long for the freedom Christ has saved you to. You must believe His promises and receive His grace as sons to live freed from the power and slavery of sin.

Do not submit again to the yoke of slavery. Do not return to the seeming safety and sure slavery of legalism or religion.

Now many will say and possibly some are thinking:

Your teaching on freedom from the law is dangerous; it will lead to license. Paul's response: your teaching on the law is deadly; it severs people from the grace in Christ.

Paul's teaching is of a whole. What we are learning in relation to the old and new realms will have huge impact, not only on our salvation, but, as we will see at the end of the message today, on how we are to live as Christians.

A grace warning from the gospel over a soul damning danger...

Realize What is at Stake**(v. 2-6)**

The issue for them, the error they were moving towards was accepting circumcision in order to be justified. They bought into the error that you had to have a right standing with the Jews, be connected to them through the rite of circumcision.

The Purpose of Real Warnings

As we work through this paragraph, we first must ask ourselves a question. What is being warned of? What do we do with the whole cluster of verses here in Galatians and in Hebrews warning us of eternal consequences for turning back from faith and turning to trusting in works?

The function of these texts is not to tell us that it is possible for Christians to lose their salvation. We know that the Scriptures tell us that we are born into God's family and placed into God's hand. There is no one or nothing that "unborn" us or remove us from God's hand. We are kept by the power of God until the last day.

The function of these texts is not to tell us how we can know if we are truly Christians. In other words, these are designed to say, "If you never go back to works, then you will know that you are truly a Christian." While this may be an effect of the text, it is not its intent or purpose.

Forcing these texts to answer questions they are not asking will almost certainly twist them and ruin them. These Scriptures are intended to be screwdrivers to fasten your faith tightly to Christ – do not use them to try to pound in the nails of a doctrine. They are not telling whether you can lose your salvation. They are warning people of something.

The function of these texts is to *warn those who profess faith of the grave dangers of returning to works* in the Mosaic System (or any works system, for that matter) so that we will not attempt to be justified by works but by faith. In other words, God has designed that we will hold fast to the truth of salvation by grace alone through faith alone by hearing grave warnings about eternal consequences of embracing the error of salvation by works. The function of these texts is to cause you to hear them, to be fearful of the results of listening to error and returning to works so that you hold fast to truth by faith all the way till you die. Then you will arrive safely in heaven having been saved by grace alone and persevere by faith.

So, do not twist these scriptures lest in the very twisting them to say what they do not intend they no longer function the way they were designed. Hear with faith and heed by grace the warning. Persevere because the Bible warns you to persevere and because the Bible tells you God will enable you to persevere.

Notice also how emphatic Paul is. "I, Paul, say to you..." (v. 2). "I testify again to every one who..." (v. 3) You can almost hear him pounding on the pulpit. If this were an email it would be shouted in ALL CAPTIAL LETTERS! So, when the Apostle is raising his voice and pounding the pulpit, we had better pay attention.

The Problem with Turning to Works

(v. 2-4)

“So, what is the big deal? I mean, in order to be identified as the people of God from Abraham to the cross, you had to be circumcised. Why can’t we be circumcised, just in case?” This is the kind of talk going on Skyline or Greeter’s after services in Galatia. Now in our day, no one is teaching that you have to be circumcised to be justified. But many are teaching you have to be baptized. You have to take the sacraments including mass and last rites. What’s the big deal? If a person goes back to that, as long as they have made a decision for Jesus, then what does it matter? Paul raises a fire alarm warning of the eternal consequences for embracing any error concerning your salvation.

Now, as we read through this, I want you to hear what the text says. Don’t dismiss the warning here, just because here in our church we don’t have a sterile room with a scalpel and anesthesia. There are all kinds of non-Jewish, non-Catholic works that are commonly relied on. People integrate them in or add them to grace. For example, if I ask you, “How were you saved?” and you answer me, “By going down an aisle, by saying a prayer, by making a decision, by being baptized, by being good,” you have to stop and evaluate carefully if any of these actually saved you. These are all works you did. Did any of them save you? No. If you trust in them or rely on them or even bank on their reality as the grounds of your salvation, listen carefully to what Paul is saying here. Brother and sisters, there is not one thing we do which has anything to do with our justification, our right standing with God.

So what is the problem if you begin to lean on works to be accepted by God? Four warnings here are designed to cause you to hold fast to faith and rest only on the saving work of Christ alone.

Nullifies Your Benefit in Christ

(v. 2)

You will not receive the benefits or the advantages of Christ. If you rely on works you are not relying on Christ. It is that stark. If you return to any works system of any kind, if you are relying on any works system of any kind now, you are not the recipient of the saving benefits of Christ. Do not accept any works system to have a right standing before God otherwise the only way you do stand right before God is not yours.

Makes You Accountable to the Whole Law

(v. 3)

If you do any work ordered by the Law or any work in addition to the Law, you are then responsible to everything single thing the Law demands in attitude and action every moment of your life, past and present. The Mosaic Law, the Old Covenant and the system of works cannot be parsed out or broken up in such a way that if you just do one piece you don’t have to do the rest. If the Galatian believers accept circumcision in order to be right with God, they have to do every bit of the law. If you try to do anything, any work in order to be right with God, you have to do everything right thing and you have to avoid every wrong thing. You cannot even desire what is wrong or not desire what right. You either accept by faith through grace the righteousness of Christ put to your account and rest on that alone or you have to keep every single bit of the Law. You have to be as good as God. Period.

Are Severed from Christ**(v. 4a)**

Now the tense and voice have changed. I have captured that in the heading. This is a clever play on the act of circumcision. Those who seek to have their foreskin cut away to be justified with God have in fact been cut away from Christ. The tense of the verb now shifts to evidentiary mode. In other words, those who rely on works only do so because they are in this condition. They are in fact not in Christ and their relying on the Law is because they are in fact in the realm of the Law. There, under the Law, they do not have life, are not saved and therefore are severed from Christ.

Have Fallen from Grace**(v. 4b)**

Finally, we have this concluding and summarizing sentence as a final and fearsome warning. If you rely on works you have fallen from grace. Now, I know that to many that phrase means, "you have lost your salvation." That is not what it says and not what it means. It means exactly what it says. There are only two possible schemes of salvation. One is the narrow way through faith in Christ. This is grace. The other is the broad way of all works and religion. If you profess faith in Christ and then turn to works or religion, you will not be saved. You are not in the realm of the Spirit. You are still in the realm of the flesh.

Now, if you are more worried about whether we are teaching that you can lose your salvation than whether you are relying on works you are not listening to Paul nor to this message rightly. We are not teaching that you can lose your salvation. We are warning you to hold fast to faith and rely solely on the work of Christ alone so that you will continue in faith and not turn back to works.

The Proof by New Covenant Truths**(v. 5-6)**

Now, how does Paul prove that this is true? In verses 5-6 he shows the essential expectant nature of saving faith. Saving faith is primarily believing in what Christ has done for us on the cross in view of, in the assurance of, standing before God righteous on the last day. This is the point of verse 5. What the Spirit does in those who are the sons of God is to so focus their faith that it expectantly hopes at the final judgment we are declared righteous before God based on His righteousness alone.

This verse totally does away with any mixing of the righteousness of Christ and our own as in some way or in some fashion being the grounds of my right standing before God. Faith in the finished work of Christ alone that is sustained until the day of judgment is the only vindication needed on that day. Not one thing that I do gives me hope for my final salvation. Only in who Jesus is and only by what Jesus has done will I ever, now, or then, stand accepted by God.

Those who bank on their works or add the Mosaic works of the Law or even the works of faith (Roman Catholicism and New Perspective) will be judged in the final day by that standard. And they will fall. They will come up short. They will be condemned. Their faith mixed with works will not save them. Their hope is futile. So be of those who by faith are assured to stand accepted by God through the righteousness of Christ alone!

The only thing that matters now, is faith working [ESV] or expressing itself [NLT] through love (v.6). This is the heart of the gospel in its affect on people. Saving faith expresses itself through all that love is. This is Paul's balance. While there is no work, even works of faith, that are the grounds of salvation, real faith will express itself, will work through the love. Faith is the mother and love is the child. Faith is the cause of what is done through love.

Reject Error's Destructive Persuasion (v. 7-12)

Destructive errors do not appear out of nowhere. They are taught by people. Those people and the errors they teach need to be exposed. But Paul recognized what is often true. Those who teach the errors have won the affection and even admiration of those being misled. Thus we have the language and the tone of this paragraph.

The Affect of their Teaching (v.7-9)

Paul describes the affect of their false teaching in three ways with three metaphors.

As in sports, they have stumbled in their race over the road block put in their path (v.7). The spiritual race we are all running is like cross-country, not like indoor track. The false teachers have cut in causing the runners to stumble. They have impeded their progress and hindered them from finishing well. They are getting in the way.

As in rhetoric or debate, they have been persuaded by voices other than those authorized by God (v.8). The false teachers are retraining the ears of the church and thus their ability to discern truth. They are arguing for a competing position. The false teachers are not speaking for God. Yet the church is being persuaded of error. Both the process of persuading and the ideas being persuaded of do not come from God, from the one who has called them to salvation.

As in a household, they have allowed a little bit of error to expand to where it now threatens the whole (v.9). What might appear to be small compromises to error will later grow and permeate the whole. Any error in the doctrine of salvation will contaminate and corrupt a whole system. Once leaven is in the bread, how will you remove it?

The Affirmation of their Judgment (v.10)

Having warned them of being persuaded by the false teachers, Paul expresses his confidence that they will be persuaded by him. His confidence is in the Lord. It is the Lord who will hold them to the truth. But the truth he teaches is what they must be persuaded of. He is confident that they will take no other view than his. This is not arrogance; this is an affirmation of his apostleship and their accountability to it.

His confidence in the Lord includes an assertion of impending judgment. While he has generally up to this point spoken of false teachers in the plural, he now speaks of "one" and "his" in the singular. So there was probably one primary teacher of this error surrounded and supported by many others who followed and taught the same errors. For all who persuade people to a soul damning view of

works and religion, their own penalty is sure. They will suffer the same judgment.

Here is that word, “troubling”. There is a “penalty” for the one doing so. The word here is *krima*. It means a sentence pronounced, a verdict, a decision resulting from an investigation. So a guilty verdict and sentence has been issued against this one. It is temporal in that the churches in Galatia should cast out the false leader and his cadre of teachers. It is eternal in that the view being taught is not that of the Apostles nor is its persuasion from the Lord. This is a clear warning of the responsibility of the church in this case. It is also a clear warning to those who were being persuaded and were vulnerable to defecting from Christ.

The Attack on their Influence

(v.11-12)

Paul attacks their influence on the Galatians by distancing himself from them and their views. He does this by declaring that he is not teaching what they are. That is evident not only from the content of his teaching, but its consequence. If Paul was in agreement with the Judiazers, then why did they continue to harass him and persecute him? Furthermore, preaching circumcision (works, religion, reliance on Law) removes or nullifies the scandal of the cross. The preaching of the cross was a stumbling block to the Jews, as well as foolishness to the Gentiles. If he was preaching circumcision, then that indignity would be removed.

This paragraph closes with one of the most shocking statements from Paul. He wishes that those who are unsettling the Galatians by teaching circumcision would go all the way and just emasculate themselves. Of course, if they did so, they would be disqualified from serving under the Law. They would become a shame in their culture. This does challenge our sensibilities doesn't it? But, here is how deeply Paul felt about the gospel and hated the dire threat to it from false teaching. Do we have anywhere near this sort of love for the gospel? As Hendriksen wrote on this text, “Accordingly, instead of saying, ‘Shame on you, Paul, for wishing such a thing!’ should we not rather say, ‘Shame *on ourselves*, that when in our own day and age the soundness of the gospel is being sacrificed upon the altar of ecumenicism, and when ever so many people are being led astray by a so-called gospel that recognizes no contrast between saved and unsaved, but only “the brotherhood of all men” our own cheeks have lost the ability to glow with righteous indignation!”¹³

Respond by Lovingly Serve One Another

(v. 13-14)

What do we do then if those who are in Christ are no longer under the law? Are we then allowed to simply live anyway we want. Since we are free then are we free to do anything? Isn't this the response from many even today? “O, Paul cannot be talking about how we live as Christians, but only about how we become Christians. He is talking about justification, not sanctification (*sic.*)” Except, if that were true, then this paragraph is useless. All he has to do is say, “Now since you are justified, you know how to live by faith by keeping the Law.” But that isn't even close to how he talks. This morning, I am going to briefly enter this paragraph, screw it to your hearts, then start here next week in our message, the Lord willing.

The Problem that Freedom Poses (v.13)

Ah, how easy it is to take our freedom and use it to justify our sin. Do not use our freedom from the Law as an opportunity to commit sin. Romans 5-8 are crucial to expanding on this simple problem and its necessary correction. [We will be working through that this summer as a part of our summer Adult Bible Study at 9:15am. Just because there is no law requiring you to be here don't allow your freedom to indulge the flesh in sleeping in!]. So this is the challenge. Any truth can be twisted and perverted to serve sinful aims and agendas. We do not then try to undermine that truth; rather, we seek to know what other truths put the curbs in the road.

The Principle that Limits Sin (v.13-14)

Since we are free then we must use that in love to serve one another. This is the principle that limits sin. All holy conduct is built on two commands, love God and love neighbor. Our freedom from sin and the law releases us to extravagant acts and deeds of self-sacrifice and love for others. It does not free us to serve ourselves. Why? Because when we through love serve one another, this is faith expressing itself. A claim to faith that does not produce love for others is a false and feigned faith. But true faith looks away from the realm of flesh and self-seeking avenues of expression for the good of others and the glory of God.

The Practice that Destroys Relationships (v.15)

Why does he say this now? While returning to works and Law for salvation damns souls, legalism destroys relationships. Sadly, legalism tends to foster just what Paul describes here. Reliance on law and legalism yields harshness and hardness.¹⁴ So here is the ironic warning. Watch out you who bite and devour one another with error and words lest you end up destroying one another.

So how will we respond this morning? Let me call you to these heart changes.

Conclusion

- ☐ Do you believe the gospel?
 - Do you come to Christ by grace through faith alone?
 - Have you rejected all works and religion?
- ☐ Do you love the gospel?
 - Do you realize what is at stake?
 - Do you reject error's destructive persuasion?
 - Do you respond by lovingly serving one another?
- ☐ Do you live the gospel?
 - Does the gospel shape your relationships?

Does the gospel cause you to serve others?

May God be pleased to grant us saving faith so that we will hold fast to the gospel. May God grant that we love truth so much that we will resist all who may teach contrary to it. May God grant us, in the midst of strong faith and tightly held truth to love people for the glory of God.

Notes

¹³William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, vol. 8, New Testament Commentary : Exposition of Galatians, Accompanying Biblical Text Is Author's Translation., New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001), 206.

¹⁴Paul's harshness with the Judaizers means he is treating them as "not a neighbor." They are outside the family of God attempting to destroy the truth binding the family of God together and so are enemies of the gospel, of God and of God's people. It is very interesting that Paul can go seamlessly in his own mind and writing from a dreadful statement against the Judaizers and then right away warn Christians about the tendency of legalism that he appears to have just violated!

Living by the Gospel

Galatians 5:15-25

Introduction Our study has followed two of the major sections of the letter. ¹⁵

The apostle’s authority has been declared, demonstrated and defended.

The arguments for the transforming power of the gospel and the dangers of returning to works are made.

Now we have begun the last section where the applications of the gospel for practical Christian living are worked out.

Liberty, not bondage—5:1–12

The Spirit, not the flesh—5:13–26

Others, not self—6:1–10

God’s glory, not man’s praise—6:11–18

This text also has a surprising structure. This is one of the places where Paul uses the idea of Hebrew chiasm to structure his thought. It looks like this.

Walk by the Spirit	(v.16)
Conflict with the Flesh	(v.17-18)
Works of the Flesh	(v.19-21)
Fruit of the Spirit	(v.22-23)
Crucifixion of the Flesh	(v.24)
Walk by the Spirit	(v.25-26)

If we are going to love the gospel, defend the gospel, we must also live the gospel by grace. Paul called the believers to fence their freedom by loving service to one another (v.13-15). In so doing he warned of not destroying one another in the midst of conflict. While theological debate and even division is necessary in the exposing of error, we must be careful how we interact with those who are under its sway.

So, if we are to lovingly serve one another in our freedom, what is the real challenge here? Is it the people we are dealing with? Or is there something else more essential that transcends the immediate problem with people and extends to the whole of our struggle with sin?

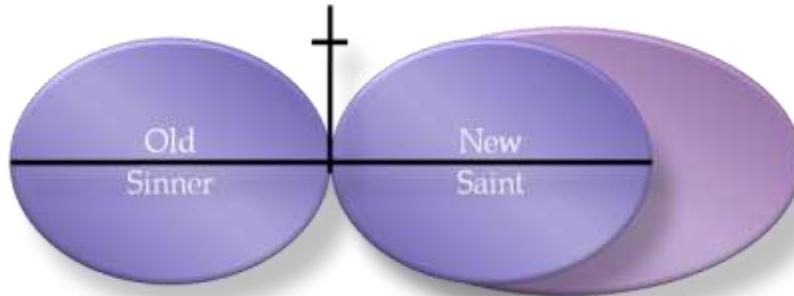
Paul Tripp summarizes this text in these words, “The essence of sin is not the breaking of rules, it is breaking of relationships.” Rules have their place to guide and guard. But the two great commandments are about relationships, love God and love neighbor.

Let’s think together about living by the gospel.

Its Principle Affirmed**(v.16)**

We live by the gospel with a promise of practical victory over sin. There is a principle here for us. This principle is grounded in a very important truth. It is simply stated as a fact and with what follows from it.

Now let us take a moment to get oriented to these two terms, flesh and Spirit. I want to do so by the diagram we have been using through the book of Galatians.



So, Paul makes a startling assertion: Walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

With the Condition

There is a condition that we walk by the Spirit. Frankly, this is much simpler than many make it out to be. In Christ, being a saint in the realm of the Spirit, is where the Holy Spirit causes all that being a saint means. The word walk here simply refers to your lifestyle, the way you live. But it is an imperative, a command. So here is what I believe this means. Live your life in Christ by the principles of being a saint, your spiritual identity, and through the power of the Spirit, your spiritual power. The opposite is to live by the principles of the old and in the power of the flesh.

In the Consequence

There is the consequence that we will not gratify the flesh's desires. Now do not hear this by saying, "you will not gratify the desires of the *body*." This is not what Paul has in mind. The flesh here is the current fallen order. Our bodies exist in the fallen order in which we are tempted. But if we order our lives by the realm of the Spirit we will not gratify the passions, cravings and lusts of the fallen world.

Its Problem Exposed**(v.17-18)**

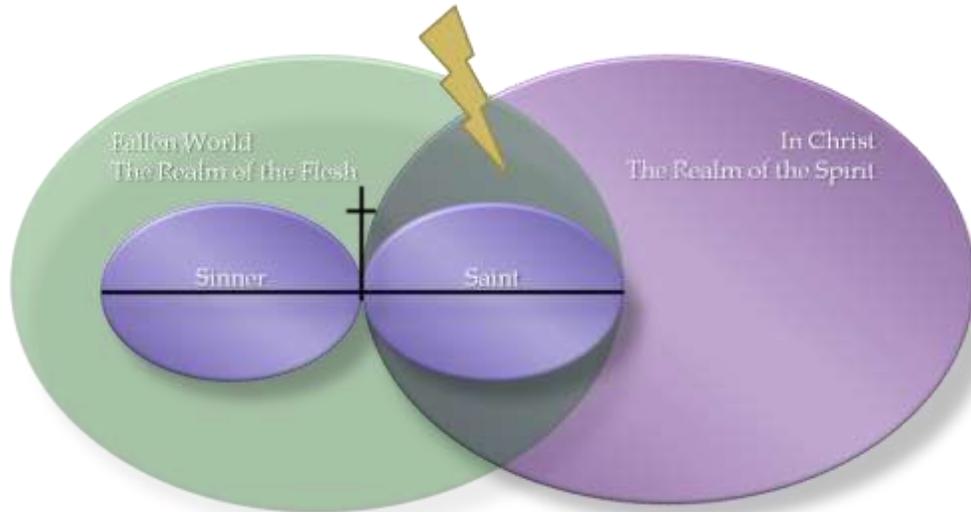
Why does Paul say it this way? Because he is locating circumcision in the realm of the flesh. Legalism and law keeping for positional and practical righteousness are the ways of the old. They cannot and do not prevent the desires of the old, both in the world and in our physical bodies. So, in the next sentence we recognize that the promise of victory is being worked out in the midst of a conflict.

The Nature of the Struggle

(v.17a)

We must understand that there is going to be a difficult struggle. While we have been delivered from the flesh and placed into the Spirit, we still physically live in the midst of the flesh, that is, in a fallen world.

Once again, think about the following diagram which helps us recognize the “already, not yet” of this deliverance.¹⁶



So the conflict is in category of desires and cravings. The Holy Spirit instills desires and cravings informed and shaped by the Word of God. These are contrary to the desires and cravings informed and shaped by the world. Because we are living at present in both worlds, there is a great struggle. This struggle is experienced in hearts. We feel the tug of the world and the sinner we used to be. We feel the urges of the Spirit out of a renewed mind by the Word.

The Effect of the Struggle

(v.17b)

This struggle is a problem because it affects what you do. You want to do what is right, the Holy Spirit prompts that desire. But even then, because of the presence of fallenness in your body and because of your presence in this world, you struggle to do what you know is right. Paul speaks often of this struggle. We experience it often. So how do we deal with it?

The Answer to the Struggle

(v.18)

In the midst of the conflict, we need to be able to answer a question which establishes who we are and where we are. Are we led by the Spirit? The solution is in locating ourselves by the truths of the Word of God. We who are led by the Spirit are not under Law. We are not under the control or the condemnation of the Law. We are in the realm where grace reigns as we live out our identity in Christ by the power of the Spirit.

Here is the practical way the principle works out in life. We know we are in the realm where the gospel promises and provides victory because we are led by the Spirit. The sense if this, in the words of someone else, is “to keep in step with the Spirit.”

Now, what does it mean to be led by the Spirit? There is a lot of confusion here. People think of the Spirit leading them as an inner voice guiding them. Nothing in this text or this book points us in that direction. Paul is saying we walk where we are led. We are led by the Word of God illuminated by the Spirit and our hearts enlightened by the Spirit. You must *never* separate Word and Spirit. The Spirit and Word are intertwined. To walk in the Spirit and to be led by the Spirit is to be Word focused.

Its Products Contrasted

(v19-23)

So what will each realm produce? If the desires of the flesh control us, what will be observable? If the desires of the Spirit control us, what will be manifested?

The Works of the Flesh

(v.19-21)

What the realm of the flesh produces is plain to all. There should be little debate about what the flesh produces. The Scriptures describe it. The world extrudes it. We do not have to wonder. The realm of flesh, the world, fallenness craves and does these things.

Here is an illustrative list of the works of the flesh. These fit loosely into four classes or categories. But this list is not arbitrary. These works of the flesh were what the people in Galatia were vulnerable to and being tempted in. These are the sins that they were committing and were trying to regulate by legalism.

Sexual

- Sexual immorality as heart cravings and physical acts of sexual sin.
- Impurity as the uncleanness by the effects of sexual sin.
- Sensuality as the orientation leading to excesses of sexual sin in debauchery.

Spiritual/Religious

- Idolatry as an orientation of the heart producing all sorts of sin in rebellion to God's will.
- Sorcery as an illicit use of natural and demonic powers contrary to God's will. The word here is *pharmakeia*.

Interpersonal

- Enmity where there are heart hostilities towards others viewing them as enemies.
- Strife as on-going conflict where there ought to be on-going peace and unity.
- Jealousy where the heart sinfully craves the undeserved and unwarranted sole attention of another.
- Fits of anger where the heart's raging and furies break forth in outbursts of unreasonable rage.

- Rivalries as the heart in hostile competition with someone where there ought to be partnership.
- Dissensions as the expression of discord contrary to God's will and dissonance with God's Word.
- Divisions as the separating out into theological sects or personal cliques where there ought to be oneness around truth, diversity in wise application and welcome to all.
- Envy where the heart craves another's place, position or possessions.

Cultural

- Drunkenness as being under the control of an intoxicating substance like alcohol.
- Orgies as participating in sensual sins with a crowd where there is a gross lack of conscience, control and sensibility.

Listen to the stern warning against the works of the flesh. This warning is intended to keep you from these sins. It is also intended to cause you to examine your profession of faith. We are warned that those who keep on doing the works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God. Why is this so?

Those who are still in the realm of the flesh do its works.

Those who are in the realm of the Spirit are in the kingdom of God.

Therefore, to continue to do the works of the flesh as a manner of life is clear evidence that you are not in Christ, in His kingdom, a recipient of His Spirit and saving graces.

The Fruit of the Spirit

(v.22-23)

In contrast is an illustrative list of the fruit of the Spirit. This list is not complete. There are many other products of the Spirit's work in our lives. These products of the inward work of the Spirit are particularly what were needed in the Galatian churches. In contrast to the chaos and categories of the works of the flesh, they are not given in categories for they are a single cluster of fruit.

- Love as both your experience and expression of sacrificial care for another. This is the forefront fruit whose character and qualities are replicated in all the rest.
- Joy as your experience and expression of delight in God and in others where the fullness of fellowship overflows into inward happiness.
- Peace as the inward quietness of your heart when submitted to the purposes and providences of God even in the midst of conflict and suffering.
- Patience as your sturdy willingness to actively wait and forbear with others until God carries out His purposes in relationships.

- Kindness is your inward bent and the outward expression in words and deeds of generosity, gentleness and goodness designed to meet the others true needs.
- Goodness is your inward desire for what is right that expresses itself in intentional acts benefiting others.
- Faithfulness is the virtue of being trustworthy and reliable to keep your word and do your task.
- Gentleness or meekness is the quality of submitting to the power of God so that your strength is under control and used for the good of others.
- Self-control is the virtue of desiring by grace to aim your will to pursue and practice God's agenda and will for your life. It is the necessary ingredient to principled and practical righteousness.

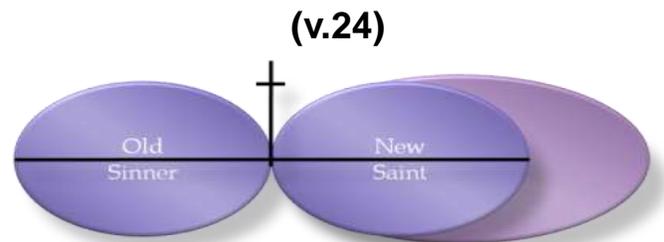
In an ironic statement, we are told that there is no law against the fruit of the Spirit. At first, this sounds odd. But he is making a point to the Judiazers: You want to function under the Law? Well, the Law does not forbid any of these fruit. So, where are these fruit in your lives? Why are you not talking about them? Why are you not emphasizing them?

Here is the problem with legalism in our growth and transformation as Christians. We are rarely legalistic about the virtues and graces emphasized by the New Covenant. We are legalistic about areas of liberty often ignoring real issues of the flesh and world fostering vile and vicious breaks of relationship.

Its Provision Explained

Parallel to verse 17, we are told how the flesh has been dealt with. From our illustration earlier we can see what Paul is saying. The flesh, the world, the old has been crucified. What does that mean? It means that while we still live in fallenness and the old still exists, it has been executed through the cross. We are separated from its power and control over us. Through all that remains in this world, that is our bodies and the world around us may tempt us but cannot make us sin.

So the flesh, as a principle and power of sin that we reside in and that remains in us, has been crucified with Christ. All those who are in Christ and belong to Christ have this provision. This provision is activated by faith. So, the reason it does not "work" for many believers is that they either do not know about it or do not actually believe it to be true. Many believers have been taught errors that mis-define the flesh, talk about two natures and thus cut the believer off from the grace that actually enables the fruit of the Spirit.



Its Practice Commanded

(v.25-26)

So, you will choose which realm you live in. Since all this is by faith, your desires, emotions and actions will all be shaped and organized by what you believe and confess. We work out what it means to live by the gospel in these two important commands.

To Walk by the Spirit

(v.25)

What this means has been the main part of this text and this message. But now, in addition to it being characteristic of those live by the Spirit, it is also a command. Living this way is not an option. It is required. To live a crucified life cultivating all the fruit of the Spirit is the privilege and power of being in Christ. It is believed in an obeying way by faith.

To Humility in our Relationships

(v.26)

So what will it look like practically? It will look like loving God and neighbor. For the believers in the churches in Galatia and for each of you, it means being humble towards others and not conceited about yourself.

Two practical ways that humility, love and the fruit of the Spirit affect our relationships. We will stop provoking and envying others. These were two particular problems in Galatia. We saw it in verse 15 where it is called, “biting and devouring one another.” But these are important for us today. Humble yourself before the Lord. Don’t look down on others from the lofty and precarious perch of self-conceit. Stop poking at others with your words and ways. Stop craving the good blessings good has given another in their position, place or possessions. Stop allowing lusts and passions of the flesh, the world, the old man you were to orient your heart. Affirm in your heart that you are dead to the old and alive in the new. The Spirit will produce His fruit if you will walk in Him.

Conclusion How do you live gospel?

Does living the gospel primarily mean trying to keep rules? Is your Christian life primarily about law or is it primarily about faith working by love?

Do you practice the evident sins of the flesh? If so, are you in Christ? Have you believed the gospel and bowed to Christ our Lord and King? Do you trust His finished work for all?

Do you struggle with the sins of the flesh? If so, in what way do you struggle? Is it a matter of will and strength? Or is a genuine belief in these principles and an active and intentional love for God and others?

Let us all walk in Spirit so that we do not gratify the cravings of the flesh and so that we do not break our relationships with one another.

May God’s grace enable all that His Word has taught and commanded us this day.

Notes

¹⁵ Adapted from Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*.

¹⁶ We will be looking at these principles more in depth this coming summer in Adult Bible Education, Sunday AM 9:15 hour.

Community by the Gospel

Galatians 6:1-18

(Preached on Biblical Counseling Sunday, May 6, 2007)

Introduction Let me introduce: ¹⁷

Bill and Jane – They are prominent members of their church, involved in many ministries. They are respected as Christians. Yet, behind the closed doors of their home, there is great trouble, terrible words, anger and sin. Where do they go for help? What will people think?

Lee – Is a single man reaching middle age. He has a good job and seems to have a good life. Inwardly there is a creeping darkness and twilight in his soul as disappointments in relationships and a growing appetite for homosexual pornography grip his heart in its deadly coils. Will the meds brighten his day? Will they quiet his conscience? Has anyone noticed as he slips away from his ministry in the church? Does anyone know? Does anyone care?

Bernice – Is a single mother with 2 children who has been recently converted. She was brought up in a pagan home and has almost no knowledge of the Bible or the faith she has professed. Her children are out of control. They disobey her, disregard her, strike out at her. She is excited about her faith and overwhelmed with the hardness of life and the consequences of sin. Who will help her?

Does the gospel say anything to people like this? Yes, the gospel is for people like this, struggling in these ways. But it comes to them in the context of community. The gospel brings us into Christ. Then publicly confessing our union with Christ through baptism, we are in the gathered community of a local church. Here there is hope and help as the Word of God is ministered publicly and privately. For each other, God has given His Word, His Spirit and His people. So the gospel brings to struggling people truth that transforms.

But there is the world who offers alternative spiritualities in the form of the psychologies. These pagan myths become absorbed as functional lies. And there are those who teach error, who bring souls into bondage by distorting the gospel.

We are launched into this portion of God's Word from verses 25-26. In the struggle with legalism overtaking a cluster of churches, Paul sees a great danger of how people will respond to one another. Being in Christ and walking with God are primarily about relationships, not rules. Breaking relationships in the church is a very big deal. There are times we must, usually focused on false teachers. But even when Judaizers are on the loose, Christians holding fast to truth must not become proud or conceited with the effect that we envy one another and provoke one another.

Instead, we must love one another in such a way that we move towards people like Lee, Bernice, Bill and Jane.

Assist the Struggling**(v.1-5)**

Here is the mandate for crises discipleship, for Biblical counseling. This short paragraph sums up the needs, focus, standards and outcomes of Biblical counseling. This is why we regularly here call Biblical counseling, Galatians 6 ministry.

Restoration in the Midst of Sin**(v.1-2)**

Biblical counseling is primarily the following ministry.

It is the ministry of the church. This text is addressed to the “brothers”. It is not addressed to a professional class of unbelievers. It is to the brothers. It is first and foremost a relational ministry in which we engage one another in the familiar love, know, speak, do.

It is a ministry to saints overcome with sin. The word “caught” here is not the idea of being found out. It is the word meaning “being run down, being overcome.” There will be Christians who will struggle with sin and need the loving and skilled crises discipleship we call Biblical counseling.

It is a ministry focused on both sin and wisdom issues. The word “transgression” here means a false step in life or a lapse from righteousness. Biblical counseling addresses the issues of the heart that bear fruit in foolish and in sinful choices. It will give both authoritative and advisory counsel, understanding that it must never confuse the two.

IT IS A MINISTRY BY THOSE WHO ARE SPIRITUAL. Now, this first means that it is to be done by Christians. But more importantly, it is done by those who are primarily walking in the Spirit and are manifesting the fruit of the Spirit. While we are all to counsel, confront and comfort one another, the Christians who are overcome with sin need the ministry of mature and skilled people.

IT IS A MINISTRY OF RESTORATION. The imperative here is to restore, to mend, to return to full usefulness. Biblical counseling’s purpose is to bring repentance, recovery and restoration. It is to counsel in such a way that repentance from the commission of sin is called for. It is to teach, instruct and help so that the person recovers from the course of sin. It is to patiently strategize so as to assist with the consequences of sin.

IT IS A MINISTRY CONDUCTED WITH A HOLY SPIRIT ENABLED ATTITUDE OF HUMBLeness, MEEKNESS AND GENTLENESS. The exercise of Biblical counseling is the most fertile field for the cultivation and growth of the fruit of the Spirit in relationships.

IT IS A MINISTRY WITH ITS OWN CLUSTER OF TEMPTATIONS AND DANGERS. Those ministering in this way must guard against legalism in their hearts that emerges as harshness, hardness, unkindness and impatience with those being counseled.¹⁸

IT IS A MINISTRY SHAPED BY THE CROSS. It is a ministry that bears the burden of another’s sins, not in a redemptive way that pays its price, but in a relational way that brings reconciliation and restoration. This cross kind of burden bearing thus fulfills the law of Christ to love people in a proactive, intentional, trajectory towards righteousness. It comes alongside the sinning saint and

shoulders the burden of sin, but does not shield them from the chastening and consequences of sin. It teaches a cross kind of mentality: *suffering now for glory later* as the model for growth and change (Hebrews 12, 1 Peter 1-2).

Responsibilities in the Midst of Ministry (v.3-5)

There are three responsibilities emphasized in the context of restoring others and in the larger context of Christian ministry shaped by relationships and not rules. These responsibilities set standards for ministry: we must measure ourselves by them and we aim to restore others to them.

YOU MUST EXAMINE YOURSELF HUMBLY (v.3). We are warned against conceit and pride in the pursuit of ministry. This occurs in your thinking, in the words that run through your mind. When you fail to see your true status before God, then you will be in your own gaze. Self-congratulation and self-adulation will be the song of your heart. Sadly, it will be a deceit. You will simply be fooling yourself with deadly effect in your ministry.

YOU MUST EVALUATE YOUR WORK HONESTLY (v.4). Through another of Paul's ironic statements, we are exhorted to honestly appraise our own works of ministry with an eye toward God's approval. In the context of walking in the Spirit, be sure that you are judging your work of ministry and doings with a sense of the same penetrating insight that you tend to focus on others. As usual, Paul is undercutting all boasting – even the inappropriate admiration of other's ministries that substitutes for working hard at doing well in our own.

YOU MUST EXERCISE YOUR MINISTRY FULLY (v.5). The ESV catches the change in word from verse 2. We are to carry one another's burdens in reference to sin. But we are to carry our own load of ministry. Examining ourselves humbly and evaluating our work honestly undergirds exercising our ministry fully. Each person in the church has a work of ministry to do. When they are overcome with sin, they usually falter in that work, fail to do it well or must be asked to step down because of being disqualified. The work of Biblical counseling is to restore a person to fellowship and to functionality in the church.

Do Good to Others (v.6-10)

Our community in the gospel calls us to help those who are struggling with sin or in ministry. It also calls us to doing good to others.

With a Respect for Your Leaders (v.6)

The church is instructed to ensure that the true teachers and leaders of the church are taken care of here. Their physical needs should be taken care of as much as is possible. Why is it stated this way?

We are to see it as a ministry of sharing out of what God has given us with others who are sharing with us out of what has given them. As a community of people led by teachers, then there is a *koinonia*, a fellowship or partnership of relational sharing that includes financial care.

The church should not think of in terms of hiring a pastor or elders. Paul addresses this issue as a community issue not an employer/employee issue. The vocational elders are not the employees of the church. They serve in exactly as any other elder and are vocationally freed to give most of their time to ministry.

The aim is to free the true teachers of the church from financial pressure to teach or speak differently. In the churches in Galatia as in many places, the true elders/pastors are financially vulnerable if false teachers start undermining their support.

As a Response to Biblical Principles (v.7-8)

You are to do good for others, to help those who are struggling and to share with your leaders because of relationships not rules. You do so as a response to Biblical principles. You understand that God has established the principles of sowing and reaping in our relationships. If you sow primarily in the realm of the flesh then you will reap what the flesh produces. If you sow in the realm of the spirit, you will reap what the Spirit produces. So, we do Biblical counseling and take care of our leaders because this is the way we sow and reap in the realm of the spirit.

In a Resolve of Hopeful Endurance (v.9)

You are to keep on doing good for others even if you do not experience the results now. You resolve to keep on with an assurance that there is a reward. You will one day reap. God may delay the harvest, the results, the reward. But nevertheless, you will reap. This confidence of God's blessing causes a sturdy and unwavering commitment to help the struggling and do good to others. This hope, this assurance, is not losing heart. Those who lose heart and give up have placed their hope in the reward, not in the God of the "due season". So, we need to shift our hope and never give up until the "due season" arrives.

With a Regard to Other's Needs (v.10)

Our responsibility to do good to others extends to all our relationships. When you have opportunity to do good, to help a neighbor, then do so. Mercy ministry to the lost is primarily if not exclusively, an individual responsibility in the context of relationships.

But the primary relationship, the "especially" of our doing good is those who are in the household of faith. So we are to share with leaders and do good to those in need in our faith community. We are, as opportunity affords, to do good to all. Paul is clearly thinking in terms of concentric rings with the priorities moving toward the center.

Pay Attention to the Apostle

(v.11-16)

In the closing of the letter, Paul puts the issues facing them and us on the table. In a simple summary he deals legalism a death blow. For our sake, he closes by focusing on the main things. He has done something very unusual in this letter. He has written it with his own hand. He has not dictated it, as usual. Because of the grave danger they are in, they must pay attention to the apostle. So must we.

Main Issue

(v.11-12a)

The main issue for the church is the focus on the realm of the flesh. The main aim of the false teachers is to make a good showing in the flesh. The word here is to put a good face on it, to make a display of religious zeal. They are more interested in how it appears than what the heart reality is. This is the problem with all legalism; piety becomes about rules and regulations. They accomplish that forcing them to be circumcised. The false teachers worked through manipulation and coercion to compel obedience to the Law in circumcision.

Main Purpose

(v.12b)

They were doing this in order avoid being persecuted and suffering for the sake of the cross. The gospel, the message of the cross, brought persecution from nearly everyone. The zealous Jews persecuted them because of the claim that Jesus was the crucified and risen Messiah. The gentiles persecuted them because of the claim that Jesus was the only sovereign king. Connecting Christianity to historic Judaism through the rite of circumcision helped lessen the pressure from both.

Many false teachers today are working hard to make Christianity as acceptable to all as possible. We have gotten to the point that neither Judaism nor pagans would even persecute most Christians. The message from Christendom is so wide that it makes a narrow target for hatred. Only the Muslims understand the threat and will slaughter even nominal professing Christians.

Main Motivation

(v.13)

They are driven by a desire to boast in what is accomplished and therefore can be measured in the flesh. Paul often exposes the motivations of the false teachers. He has done here in Galatians. He has done in many other of his letters. False teachers are not just all about ideas, they are driven by the cravings and lusts of the realm of the flesh. These desires may be carnal, but sometimes they are esoteric and intellectual. But they are motivated by being able to produce lists and check marks whereby true spirituality can be measured. The resulting emphasis on conduct and visible, measurable fruit often obscures character, the issues of the heart.

Main Remedy

(v.14)

We boast in the cross. The main remedy to legalism and false teaching is keeping the cross up front and center. If we are going to boast, then we should boast only in the cross. What is shame to others is our glory. What looks like weakness and ugliness to others is where the very saving provision and transforming power of

God are. We boast in the cross because there we have been crucified to the world and the world to us. This is simply another way of saying the underlying principles.

Can we echo this? We must be able to say, “Not only will I not boast in anything except the cross, but it is the furthest thing from my mind.” The cross is what we rely on and revel in. It is what we hold up. While we hide ourselves behind the cross, we do not hide the cross. We will boast in the cross alone.

Main Reason

(v.15)

All that matters since the cross is the new creation. That is true in the redemptive historical sense. It is true in our personal history. Whether or not a person is circumcised; whether or not a person is identified with historic Judaism or with the Jews, has no value or worth in the sight of God. All that matters is the new creation, the new realm. All that matters is what God has done in bringing about the new, first in our own hearts and lives and later throughout the whole universe.

Main Result

(v.16)

There will be peace and mercy for all who walk by this rule. He says “this rule” ironically. You want to live by rules? Here is the one rule to live by, the rule that all that matters is God’s new creation. When we live as those who have been made new then there will peace and mercy for us from God and with one another.

One final note, the final phrase of verse 16 is often cited as proof that the church replaces Israel. It does no such thing. Given the context, this phrase is referencing the true Israel, gospel believing Jews. The church does not replace Israel nor does Israel have a separate purpose from the church. In Christ, they are merged. Christ is the true Israel. So believing Jews (the remnant of Israel) and believing Gentiles are both placed into Christ. They are one yet distinct and identifiable. The wall of partition, the Law, has been broken down (Ephesians 2:11-3:11) so that in Christ we are truly one.

Galatians has been about those false teachers who caused trouble in the church by distorting the gospel (1:7). They were lead by someone who troubled the church and would eventually be punished (5:10). Finally, because Paul has taught the gospel to the church and because he is marked by the cross-like suffering in his body, they are not to trouble him any more (6:17).

In our own gathered church, we will emulate the example of Paul. We counter error and false teaching at all points we can. We call you to live primarily in the context of relationships, not by legalism. We help the struggling and do good for others. We will stand up to false teaching recognizing what are the main issues, aims, agendas and affects.

Conclusion In closing on this Biblical counseling Sunday, may I challenge you to consider:

Are you in need of Biblical counseling, crises discipleship? Have you lost the struggle with a sin? Are you overcome? Have you been faltering and failing in ministry because you know you are walking by law or living in the flesh? Is sin tearing you apart? Swallow your pride and ask for help. Allow God to use the skilled and Spirit filled ministry of the Word in personal ministry to reconcile you to God and restore you to ministry.

Do you sense a desire to become more involved in helping people? Approach your elder/pastor or Pastor Greg to indicate that desire. Be prepared to get involved in the messiness of people's lives. Avail yourself of the practical training we offer each Spring. Crucify all that remains in you of the flesh and cultivate all that the Spirit produces so as to be qualified as one who is walking in the Spirit.

By faith, accept and affirm the centrality of community – that God calls you to physically and financially support your leaders, do good to the household of faith and to all as you have opportunity. Do so as a matter of sharing and as a matter of sowing. May I say this with gratitude – you have done so very well with Dan and I. We have much more we want to do in ministry that involves facility and vocational elders. Pray for wisdom in whatever small or large way you can share and do good.

Beware of false teachers who would lead you away from your faith in Christ and adherence to the gospel. Reject all good works, all of them, as the grounds of your right standing with God. Reject any and all who teach such things. Be discerning, particularly given their ready availability through religious media and the Internet.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

As Paul did, hear this petition and blessing:

My dear brothers and sisters, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

NOTES

¹⁷ Any resemblance to any person or couple is unintended. If any of these stories are you, get help in Biblical counseling – now!

¹⁸ The common idea taught by many that the temptation is to the same sin as is being counseled simply will not stand up to the context. Contra the Judaizers who were legislating righteousness with little concern for the heart issues and the struggle people were in, Biblical counseling must have a Christ-like tenderness with people. In this flow of argument through chapter 5 to this point, the temptations then for the “one who is spiritual” would be violations of the fruit of the Spirit.

Outlines

Chapter Outlines

The following are the outlines for the studies. They are intended to be used as a guide for those who are studying along with the text itself.



Defecting from the Gospel

Galatians 1:1-10

Pastor Russ • Chapel Pulpit • Date Sunday Morning

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Pastor Russ uses the *English Standard Version* in his preaching and teaching.

His Assertion of Authority for the Gospel (v.1-2)

- ***In the Denial of Human Standing***

- ***In the Declaration of Divine Sending***

His Summation of the Essence of the Gospel (v.3-5)

- ***Its Divine Source***

- ***Its Voluntary Sacrifice***

- ***Its Delivering Strategy***

- ***Its Decisive Shaping***

- ***Its Doxological Scope***

His Indignation over their Abandoning the Gospel (v. 6-9)

- ***Its Surprising Consequence*** (v.6a)

- ***Its Turning Course*** (v.6b)

- ***Its Troubling Cause*** (v.7)

- ***Its Damning Condemnation*** (v.8-9)

His Application of his Service in the Gospel

(v.10)

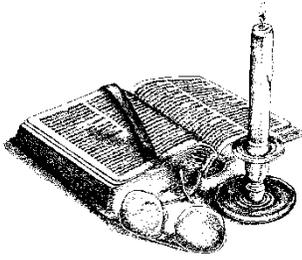
- ***In the Examination of His Motives***

- ***In the Evaluation of His Ministry***

Personal Reflection and Application

- How does my understanding of this text affect my worship and my walk?

-



Confronting with the Gospel

Galatians 1:11-2:21

Pastor Russ • Chapel Pulpit • February 28, 2007 Sunday Morning

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Introduction

His Responsibility for the Gospel Message

(1:11-24)

➤ ***His Response to the Accusations***

(v.11-12)

➤ ***His Reception of the Gospel***

(v.13-17)

His Relationship with the Jerusalem Church

(1:18-2:10)

➤ ***His Call on Peter***

(v.18-24)

➤ ***His Concerns with the Leadership***

(2:1-3)

➤ ***His Confrontation with the False Brothers***

(v.4-6)

➤ ***His Confirmation by the Apostolic Leadership***

(v. 7-10)

His Rebuke of the Apostle Peter**(2:11-21)**

➤ ***Its Need because of Peter's Actions*** (v.11-13)

➤ ***Its Nature Rooted in Christ's Work*** (v.14-21)

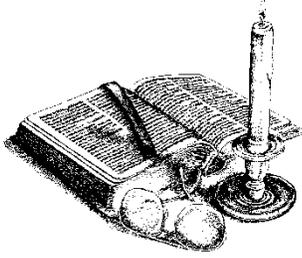
Justification - Their Standing in Salvation (v.14-16)

Crucifixion - Their Supply for Transformation (v.17-21)

Personal Reflection and Application

- How does my understanding of this text affect my worship and my walk?

-



The Law and the Gospel

Galatians 3:1-22

Pastor Russ • Chapel Pulpit • March 11, 2007 Sunday Morning

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Introduction

The Contrast to Faith

(v.1-9)

- **An Examination of their Experience of Faith** **(v.1-6)**
- **An Explanation of the Man of Faith** **(v.7-9)**

The Condemnation by the Law

(v.10-14)

- **Its Realm under the Curse** **(v.10-12)**
- **Our Rescue by the Cross** **(v.13-14)**

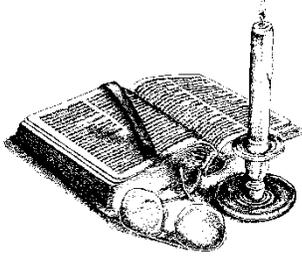
The Covenant with its Inheritance

(v.15-22)

- **The Promise to the Heir** **(v.15-18)**
- **The Purpose of the Law** **(v.19-20)**
- **The Provision through Faith** **(v.21-22)**

Personal Reflection and Application

- How does my understanding of this text affect my worship and my walk?
-



Freedom by the Gospel

Galatians 2:23-4:11

Pastor Russ • Chapel Pulpit • March 25, 2007 Sunday Morning

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Introduction

The Grand Change

(v.23-29)

➤ ***Under the Old***

(v.23-24)

➤ ***In the New***

(v.25-29)

The Glorious Provision

(4:1-7)

➤ ***As Children under the Old***

(v.1-3)

➤ ***As Sons in the New***

(v.4-7)

The Pointed Challenge

(v.8-11)

➤ ***In Principle***

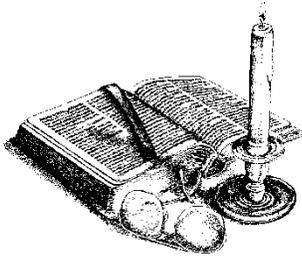
(v.8-9)

➤ ***In Practice***

(v.10-11)

Personal Reflection and Application

- How does my understanding of this text affect my worship and my walk?
-



Illustrating the Gospel

Galatians 4:12-5:1

Pastor Russ • Chapel Pulpit • April 15, 2007 Sunday Morning

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Introduction

- The Anguish Troubling their Relationship*** (v.12-20)
- ***The Personal History Uniting Them*** (v.12-15)
 - ***The Purposeful Attack Dividing Them*** (v.16-17)
 - ***The Perplexed Distress Grieving Them*** (v.18-20)
- The Analogy Correcting their Error*** (v.21-27)
- ***A Strategy to Confront Error*** (v.21)
 - ***A Biblical Argument to Clarify Truth*** (v.22-26)
 - ***The Biblical Grounds for Interpretation*** (v.27)

The Assertions Applying the Gospel**(v.28-5:1)**

- ***We are children of the promise.*** (v.28)
- ***The flesh and the Spirit are in conflict.*** (v.29)
- ***Those in the flesh are removed from the household.*** (v.30)
- ***We are children of the Spirit and are free.*** (v.31)
- ***We must stand in the truths of the gospel.*** (5:1)

Conclusion**Stand in your freedom.****Do not submit to slavery again.**

Personal Reflection and Application

- How does my understanding of this text affect my worship and my walk?

-



Warning from the Gospel

Galatians 5:1-14

Pastor Russ • Chapel Pulpit • April 22, 2007 Sunday Morning

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Introduction

Realize What is at Stake

(v. 2-6)

➤ ***The Purpose of Real Warnings***

➤ ***The Problem with Turning to Works***

(v. 2-4)

Nullifies Your Benefit in Christ

(v. 2)

Makes You Accountable to the Whole Law

(v. 3)

Are Severed from Christ

(v. 4a)

Have Fallen from Grace

(v. 4b)

➤ ***The Proof by New Covenant Truths***

(v. 5-6)

Reject Error's Destructive Persuasion**(v. 7-12)**

- ***The Affect of their Teaching*** **(v.7-9)**
- ***The Affirmation of their Judgment*** **(v.10)**
- ***The Attack on their Influence*** **(v.11-12)**

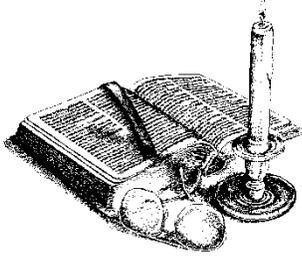
Respond by Lovingly Serve One Another**(v. 13-14)**

- ***The Problem that Freedom Poses*** **(v.13)**
- ***The Principle that Limits Sin*** **(v.13-14)**
- ***The Practice that Destroys Relationships*** **(v.15)**

Conclusion

Personal Reflection and Application

- How does my understanding of this text affect my worship and my walk?
-



Community by the Gospel

Galatians 6:1-18

Pastor Russ • Chapel Pulpit • May 6, 2007 Sunday Morning

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Introduction

Assist the Struggling

(v.1-5)

- ***Restoration in the Midst of Sin*** **(v.1-2)**
- ***Responsibilities in the Midst of Ministry*** **(v.3-5)**

Do Good to Others

(v.6-10)

- ***With a Respect for Your Leaders*** **(v.6)**
- ***As a Response to Biblical Principles*** **(v.7-8)**
- ***In a Resolve of Hopeful Endurance*** **(v.9)**
- ***With a Regard to Other's Needs*** **(v.10)**

Pay Attention to the Apostle**(v.11-16)**

- **Main Issue** (v.11-12a)
- **Main Purpose** (v.12b)
- **Main Motivation** (v.13)
- **Main Remedy** (v.14)
- **Main Reason** (v.15)
- **Main Result** (v.16)

Conclusion

Personal Reflection and Application

- How does my understanding of this text affect my worship and my walk?
-