

FORWARD

What will be our legacy as a Southern Baptist Denomination? I believe we have lost sight of the two key principles that made us who we are. Those principles are: First – we were known as a *People of the Book*. This meant we held to the inerrancy of the Word of God. Today we have over one thousand different versions of the Bible. People tend to disagree on which version or translation is the best. We live in a world where we pick and choose which of God’s teachings we are going to believe, and which ones do not apply to us. The Second key principle, we as Southern Baptist adhere to is the Cooperative Program of our Convention. The Cooperative Program is designed for each of our churches to pool our resources to provide mission ministry all over the world. Together we are stronger, and we can do much more.

However, if you were to ask the average person on the street you might hear something entirely different. One person might say, *you people don’t know what you believe*. Another reputation we have is our *Do’s and Don’ts* practices. People believe we are a bunch of rules and regulation folks. Some of these things include – you are not really saved until you are baptized in our church baptistry. We don’t care that you have been an excellent Bible Study leader for 20 years in another Southern Baptist Church, you cannot teach here for at least a year after you join. – Speaking of joining a Southern Baptist Church, there are three basis ways to join a church but churches different in their church policy. – you can’t dance, and you are a lower-class Christian if you get a divorce. And that means you sure cant serve in our church. We tend to not accept you if you don’t look or act like us. Yes, we do give off an arrogance that you have to be like us to be a part of us. We have our requirements in addition to what the Word of God teaches.

In our study of the Book of Galatians, we are going to see the Apostle Paul confronting these false teachings of the Judaizers concerning these rules, regulations, and rituals. The Jews had taken the Ten Commandments given by God and turned them into 613 oral laws of do’s and don’ts. The Judaizers had infiltrated the churches in Galicia and was teaching that these new born-again believers must become Jews before they could be a true believer. The Apostle Paul is going to confront these false teachers and address their false teachings as he defends the true Gospel of Christ Jesus. In 6 chapters, 150 verses, Paul is going to proclaim that faith and trust in Christ Jesus is all on needs to be saved and secure in God’s Kingdom.

Study of Galatians

Claiming Faith Finding Freedom

Introduction

Galatians is a magnificent defense of the Gospel of Grace that Paul preached all of his born-again life to the Jews and Gentiles alike.

The Galatian church was under great pressure to conform to the law.

That means they were to add works to their salvation.

The teaching (requirement) was an abomination to the Apostle Paul.

Paul knew that Christ purposefully came to set us free from the law.

This letter to the Galatian church is a passionate exploration of Grace verses the Law.

In this study we will examine this all-important subject of Grace verses Law in great detail.

Paul will be using books of the law like Leviticus and Deuteronomy to make the case that faith has always been God's method for salvation.

I believe very few Christian and non-believers realize or understand the freedom one receives through transferring one's trust from themselves to Christ Jesus.

Paul's letter to the Galatians was addressed to a group of churches in Galatia which is now a region of modern Turkey.

Paul had preached the Gospel message to and in these churches.

Paul is writing this letter to counter those who have infiltrated the group and teaching that Christians must keep the Old Testament Law in order to be accepted by God.

In chapters 1-2, Paul begins with a defense of his authority as an Apostle.

In chapters 3-4, Paul makes it clear that all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, alike, enjoy complete salvation in Christ Jesus.

In chapters 5-6, Paul is going to show them (and us) how the Gospel of God's grace leads to true freedom and godly living.

Perhaps the central message of the Galatian letter is *a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Christ Jesus (2:16)*.

As to the date of the letter, it is believed that Paul wrote the letter of Galatians between A D 48 and A D 58.

NO OTHER GOSPEL
There is only One Gospel!
Galatians 1:1-9

Introduction

Since the beginning of Christianity, people have tried to redefine and change the Gospel.

Some would declare that the Gospel in doing good works.

Others define the Gospel as abstaining from certain behaviors.

The Gospel is simply this:

“The Good News that Christ came and died for our sins so that we might become sons and daughters of God Himself.”

A woman (been a new Christian less than four weeks) came into the pastor’s office, she threw her Bible down on his desk and said, “I quit! I can’t do it, and I will never be able to.”

Do what, the pastor ask.

Do the Christian life, she answered. After what I heard last night, I know I will never be able to live the Christian life. So, I’m turning in my Bible, I quit!”

As a young follower of Christ trying to get started on her Christian walk, she was given a check list that included:

- 1). How much time do you spend in prayer?
- 2). How much time do you spend each day reading the Word of God?
- 3). How much time or home many times do you spend witnessing to someone?

These were only a few of the hundred items listed on that list.

That night in church had almost convinced the young woman that she would be responsible for her failures in keeping all the rules and regulations.

She was going to have to stand before an angry God and answer for her actions.

For some reason, man has an incurable desire to replace the wonderful grace of Christ Jesus with rules and regulations.

We are guilty as charged.

This tendency to add to the grace of God is not a new phenomenon.

Paul's letter to the Galatian churches is proof that the problem plagued many of the first century churches as it does for modern churches today.

One is considered to be a good Christian based upon their ability to do or not do certain things

This is called legalism because it is a return to the law – to obey the rules and regulations set by man.

The Galatian letter was written to be a group of Christians who were about ready to turn in their Bibles and say I quit.

Paul's letter was what turned the tide.

His intervention through this letter kept them from returning back to legalism.

Many Gentiles became Christ followers through Paul's ministry and preaching.

However, just as they were getting established in their Christian faith, some false teachers (Judaizers) came over from Jerusalem and began to corrupt. Their faith by teaching that one is not complete until it was accompanied by the observance of the Old Testament.

This was an open attack of the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

These attacks came in two forms.

FIRST – Those who want to subtract something from the Gospel.

Example – You don't need to believe in the virgin birth of Jesus to be saved.

SECOND – Those who want to add works, rules, and rituals in order to receive the Gift of Salvation.

Either one of these corrupts the purity of the work of Christ Jesus has done to bring our complete salvation.

Paul, when he was Saul of Tarsus, was a pious Jew who practiced and believed in keeping the law and the man's additions to it in order to have a future with his Heavenly Father.

All of this changed when he met Christ on the road to Damascus.

At that point he realized salvation was a free gift from Christ Jesus.

At this time, Paul realized that God's wonderful and overwhelming love could not be earned.

It was because of these things, we find Paul denouncing the teaching of the Judaizers in some of the strongest language found in the New Testament.

One of the first lines of attack by the legalists was their attempt to discredit Paul.

These Judaizers believed that if they could deny or explain away Paul's apostleship, they would be able to destroy his credibility.

The way they would do this would point out the fact that since Paul was not a personal (handpicked) disciple of Christ Jesus, he could not claim the same inspirations as those who were.

These Judaizers said that Paul's Gospel had been communicated to him by a human source and therefore had no authority.

Paul's purpose in writing the letter to the Galatians was two-fold.

FIRST – To clear up any confusion about his identity and his authority.

SECOND – To clarify the message of God's grace that he had been preaching.

I. PAUL IS A TRUE **MESSENGER** (1:1-2)

Notice how Paul begins his letter.

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 and sisters who are with me.

Paul begins by establishing the fact that he is a true messenger of God.

If Paul is not God's Apostle, then these Galatians could disregard anything he might say. So from the word go, Paul wanted it understood that as a true messenger, the Gospel he preached was not handed down by man but came directly from God.

So, what were the conditions for one to be qualified and considered to be an Apostle?

FIRST – A true Apostle must have been with Christ from His baptism to His resurrection.

Paul was the only exception to this stipulation.

He speaks of himself as an Apostle “born out of due time”
(1 Corinthians 15:8)

SECOND - Another quality of a true Apostle was to have received a direct revelation from God.

Paul claims such a revelation in verse 11, ***For I would have you know, brothers, that the Gospel that I preached is not according to man’s gospel for I neither received it from man. Nor was I taught it, it came through the Revelation of Christ Jesus.***

Paul was not one of the twelve, but his call was just as real as theirs has been.

They had seen Jesus.
So had Paul.

Paul was an Apostle of the LORD Jesus Christ.

That makes him qualified to deliver the message of the true Gospel.

The reason the false teachers wanted to discredit Paul was so that they might discredit his doctrinal teachings.

You see, Paul taught that the death of Christ satisfies every claim of divine justice upon man – Christ Himself is the sole and sufficient Savior.

In fact, these false teachers did not deny Christ.

They taught that Christ wasn’t enough, and the law was the completion of the Gospel.

Paul responded to this heresy in 2:21;

I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness (justification) came through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

Now with Paul’s authenticity as an Apostle sent by the LORD Jesus Christ, he moves to defend the true Gospel in all its purity that he preached.

II. THE TRUE MESSAGE (1:3-4)

To the churches in Galatia; Grace to you and peace from God our Heavenly Father and the LORD Jesus Christ, (4) who gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God – our Heavenly Father,

First, we saw how Paul dealt with his own CREDITIBILITY as God’s messenger.

Paul now turns his attention on the CONTENT of the message of the Gospel.

We will discover in the first two chapters of this letter that the word “Gospel” is found ten times.

Paul gives his usual greeting of grace and peace.

In these opening words, Paul is going to give us three major truths about Christ’s death (v 4)

FIRST – Christ’s death was VOLUNTARY (v 4a)

Christ *gave Himself* for sins.

No one forced Jesus to go to the Cross.

John 19:10-11, *Do you not know that I have the authority to release you ... (11) Jesus answered Pilate, you would have no authority over Me at all unless it had been given you from above.*

Christ chose to go to the Cross of His own free will.

SECOND – Christ’s death was VICARIOUS (v 4a)

The word *vicarious* means to do something on behalf of another person.

To do something in someone else’s place.

Paul points out that Christ died for *our* sins.

*I owed a debt that I could not pay-
Christ paid a debt He did not owe.*

Christ went to the Cross where each one of us deserved to go.

Christ chose to die in the place where we deserved to die.

Christ paid the penalty for our sins – He took our place.

Christ chose to go to the Cross in our **PLACE** to pay the **PRICE** our sin deserved.

Christ died on the Cross *voluntarily*.
Christ died on the Cross *victoriously*.

THIRD - Christ Death was **VICTORIOUS** (v 4)

Paul tells us what the results of Christ's dying on the Cross was.

*He gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age.
According to our Heavenly Father.*

The word translated *deliver* suggest that Christ has conducted a successful rescue operation.

Christ has set us free from the one who held us captive.

We, as born-again believers have been rescued from the evil one in this evil age.

Knowing that Christ Voluntarily gave Himself for us ...

Knowing that Christ vicariously took our place on the Cross. ...

Knowing that Christ has victoriously set us free from the grips of the devil

How do you think it makes Christ feel when we try to add some human effort to that which He has already done?

This is exactly what was happening in the churches in Galicia.

This is what angered Paul and caused him to write this letter instructing them in the faith.

The Gentile believers in these churches were being taught that what Jesus did through His death on the Cross wasn't enough.

Paul is going to continue to challenge this dangerous idea throughout this letter (3:1-3).

So, what is the Gospel?

- 1). Christ died
- 2). Christ was buried
- 3). Christ rose again.

Christ death was on our behalf as the sinless Son of God.

This is the pure Gospel of the Grace of God.

Paul's opening statement is clear to these questioning Galatian Believers.

The true messenger was from God – not from man.
The true message was of God's grace.

Paul corrected these believers by saying *it is not a matter of law **and** grace – it is a matter of law **or** grace.*

It is grace and grace alone!

III. THE FALSE **MESSAGE** (1:6-7)

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ and you are turning to a different gospel – (7) not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

Paul was **ASTONISHED**, shocked, and overwhelmed that the Galatians have so quickly turned away from the true message of the Gospel.

Paul **ACCUSES** his readers of turning their backs on the LORD Jesus Christ.

The Language Paul uses here refer to a military revolt and a change of attitude.

Illustration

John Walker Linch was born in Washington D.C. on February 9, 1981. At the age of 16, he converted to Islam and traveled to Yemen in 1998. In 2000, he went to Afghanistan to aid the Taliban. He was trained as a terrorist to kill as many Americans as possible. He was captured in November 2001 and brought to trial in the United States Federal Court on February 2002. He accepted a plea deal for 20 years without parole

Paul is saying these turncoats are traitors – they have changed sides.

Remember – it was our LORD who said, *whoever is not with Me is against Me* (Luke 11:23)

Paul wants to make it **CLEAR** about their decisions.

They were not just exchanging one set of opinions for another.

They were not merely preferring one acceptable way to God over another.

They were leaving God Himself.

Paul tells us in two specific words of the seriousness of this erosion of the grace of God.

We see in verse 6, that Paul is referring to their new doctrine as a ***different gospel***.

The word ***different*** in the Greek is *heteros* and means being attracted to the opposite sex.

They have a strong appeal or desire for the opposite.
A different gospel.

The second phrase is ***which is not another***.

The word ***another*** means “*another of the same variety*.”

Paul uses this play on words to point out that while they think they have a gospel, they don't have any gospel at all.

There is no compromise when it comes to the Gospel of our LORD Jesus Christ.

Next Paul is going to conclude this test by describing the one who is spreading this false message.

IV. THE FALSE **MESSENGER** (vv 8-9)

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. (9) as we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone is preaching (teaching) you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

These are strong words, wouldn't you say?

Even an angel from heaven – created by God with authority cannot defy or overrule the authority of God.

Lucifer was preaching a gospel that did not or does not originate with God.

The word ***accused*** means *to be set aside to God for destruction*.

The one who preaches or teaches a false gospel exposes himself to an awful penalty.

They are in the hands of our living Jehovah God.

God knows who they are and set them aside for damnation.

The Galatians thought Paul really didn't mean what he was saying.

So, Paul repeats himself in verse 9.

As we have said before, so now I say again: if anyone is preaching (teaching) to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

This is the very same thing he said in verse 8.

Paul wanted to remove any doubt.

This is a serious issue.

Don't mess with the Gospel of our LORD Jesus Christ!

In our present age of tolerance, easygoing compromising religious life – Paul's words will sound a bit harsh.

We are victims of culture conditioning that we will just about accept anything in the name of Religion.

After all people do have the right to believe what they want!

Tolerance is the new normal.

Paul is drawing a line in the sand.

Paul said it is time to choose sides.

Joshua 24:14-15, ***Now therefore fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the river and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. (15) And if it seems evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.***

Satan wants to keep Christians from the true Gospel, so he has presented a *water down* version.

He doesn't want you to stand up for the true Gospel of our LORD Jesus Christ.

It has become increasingly popular to try to take Buddhist or New Age beliefs and combine them with mile Christian traditions.

There is a term for this modern endeavor to pick and choose ideas from various religions and combine them into one belief; it is called *syncretism* and it is a dangerous practice.

Paul wanted to make the difference and distinctions very clear to these readers.

Paul is telling his readers – there is only one true Gospel of God’s grace.

Paul is telling his readers, those who preached or teach a false gospel are accursed because they lead people down a primrose path that will lead them in the eternal fire forever.

Tolerance has become our downward fall.

We think we are being good if we go out of our way and come to a Bible Study class or a church service.

We are doing God a favor.
We are trying to stay on His good side.

God sees right through this ----
He desires to turn and trust Him with all we have.

Illustration.

Back in 1987, 18-month-old baby Jessica fell 22 feet into a Texas well and the who nation watched as she crawled her 18-month-old body up the sides of the well, inch by inch, digging in her little toes and working her way up. She’s a hero, that Jessica!

But that was not the true story. In reality, baby Jessica was utterly helpless. Rescuer’s labored non-stop to save her and after 55 grueling hours, her life hanging in the balance, they finally reached her and extracted her from the well.

When it comes to our own salvation, like Baby Jessica – we can’t save ourselves. Our only hope is in the Gospel of God’s grace.

One day we were at rock bottom and Christ reached down and rescued us.

Jesus made the way and there is no other.

GRACE UNDER FIRE
Galatians 1:10-24

Whenever people are presented an uncomfortable truth, their first reaction is typically to attack the credentials of the messenger.

These false teachers were no different.
They tried to discredit God's chosen Apostle.

In this study, we will examine God's mercy and His grace.

Mercy is God withholding from us what we deserve.
Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve.

As we study this letter, we see mercy is God saving the Apostle Paul and grace is God calling Paul to be an Apostle.

Remember, Saul was God's chief enemy and was out to destroy everything that represented Christ Jesus.

Paul continues to defend his authority as an Apostle and his independence as far as the Gospel is concerned.

I. REVIEWING THE BASIS FOR PAUL'S MESSAGE (v 10)

For am I now seeking to 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.

Paul admits this has not always been true.

In his life before Christ he was out to please men.

He said, *if I still please men...*

Saul was seeking the approval of the world.

This was no longer true for the Apostle Paul.

Paul's opponents from Jerusalem were accusing him of making up his message of grace and freedom from the law.

They accused Paul of doing this in order to grow in popularity with the Gentiles.

Are the strong words Paul uses in verses 8-9 the words of someone who is trying to please people?

Paul had just stated that anyone who preaches/teaches a gospel that is not the Gospel of God's grace, was not a follower of Christ Jesus.

The Apostle Paul makes it clear here that as the bondservant of Christ Jesus his only desire in communicating the message of free grace is to please God.

Next, Paul is going to cover where his Gospel message came from.

II. REVIEWING THE **BEGINNING** OF PAUL'S MESSAGE (vv 11-12)

For I would have you know, brothers, that the Gospel that was perched by me is not man's gospel. (12) For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Paul understood that the Judaizers who accused him of watering down the gospel were themselves governed by the traditions of men.

Paul was governed by a message from God, and he makes three points in this section.

FIRST – It was not an invention – he did not **FABRICATE** it.

The true Gospel was *not according to man*

The false teachers were accusing Paul saying, *well, you probably just made that up. You did it because you wanted people to like you more. Who wouldn't want the grace of God.*

Paul's reply, *No, it wasn't my invention.*

What I preach comes from God not man

SECOND – It was not a tradition – he did not **INTIMATE** it.

Paul goes on to say, *I neither received it from man*

Some thought Paul had gotten together and concocted this teaching about God's grace.

Paul denies this accusation as well.

THIRD - It was not an instruction – he did not **ASSIMILATE** it.

Paul concludes with, *nor was I taught it*

Paul declared that the Gospel of God's grace came to him unconditionally straight from Jehovah God.

This message came from the heart of the Almighty God to this Apostle.

Paul has clearly answered his critics.

His message came through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit from God through Jesus Christ.

Next on Paul's heart is to prove these facts of his own life that there was no way this Gospel could have come from man.

III. REVIEWING THE **BACKGROUND** OF PAUL'S MESSAGE (vv 13-24)

Paul is going to tell his life story in his testimony based on three parts.

His life before he encountered Christ.
His life events during his conversion to Christ.
His life since become a Christ follower.

Paul is going to use his life story to prove that there would be no way for him to be coached concerning the issue at hand.

So, let's look at these times in Paul's life.

FIRST – What Happened to Paul Before His **CONVICTION** (vv 13-14)

For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. (14) And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.

Paul gives his testimony, so he can make the point that he is the most unlikely candidate to ever trump-up a Gospel according to God's grace.

So, Paul begins by telling us who he was before he met Christ.

1). Paul **PERSECUTED** the church and was out to destroy it. (v 13)

Paul was a devout Jew.
Paul was a strict Pharisee.

Paul believed that persecuting and killing Christians was not on his religious gun.

Paul took his gruesome assignment seriously.

Acts 22:4-5
Acts 26:10-11

This was what Paul was doing when he encountered Christ on the Road that day.

Apparently, he ran out of Christians in Jerusalem and he wanted to pursue them in Damascus.

This is what Paul is saying about himself.

We are hearing his testimony about who and what he was before he became a born-again believer.

We know this about Saul of Tarsus.

He was a rebel.

His mind was made up.

He was a zealot.

Bottom line – he was an absolute, totally committed, all in, nothing-left-on-the-table persecutor of the things of God.

2). Paul **PRACTICED** the traditions of the Law (v 14)

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 father.

According to Paul, himself, he was on his way to top of his Jewish religion far above any of his peers.

Paul was a good Jew.

Paul did everything by the book of the law.

Paul put into practice what he believed.

We have more detailed information in the Philippians letter, (3:5-6)

Here Paul is going to list seven steps he had already accomplished on his way to the top.

- * He was circumcised on the eighth day.
- He was of the stock of Israel
- Jew was of the tribe of Benjamin.
- He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews
- He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees
- He was a zealous persecutor of the church
- He was blameless before the law.

Paul was head of his class – on the dean’s list.

His credentials were impeccable.

Bottom line, Paul was a great Hebrew, a great Jew.

He had no reason to leave what he had accomplished.

Why would he want to change?

Why would he walk away from all of this?

So, what happened that changed him?

SECOND – What happened to Paul at His **CONVERSION**. (vv 15-16)

But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by His grace, (16) 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.

The story of Paul's conversion is so important that it is recorded in the New Testament *five* different times.

Acts 9

Acts 22

Here Paul defends himself before the Jews in Jerusalem.

Acts 24, 26

He appears before Roman governors, Festus and Felix.

Philippians 3

I Timothy 1

Here Paul shares his testimony with his young protégé.

The common denominator in each of these testimonies is that Paul's conversion didn't come gradually.

Paul was changed instantly, and he became a new creation in Christ Jesus.

So, let's look back in verses 11-12.

Notice the pronoun "**I**" – it is remarkable how many times Paul refers to himself.

Now compare these verses with verse 15.

The "**I**" in Paul's conversation have been replaced with "**GOD**" and pronouns referring to God.

Before Paul's conversion it was all about him.

Now it is all about God.

That should be the natural affect when one truly comes to faith in Christ Jesus.

Before, Paul was self-centered.
Now Paul was Savior-centered.

THIRD – What Happened to Paul **AFTER** his conversion?

Verses 17-24 tells us!

In these verses, Paul gives a detailed account of his experience since his conversion.

Paul wanted to demonstrate that he did not have the time nor opportunity to be educated in some new doctrine.

Once again, Paul's experience, his education, and his exhortation came all from Jehovah God and Him alone.

1). A time of **ISOLATION** with the LORD. (vv 17-18a)

Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were Apostles before me, but I went away to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. (18) then after three years...

Paul went on a personal retreat after he was converted to Christianity.
Paul went to the desert of Arabia and stayed there for three years.

There are a lot of opinions to what was going on in Paul's life during those three years.

Here is a thought.
Jesus had spent three years teaching and training His disciples/Apostles.

Paul was not enrolled in his **MASTER**'s School of learning.
Here he was taught how to live his Christian life.
Here he was taught how to lead in his Christian life.

According to Paul, he had no contact with humanity.

Paul got his message from God in the School of Theology in the Desert Arabia University.

2). This was a time of **INTERACTION** with Peter and James. (v 19)

Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Peter and remained with him fifteen days. (19) But I saw none of the other Apostles except James, the LORD's brother.

3). This was a time of **IMPORTANCE** in Syria and Cilicia (v 21)

Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

Paul is making the point that he was not in the mainstream of what was going on in Christendom.

Paul was saved in an inordinately strange and dynamic way.

After his conversion, he spent three years in the desert with no body but the LORD.

Then he spent 15 days with Peter and a little bit of time with James.

Then he headed off to Cilicia and Syria.

4). A time of **INFLUENCE** in Judea. (vv 22-24)

And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. (23) They only were hearing it said, 'he who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy' (24) And they glorified God because of me.

Paul wasn't influential because of what he was saying or because of what he was doing.

He was influential because of what these people had heard about Paul.

Paul had a tremendous reputation as an enemy to Christ and His churches.

Now, People saw the life-change in his heart that only Christ could do, they were **AMAZED**.

The Word of God says all they could do was praise and glorify God.

Paul's past reputation some three years later, still made it difficult for him getting started in his calling as a missionary of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

People were having a hard time trusting him.

People thought Paul's conversion story was simply a ploy to get inside the fellowship of the Christians, so he could cause more havoc on the churches.

Acts 9:13-14 tells us that Ananias did not believe the story at first.

Acts 9:21 tells us that the people in Damascus did not believe him as well.

Acts 9:26, when Saul tried to join the disciples in Jerusalem, they did not trust him.

It was only when they saw God's grace displayed in Paul's life did they turn and praise Jehovah God.

They didn't praise the preacher.

They did glorify God.

These folks were living out Matthew 5:16, ***In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven***

Saul of Tarsus

It is well known fact that the Apostle Paul was first known by another name "Saul of Tarsus."

For the most part, people have not bothered to find out what exactly Tarsus referred to.

Tarsus simply identifies a city in southern turkey on the Mediterranean Sea where Paul was born.

Tarsus has a rich history that included a conquest by Alexander the Great as well as a secondary home for Anthony and Cleopatra.

Tarsus is still standing today.

One can visit this thriving city and walk on Roman roads that the Apostle Paul likely would have walked on himself.

THE FREEDOM FIGHTER

Galatians 2:1-10

Introduction

There are not many people who enjoys confrontation.
Most of us will do anything to avoid having to take a stand.

Not so with the Apostle Paul.
Paul didn't possess the Spirit of Fear and timidity.

It would have been easy for {Paul to be passive – after all he was the new kid on the block.

However, Paul knew that God's truth would win out.
Some he bravely presented the Gospel in one of the most crucial passages in the New Testament.

Illustration

Earnest Hemingway was an author primarily known for *For Whom the Bells Tolls*. However, his life story is a study in the poisonous power of legalism. Interestingly enough, his grandparents were devout evangelists who attend Wheaton College, a famous Christian school in Illinois. His parents were also professing Christians but had developed to the fullest that brand of Christianity that is judged by one's adherence to the rules and regulations of religion.

When Hemingway began living his sinful lifestyle, his mother refused to allow him in her presence. One year for his birthday, she mailed him a cake along with the gun his dad had used to kill himself. Another year, she wrote him a letter explaining that a mother's life is like a bank. She wrote *the child makes withdrawals, but no deposits during all the yearly years. Later when the child grows up, it is his responsibility to replenish the supply he has drawn down.*

Hemingway's mother then proceeded to spell out all the specific ways in which Earnest should be making deposits to keep the account in good standing. She listed among other things, flowers, candy, fruity, and paying of mother's bills. *And above all, she wrote a determination to stop neglecting your duties to God and your Savior Christ Jesus.*

Sadly, Earnest Hemingway never got over his hatred for his mother or for her Savior.
(David Jeremiah Study Guide of Galatians, (p38)

In Paul's early years as God's missionary, Paul preached salvation in a series of churches in the Roman Province of Galatia.

Now, Paul has learned that some religious leaders from the old school had made their way into those churches and were calling Paul's views and his authority into question.

False teachers were introducing the old ways and forcing rules, rituals, and regulations on these church folks.

Basically, the old false religious teachers were going so far as to use their strong-arm religious tactics to intimidate these Christians to change their way of thinking.

Illustration

The problem with legalists is that not enough people have confronted them and told them to get lost...they are grace-killers. Legalist drive off every new Christian you bring to the church. The legalists are enemies to God and to our faith. (Saul of Tarsus was a legalists) (p39).

In Galatians 2, Paul continues to defend himself against the accusations of the false teachers from Jerusalem

These false teachers were driven by one thing – **FEAR**.

You see, those who have control over you will do almost anything to keep you in bondage.

When one studies the Book of Acts, this control issue is evident.

There is a great concern in the hearts of those would-be leaders from Jerusalem that they were losing their control over the people.

The standard manifesto for any false teacher is when they cannot find a way to attack the message they turn on the messenger.

Paul had already told these critics that the message he brought did not come from some theological think-tank.

The message Paulo brought came from the LORD that the Holy Spirit had to him.

In this section of Scripture from Galatians, Paul is going to make a different point.

The Judaizers have come back now with a different accusation.

Now they are accusing Paul of preaching a different Gospel than the one Joh had taught.

Paul is going to respond to this attack in this portion of our text by proclaiming that his preaching of the Gospel came from the LORD and is in fact the same Gospel the Apostles were preaching/teaching.

In Galatian 2:1-10, Paul will be describing his most significant trip to Jerusalem after he became a born-again believer.

Paul had one goal in mind.

To demonstrate that the gospel he taught to the Gentiles was in fact the same Gospel being taught by the Apostles.

I. PAUL'S **APPOINTMENT** IN JERUSALEM (2:1-2)

Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. (2) I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the Gospel that I proclaimed among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.

Note about Titus.

Although Titus is not named once in the Book of Acts, his name appears in the New Testament thirteen times. His legacy and importance would still be great if all we knew of him was his role in vindicating Paul before the leaders of the early church. But Titus also aided Paul greatly in other evangelistic efforts. Along with Paul, Titus introduced Christianity to the Island of Crete, and remained there long after to firmly establish the church there. We also know from 2 Timothy 4:10, that Titus was sent to be a missionary to Dalmatia, which was a Roman Province on the Adriatic Sea. Ancient Dalmatia would be located today in southern Croatia.

FIRST – The **SEQUENCE** of events (v 1a)

Paul begins by writing, *Then, after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem...*

Remember that after Paul's conversion, he spent the first three years of his Christian life in the desert of Arabia.

In Galatians 1:18, we are informed that the end of those three years, he visited with Peter in Jerusalem for fifteen days.

We are told that during that time he also saw James but on one else.

Paul included this information in chapter one because it was essential for him to establish his independence from the other Apostles when it came to his calling and revelation from God, Himself.

The reference to *fifteen years* is understood by the words *then in verse one*.

Paul's timeline:

- He was converted.
- He spent three years in desert of Arabia.
- He visited Jerusalem the first time.
- He spent 14 years on his missionary journeys.
- He returns to Jerusalem again.

The sequences of events.

SECOND – The **SELECTION** of his companions (v 1b)

Paul continues by saying that Barnabas and Titus were with him.
These two men were an interesting pair to serve with Paul.

Barnabas was Paul's Jewish companion.

We learn from Acts 11:24, that Barnabas was *a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith*.

He original name was Joseph, but the Apostles changed his name to Barnabas which means *son of consolation* or *son of encouragement*.

NOTE- Every time Barnabas' name appears in the Scriptures, he is encouraging someone.

It was Barnabas who introduced Paul to the revivals in Antioch.

In Acts 13:1-5, we are told that it was Barnabas and Paul who were first foreign missionaries.

Paul's choice of Titus shows more interesting.

This was a bold choice.

Titus was one of Paul's spiritual sons and co-workers (Titus 1:4-5)

Titus, unlike Barnabas, was a full-blooded uncircumcised Gentile believer.

Titus was a Greek convert and a product of the very ministry that the Judaizers were attacking them for.

Remember, the Judaizers were teaching that one had to be circumcised to be saved.

We have looked at the *sequences* of the events.
We have looked at the *selection* of companions.

THIRD – The **SOURCE** of his instruction (v 2a)

Paul tells us that when he traveled up to Jerusalem – he did so ***by revelation***.

Paul is simply telling his readers that he got his orders directly from God.

Whether Paul wanted to go to Jerusalem or not, he had no choice.
God said go --- so Paul went.

FOURTH – The **SUBMISSION** of his Gospel message (v 2b)

Paul continues writing, (v 2b), ***He communicated to them that the Gospel which I preached among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation.***
(influence).

Paul had been preaching for 14 years establishing New Testament Churches.

And now he is headed down to Jerusalem.

This would be kind of intimidating since Jerusalem was where the big church is head quarter.

Jerusalem is where the council resides.
Jerusalem is residents for all the famous Christians

The first thing on Paul's agenda when arriving in Jerusalem was to get with the leaders of the Jerusalem church.

Paul identifies these leaders as ***those of influence*** or reputation.

This simply means those who are honored.

Paul's meeting was with Peter, James, and John along with Barnabas and Titus.

Paul shared with them the content of the Gospel message God had given him as he preached to the Gentiles.

Paul wanted these men to know that the message he preached to the Gentiles was in fact the same message they were preaching to the Jews.

FIFTH – The **SERIOUSNESS** of Paul’s concerns (v 2)

Notice the phrase, *lest by any means I might run or had run in vain.*

Paul knew that Judaizers had been following him around trying to sabotage his work and his witness.

Paul is challenging the Jerusalem Council to make a public statement.
Either endorse them or endorse him.

Paul did not need their endorsement or approval concerning the Gospel message he was preaching.

The council needed to repudiate those from Jerusalem who were teaching that works of the law were necessary for salvation.

Paul’s *Appointment* in Jerusalem.

II. PAUL’S **APPEARANCE** IN JERUSALEM (2:3-5)

FIRST – Paul’s **FRIENDS** (v 3)

But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

Titus was exhibit a for Paul’s contention that circumcision was not necessary for salvation.

Titus was a full Gentile and was a true follower of Christ Jesus.

To make him yield to the demands of the Judaizers would have undercut the Gospel of God’s grace.

For these Judaizers, circumcision would have been only the beginning.

He then would be forced to keep the Sabbath.

He would be required to participate in the ritual law, to offer sacrifice.

He would be remanded to adhere to the strict observance of the Mosaic dietary laws.

Paul recalls the no one was able to intimidate Titus to submit to circumcision.

Not even the highest level of authority in the church – the Jerusalem council – would require Paul’s Gentile friend and convert to be circumcised.

The Jerusalem Council's decision concerning circumcision and keeping the law was so important that a letter was sent out to the churches Galatia, Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.

We find this letter recorded in Acts 15:23-29.

SECOND – Paul's **FOES** (v 4)

Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in – who slipped into spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery...

Notice that Paul refers to these Judaizers as *false teachers*.

These two words translated from the Greek means *sham Christians*.

Apparently, these intruders were smuggled into the Council meeting in Jerusalem.

These were enemies of the Gospel placed there to sabotage the meeting.

Paul says these spy's intention as to bring these Christians back into the bondage of the Law.

THIRD – Paul's **FIGHT** (v 5)

To them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the Gospel might be preserved for you.

Paul's courage and determination, he had before his conversion to Christ has not weakened.

That courage has a new master controlling it – Christ Jesus.

We are reminded of this type courage throughout history.

Many men and women of God have given their lives (some literally) to preserve the message of the Gospel.

III. PAUL'S **ACCEPTANCE** IN JERUSALEM (2:6-9a)

FIRST – Paul's **AUTHORITY** as an Apostle (v 6)

Once again Paul defends his standing as an Apostle in verse.

And from those who seem to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality) –those, I say, who seem influential added nothing to me.

Paul gives us *four* key phrases:

Galatians 2:2 – Those who were of influence (Reputation).

Galatians 2:6 – Those who seem to be something.

Galatians 2:6 – Those who seem to be something.

Galatians 2:9 – Who seem to be pillars.

Who was Paul talking about here?

These were individuals who were teaching that Peter, James, and John were the only true ones who set the standard for the Gospel.

After all – they had walked with Christ Jesus during His earthly ministry.

These false teachers were saying that Paul's claim to be an Apostle fell way short of the standard set by these *pillars of the faith*.

Paul response to the false teachers.

He retorts and says that he does not have to have his Gospel message judged even by those who seem to be pillars of the church.

Paul honors these men, but he says they have no more standing with God than he does.

SECOND – Paul's **APPROVAL** AS AN APOSTLE (vv 7-8)

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 (8) (for he who worked through Peter for his Apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles).

Paul tells his readers that the other Apostles recognized the grace of God that had been given to him.

They also recognized that Paul had been entrusted with the preaching of the true Gospel of Christ Jesus.

There is only one Gospel message.

The same message is for the circumcised (Jews) and the uncircumcised (Gentiles) alike.

Peter, the Apostle, and Paul the Apostle preached the same message of the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

IV. PAUL'S **AFFIRMATION** IN JERUSALEM (2:9)

And when James, Peter, 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.

When the Jerusalem guys came to know and understand the grace of God that was given to Paul, they reached out to welcome him and offer the right hand of fellowship.

NOTE – In the near east, to clasp the right hand of a person was to make a solemn vow of friendship and it was also a mark fellowship or partnership.

Paul and Peter had different mission fields they served Christ in, these leaders in Jerusalem realized they were on the same team.

TEAM JESUS!

This scene of unity and fellowship dealt a death blow to the Judaizers and false teachers.

This also preserved the Gospel from the bondage of the Law.

V. PAUL'S **ASSIGNMENT** IN JERUSALEM (2:10)

They only asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

The church in Jerusalem was facing a very difficult situation.

The church had had a great influx of new believers.

There were many poor in the city for the church to help.

This included pilgrims who had scraped together everything they could to come to Jerusalem, the Holy City.

Some of those individuals had come to faith in Christ while there and wanted to stay there.

These new believers wanted to live in the Christian community that care for them.

However, they had no means to support themselves.

Christians from other places would collect offerings and send it to the church in Jerusalem to help support these folks.

So, Paul organized his famous collections and urged the wealthier Gentile churches of Macedonia and Achaia to support the less wealthy churches in Judea.

Paul regarded these gifts as a means to foster and demonstrate the Jew-Gentile solidarity in the fellowship of the early churches.

THE HARDENING OF THE OUGHTERIES

Galatians 2:11-21

Our freedom is provided by Christ Jesus and it comes with responsibilities as well as requirements.

Introduction

The word *freedom* means doing whatever you want.

That is the world's definition.

However, freedom is not a "free-for-all"

True freedom comes with certain and severe responsibilities and obligations.

Paul knew this and why he went so far as to rebuke Peter in front of the church.
Paul saw that Peter had traded his freedom in Christ Jesus to please his peers.

In our Text, we will notice two key points.

First – the *Cowardice* of Peter.

Second – The *Courage* of Paul.

Dr. David Jeremiah has entitled this portion of our study *The Hardening of The Oughteries*. For many Christians, it is all about the "ought".

You "ought" to do this.
You "ought" to do that.

Many Christians are miserable because they suffer from the "hardening of the oughteries."

They feel they have never done enough to please God or their peers.

This is just another form of legalism.

Illustration

Max Lucado, in He Still Moves Stones, writes, a legalist believes the supreme force behind salvation is you. If you look right, speak right, and belong to the right segment of the right group, you will be saved. Legalism is just enough religion to keep you, but not enough to nourish you. So, you starve. Your teachers don't know where to go for food, so you starve together. Your diet is rules and standards. No vitamins. No zest. Just bland predictable religion.

In our Text, the scene has changed from Jerusalem to Antioch.

This is where the first Gentile church in the area was established.

This is where Paul and Barnabas co-pastored along with the other three men listed in Acts 13:1.

This is the place where believers and followers of Christ Jesus were first called Christians.

In Galatians 2:9, we were told that Peter, James, and John gave Paul the right hand of fellowship.

Now Peter has arrived in Antioch, he got quite a different reception.

Paul now must confront Peter to his face about his behavior as a **BELIEVER**.

I. THE **COWARDICE** OF PETER (2:11-13)

FIRST – The **CONFRONTATION** (v 11)

But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

Let's take a breath here!

Think about what this means and what is actually going on here.

Both Peter and Paul are born-again believers and servants of Christ Jesus.

Both are called out and set aside as Apostles.

Both men are honored in the churches for their leadership.

Paul has already called Peter as one of the pillars of the church.

These two men were so important, so prominent in the New Testament that their lives literally outlined the Book of Acts.

Peter – Acts 1-12

Paul – Acts 13-28

And now, here is Paul having to confront Peter for his **BEHAVIOR**.

Please note that it was not because of their difference in their teaching that caused this confrontation.

Paul has already confirmed they were preaching/teaching the same Gospel to different congregational groups.

So, it wasn't the **PREACHING** of the Gospel that was the problem.

It was the **PRACTICE** of the Gospel that was the source of contention.

Paul tells Peter that he was the **PROBLEM**.

You are the blame.

Blame means *condemned*.

In Paul's eyes, Peter stood condemned because of the actions Peter had taken.

SECOND – he **COMPROMISE** (v 12)

For before certain men came from James, he (Peter) was eating what the Gentiles, but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcised party.

We are not told when or how long Peter was in Antioch.

Peter had come to join in on the revival among the Gentiles that was taking place.

Peter was welcomed and accepted by the Gentile believers and God was continuing to shower them with His blessings.

The fact was, Peter was a celebrity among the Gentiles.

He was invited to different homes for dinner and fellowship with family and friends.

This was a great example of how Jews and Gentiles could enjoy fellowship in Christ Jesus together.

Everything was going great...

That was until certain men from James dropped by.

Apparently, the word had made its way back to Jerusalem about how Peter, the Jew, was associating with the Gentiles.

Peter was eating continuously with the gentiles in what they cooked and served.

Peter was having a great time and loving the freedom he had because of Christ Jesus, Himself, had shown him that meat does not commend you to God.

James and the other Jewish Christian leaders felt that Peter's behavior was hindering their work of reaching the Jewish communities.

Now remember, James was one of the *pillars* that had confirmed that the same Gospel was for both Jews and Gentiles.

James was having a difficult time giving up his Jewish family traditions, rituals, and regulations.

James was trying to live up to this name – James the Just.

Anyway, the word got back to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem about Peter's fellowshiping with the Gentiles.

NOTE -In order to understand the source of the conflict there are certain things we must understand.

First – About the Jewish diet. Their diet consisted of avoiding unclean animals. Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 specifically listed many animals that were forbidden to be consumed. In addition to the well know swine, also listed are camels, mice, snails, tortoises, and many species of birds. An animal was considered kosher if it both chew its cud and had cloven hooves. This is why sheep, cows, and goats were considered to be clean. Orthodox Jews today, still carry out these practices.

Second – Let's note some things about the church in Antioch. It was largely a Gentile congregation. But there were some Jewish followers of Christ as well. The church would typically have “potluck” on communion days. There was a Jewish kosher table and a Gentile table at these feasts. People were free to select and eat from whatever table they chose to. Peter was enjoying his new freedom by fellowshiping at the Gentile tables.

James was not happy about the breakdown of the Jewish dietary laws and customs, so he sent some people to check it out.

When they showed up, Peter recognized them, and he got up from the Gentile table and joined the Jewish table.

Peter knew better because God had already given him a scolding lesson when he went to Cornelius' home (Acts 10:11-16).

Peter's own words were coming back on him. He preached a message while at Cornelius's home (v34) ***In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.***

Peter feared his peers more than he enjoyed his freedom in Christ Jesus.

THIRD – The **CONSEQUENCES** (v 13)

And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

It was not just Peter.

His actions affected a group including Barnabas.

The effect on Barnabas with Paul was probably the most hurtful.

He was Paul's partner in the ministry.

He was one of the great missionaries of the day.

The Gospel of Christ Jesus is always about freedom.

This was the message that both Paul and Barnabas had been preaching/teaching.

Christ had already clarified that meat made no difference to God.

Salvation came only through Christ Jesus and that meant one was justified through faith alone in Christ Jesus.

Salvation did not depend on which table you ate from.

Because of peer pressure, Peter and Barnabas gave a false presentation and testimony what it meant to be a true believer.

Paul used two words in verse 13 that are different forms of the same word, to describe the conduct of Peter and Barnabas.

Paul calls it ***hypocrisy***.

When Paul uses this word, he cuts deep into the heart of their sin.

What was the problem?

Why did Paul confront Peter?

Paul called them out because of their lack of conviction.

Paul is going to use the rest of the chapter in his response to this situation.

We see the *cowardness* of Peter.

II. THE **COURAGE** OF PAUL (2:14-21)

FIRST – A public **RESPONSE** (v 14a)

When I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the Gospel, I said to Peter before all of them ...

Paul chose to do the actions in public because both Peter and Barnabas had been public hypocrites.

These two men had been the examples of God's grace among Jews and Gentiles alike.

They and demonstrated that salvation come to anyone who would place their faith and trust in Christ Jesus.

Now, because of their hypocritical actions, they had jeopardized many years of their witness and ministry investment.

Paul saw this and realized that Peter was sending a message to all Jewish Christians and to all Gentiles Christians, that the most important thing was not the Truth of the Gospel.

The most important thing was what other people thought about you and your actions.

Peter had acted and influenced so many people publicly and Paul needed to conform Peter publicly.

Paul reprimanded Peter publicly so people would know the Truth of the Gospel.

Therefore, Paul rebuked Peter before the whole church.

SECOND – A Personal **REBUKE** (v 14b)

Paul said to Peter, *If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like a Jew?*

Eugene Peterson paraphrases this verse in the Message, *If you, a Jew, live like a non-Jew when you are not being observed by the watchdogs of Jerusalem, what right do you have to require non-Jews to conform to Jewish customs just to make a favorable impression on your old Jerusalem cronies?*

Paul is saying to Peter, *You can't have it both ways.*
You are either free in Christ or you are not.

You can't cling to your old traditions and force them on others when it is in your best interest to do so.

The problem was trust in Christ to set you free or put your trust in traditions that continue to bound you.

The Gospel of Christ Jesus tears away at manmade traditions.

THIRD – A Pointed **REVIEW** (vv 15-16)

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners. (16) yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, so we also believe 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.

Eugene Peterson's paraphrase, From the Message

We Jews know that we have no advantage of birth over non-Jewish sinners. We know very well that we are not set right with God by rule-keeping but only through personal faith in Christ Jesus. How do we know? We tried it and we had the best system of rules the world has ever seen, convinced that no human being can please God by self-improvement, we believed in Jesus as the Messiah so that we might be set right before God by trusting in the Messiah, not by trying to be good.

Three times in verse 16, we find Paul saying that salvation comes through faith in Christ Jesus and not by the works of the law.

The *First* time it is used as a **GENERAL** statement.

Man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Christ Jesus.

The *Second* time is a **PERSONAL** statement.

That we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law.

The *Third* time is a **UNIVERSAL** statement.

For the works of the law, no human shall be justified.

Illustration

Martin Luther understood the impossibility of keeping the law very well.

As a member of the church, he tried it all. He flagellated himself with whips. He climbed many flights of rough stone steps on his bleeding hands and knees to take years off his sentence in Purgatory. He worked and slaved for his justification. But somehow the feeling of shame and guilt would never go away. And then one day God stepped in with one verse of Scripture (Romans 1:17)

For in the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written 'the righteous shall live by faith.'

This one verse changed Martin Luther's life forever.

The walls of legalism for Martin Luther came crashing down.

It would be years later as he looked back on that critical important doctrine of justification, he would write: *This is the truth of the Gospel. It is also the principal article of all Christian doctrine, wherein the knowledge of all godliness consists. Most necessary, it is, therefore, that we should know this article well, teach it to others, and beat it into their heads continually.*

So, what are we speaking of when we say justification by faith?

John R. W. Scott puts it like this: *God's act of unmerited favor by which He puts a sinner right with Himself, not only pardoning or acquitting him, but accepting him and declaring him as righteous.*

Illustration

Growing up in the Auto repair business, I saw many problems that needed repairing. In the early 1960s, I got a call to come tow a "Bentley" auto to the shop. It had broken down. However, we were not allowed to repair it. The owner called the manufacture and they flew their mechanic from London, England to repair the car. That was the warranty on the car. The owner was out no expense. The warranty covered the repairs, the flight, the mechanic, the lodging for both the owner and the mechanic and any expenses he incurred while the auto was being repaired at no cost to him! The auto was put back as if it was new – nothing ever wrong with it.

This is a great example of what the word *justification* means.

Just-if-I-never- sinned.

Christ has paid the price for all the repairs on our life of sin. God sent His only Son, Christ Jesus, to pay for the repairs and penalties we have incurred and now because of our confession of faith in Him – we are brand spanking new.

The law cannot justify a guilty man.

Only our LORD can do that, and He does that!

FOURTH – A Persuasive **REASON** (vv 17-18)

But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ Jesus, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ Jesus a servant of sin? Certainly not! (18) for if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

New Living Translation (NLT) says it this way, *But suppose we seek to be made right with God through faith in Christ and then we are found guilty because we have abandoned the law. Would that mean Christ has led us into sin? Absolutely not! (18) Rather, I am a sinner if I rebuild the old system of law I have already tore down.*

The critics were saying that if Christ Jesus forgives and justifies us through His grace, and we are not obligated to do good works to be justified ... is not Christ and His grace a good excuse for sinning?

For Paul, and us, justification is not just something that happens to us –
Justification is something that happens in us.

God now has given the justified a new desire for things like **HOLINESS** and **HEAVEN**.

It is not that we can't sin ---

It is that we don't want to sin.

FIFTH – The Present **REALITY** (vv 19-20)

For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ Jesus. It is no longer I who lives, but Christ Jesus 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.

New Living Translation *For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law – I stopped trying to meet all its requirements – so that I might live for God. (20) My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who lives, but Christ living in me. So, I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

All the law could do was to **CONDEMN**.

This is totally opposite of being **CLEANED** through justification.

The law shows us why we need grace as we continually discover our inability to keep the law.

The law administers **DEATH**.

Christ gives us **DELIVERANCE**.

It is through our faith in Christ that we find life, abundant life (John 10:10) and it is only found in Christ Jesus.

Why would any person want to return to the old way of living, after they realize what Christ has done for them?

But it happens.

It is known as “*backsliding*”.

SIXTH – A Powerful **RESOLUTION** (v 21)

New Living Translation, ***I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.***

Adding works to salvation is blasphemous because it insinuates that Christ Jesus is not enough.

We cannot become Christians by doing good works/things.

Christ is not only **SUFFICIENT** for our salvation – He is the only way for salvation.

BEWITCHED

Galatian 3:1-5

Introduction

Paul is continuing to confront the Galatian's foolishness and the dangers of returning to the law.

It has often been said that when it comes to knowledge, the battle is not to learn new things.

The real battle is to remember what you already know.

This applies to our Spiritual lives as well.

We know we are to grow daily to become stronger and steady in living for Christ and the knowledge of the Word of God.

It is also critical that we retain the knowledge of the things we do know.

We must remember the faithfulness of God toward us and never forget where He has brought us from.

Illustration

During the years of the great depression in America, there was a man by the name of Yates who owned a great deal of land in west Texas.

He raised sheep on his land and lived in extreme poverty. He struggled to get enough money to feed his flock and cloth his family. The situation worsened to one point to where he was in danger of losing his property altogether because he could pay the taxes that were due on the land.

As Mr. Yates was facing inevitable bankruptcy, an oil company approached him and said, *we think there may be some oil on your land. Will you let us drill?*

Well, he had nothing to lose and he was about to lose the property anyway, so he gave them the rights to drill.

The company begin drilling, and at a very shallow depth they struck one of the largest oil deposits that had ever been discovered on the North American Continent. The well on Mr. Yates property began producing over 80,000 barrels of oil every day.

Overnight, Mr. Yates became a billionaire, or did he? If you think about it, Mr. Yates was already a billionaire, He just didn't know it.

The story is a great analogy of our Christian Life.

We live in Spiritual poverty when we have the riches of God in Christ Jesus at our disposal.

This was what kept Paul up a night.

This was what was really burning in his heart.
So, Paul gives us chapter 3 of Galatians.

These Galatians believers were going back to the lowest level possible.
They were returning to and groveling in the poverty of legalism.

Paul could not believe that they would leave such an incredible **BLESSING** and place themselves under the **BONDAGE** of the law.

Paul could not believe they had moved away from the Gospel he both taught and preached.

Remember what he said earlier (1:6).

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ and are returning to a different gospel ...

The folks had walked away from Calvary and return to Mt. Sini.

They moved from being a child of God to a slave to satan.

Paul is saying to these Galatians that are living their life in **DISOBEDIENCE**.

They have been **DECEIVED**.

Their life has now become **DEFECTIVE**.

In these first five verses of chapter 3, Paul is going to establish a sharp contrast between **LAW** and **LOVE**. (Grace).

Paul cares about these people.

They are his friends in the LORD.

He wants them to remember that I was through placing their faith in Christ Jesus they begin their Christian life and it will be the same faith they will continue to live their Christian life.

We have the same problem today.

Many believers are saved through God's Grace but to maintain their walk with God they are required to do good works.

They believe their works commend themselves to the LORD.

In order to get his point across, Paul is going to ask these Galatians five questions.

These five questions will require the Galatians (and us) to examine their experience in Christ Jesus.

I. WE HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT THE **PRIORITY** OF CHRISTIANITY (3:1)

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Christ Jesus was publicly portrayed as crucified.

One of Paul's favorite terms when writing to his friends is ***dearly beloved***.

This was not the case when writing this letter to the Galatian believers.

Paul called them ***foolish Galatians***.

Paul is communicating his surprise, perplexity, as well as his indignation.

It is beyond his comprehension how these Galatians would turn away from the Gospel of God's grace to a system that would keep them in legal bondage.

The word ***foolish*** doesn't mean they were morons or were stupid.

Paul uses the word to mean ***spiritually dull***.

Paul is saying these people were not using the intelligence God had given them.

The idea is that anyone with any spiritual intelligence – perception should be able to see the impossibility of legalistic efforts to save anyone.

We would say it like this, ***have you lost your mind?***

Paul's actual word is ***bewitched***

This word in the Greek means to ***fascinate*** and found only here in the New Testament.

This word is the blighting influence of the evil one.

Sorcerers and people who cast spells on others.

Paul is actually saying, *who has brought you under his spell?*
Someone has confused your thinking.

Let's notice the word *who* in this verse.
It is used in the singular voice.

Some think Paul is referring to a particular individual, a particular teacher, or a famous individual who had come to lead the Galatians away from the Truth.

Others believe it is a reference to satan who lives up to his reputation as the greatest deceiver. (John 8:44)

Paul is also drawing a contrast in this verse.

You have allowed someone to deceive you and you took your eyes of Christ Jesus, your savior, and now you are following after this deceiver.

Publicly portrayed

The literal translation is *placarded*.

In New testament times public announcements were made by posting them on a major placard in the town square.

Paul's first question he poses to the Galatians is:

Is it Christ Jesus alone, or is it ceremonies and calendar and laws to keep?

II. A QUESTION ABOUT THE PROCESS OF CHRISTIANITY (3:2)

Let me ask you only this, did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

Paul is saying, *if you will answer this one question, you won't have to answer any more.*

It is interesting that all the Galatians that were in the process of being deceived had already received the Holy Spirit.

They were Christians.

Ever Christians has the Holy Spirit of God residing in them (Rom. 8:9)

Paul tells us in Romans 8:16, ***The gift of the Holy Spirit is the believers most unmistakable proof of salvation and his greatest guarantee of eternal glory.***

Romans 8:9, ***You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.***

Romans 8:16, *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our Spirit that we are Children of God.*

So, Paul has a valid question.

When you received the Spirit (referring to when they invited Christ Jesus into their hearts) did you receive Him because you did a lot of good works, or was it by the hearing of faith?

Dr. David Jeremiah has explained the difference between law and Grace (p71 Galatian Study Guide).

The law says “do”

Grace says “done”.

The law says “try”

Grace says “trust”.

The law says “behave”

Grace says “believe”.

The law points to the “commandments”

Grace points to “Christ”.

The weakness of the law is the “flesh”

The wonder of Grace is “the Holy Spirit.”

The law requires man’s “achievement”

The Gospel simply requires Faith in Christ’s achievement.

This issue is this, When the Galatians were saved, how were they saved?

Was it the things they did to merit God’s favor on them? NOT AT ALL!

They were saved by God’s grace when they accepted Christ Jesus as God’s only Son and invited Him into their hearts by faith.

Everyone without Christ is spiritually dead.

Only God can bring them to life.

So, question number two is about the process of salvation.

How did you get saved?

Was it by Faith or was it by works?

III. A QUESTION ABOUT THE PERFECTION OF CHRISTIANITY (3:3)

Are you foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Illustration – J B Phillips paraphrases this verse like this: *surely you can’t be so idiotic as to think that a man begins his spiritual life in the Spirit and then completes it by reverting to outward observances?*

When we see the word *perfect* it is not referring to sinless perfection.
The idea is *maturity*.

A born-again believer becomes mature in the same way they are saved.
Through faith in Christ Jesus.

One of our greatest problems we have in church life growing in our
understanding/maturing of Christ Jesus and His plan for each one of us.

There is a lot of stuff we try to do because we think we are supposed to do as
Christ-followers.

Read the Bible
Praying regularly
Attending church

These things are great, but they are the by-products of a born-again believer
maturing in Christ.

Here is the bottom line about maturing in Christ Jesus.

Our motivation for growth in our daily lives is not so that some how we can be
more acceptable to God.

But as we come to know him ore and more about who we are in Christ, our hearts
warm to the task of wanting to live in light of the privileges that are ours ... the
motivation and challenge of praying and doing good works is totally different in
this context. (Dr. Jeremiah p72)

IV. A QUESTION ABOUT THE PERSECUTION OF CHIRSIIANITY (3:4)

Did you suffer so many things in vain – if indeed it was in vain?

When individuals come to faith in Christ They are turning from their old life, their old
belief systems and following Christ Jesus.

Their old life friends don't understand and tend to criticize and condemn them –
they are verbally persecuted and at times physically persecuted.

Remember the assault Saul of Tarsus led against anyone following Christ
Jesus.

These Galatian believers had suffered the ridicule and persecution rom the non-
believers.

Paul's argument is simple.

If you want to go back and live under the law, then what does that say about all the persecution you have gone through? You were delivered from the bondage of the law when you transferred your trust to Christ Jesus.

You come to faith in Christ Jesus and now you want to return and live like you did previously.

For Paul, he was having a difficult time wrapping his head around the fact, these Galatians would abandon the Gospel and embrace the teachings of the Judaizers. He expected better from them!

V. A QUESTION ABOUT THE **POWER** OF CHRISTIANITY (3:5)

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?

In verse 2, Paul told us that the Gospel was received by faith.

In verse 5, Paul says that God is the One who gives the Gospel.

The principle behind His giving the Gospel is not because of their works but it came through their faith in the Son of God.

This verse teaches us that the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Galatians and His mighty work in and through them was totally dependent on their faith they had in Christ Jesus.

In Acts 14:8-10, we have the story of God using Paul while in Lystra to heal a man cripple from birth.

Paul knows that it was not by works of the flesh this man was healed.

Listen as Luke describes this event (NLT)

While they were at Lystra, Paul and Barnabas came upon a man with cripple feet. He had been that way from birth, so he had never walked. He was sitting (9) and listening to Paul preach. Looking straight at him, Paul realized he had faith to be healed. (10) So, Paul called to him in a loud voice, "stand up" and the man jumped to his feet and started walking.

NOTICE – Paul did not tell the man he had to follow the ten commandments to the letter of the law.

This man was healed by the miracle of God.
It was by faith this man was healed.

Paul wanted his Galatian friends to see the difference between faith in Christ Jesus and the legalistic teachings of the Judaizers.

A Christian life is based on Christ in their life.

The message of the Judaizers was to do good works of the law.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV), ***For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the Gift of God. (9) not a result of works, so that no one may boast.***

TWO WAYS OF SALVATION

Galatians 3:6-14

The goal of this study is to learn that faith has always been God's means for salvation.

The Judaizers in the Book of Galatians sought for these new believers to return to the customs of the law.

However, they missed the whole point.

From the very beginning, the purpose of the law was to reveal our lack of **RIGHTEOUSNESS** and our need for a **REDEEMER**.

In these verses, we will look at:

the **ANALYSIS** of faith;
the **ALTERNATIVE** to faith;
and the **ANSWER** to faith.

Introduction

Some are reluctant to place their faith in a God they have never seen.

They live their life on facts not faith.

But these same individuals practice their faith every time they step on an airplane to fly.

They have never seen the pilot, but they trust him to get them to their destination.

They have never met the pilot, but they have placed their trust in him/her.

Hebrews 11:1 (ESV), *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

Our faith allows us to do the seemingly impossible.

Noah built an Ark 120 miles from the nearest body of water and it wasn't raining.

Moses rejected the palace for a place to serve in the wilderness.

Joshua took a march around the walls of Jericho just because God said so.

Gideon went to battle with 300 men of valor against an enemy that was 10 times their size.

But perhaps the man who demonstrated his faith more than all was **Abraham**.
He is the first person in the Word of God that is said, *he believed God*.

Genesis 15:5-6, *And God brought Abraham outside and said, ‘look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them; then God said to him, “so shall your offspring be.” (6) And Abraham believed the LORD and God counted it to him as righteousness.’*

It should be no surprise that Paul would call the Galatian’s attention to Abraham.

Paul begins to tell the story of the great Patriarch of the faith.

To Paul, Abraham was the most powerful example of a man who lived by his faith in God.

Abraham would be considered legitimate and in sharp contrast to what these Galatians were doing.

In Galatians 3:1-5, Paul built his message around *five* questions.

Now in Galatians 3:6-14, Paul builds his argument around six questions.

NOTE – in these verses, Paul is going to use the words *faith* and *believe* ten times.

This portion of our Scripture is not a passage about works – it is about **FAITH**. Paul begins:

I. THE **ANALYSIS** OF FAITH (3:6-9)

FIRST – The **BEGINNING** of Faith. (v 6)

(CSB) *Just like Abraham who believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness.*

Paul is quoting Genesis 15:6 here.

NOTE – Abraham’s response in Genesis 15:6 is the first time the word *believe* is used in the Word of God.

Abraham’s faith was not his righteousness; But God accounted it to him for righteousness.

Here, God revealed to Abraham the whole principle of faith.

The Scripture teaches us that the exact same thing happened to Sarah, Abe’s bride.

Hebrew 11:11, *By faith Sarah also received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.*

What this teaches us is that Sarah *believed*.

Abraham exercised faith in God in all areas of his life.

There were **MANY** times he did not know what God was going to do next.

This gave Abraham **PLENTY** of opportunities to demonstrate his total trust in God through his faith in God.

Abraham believed God when He told him he would have a son.

Abraham believed God when he and his boy headed to Mount Moriah.

In every experience Abraham believed God although he didn't not understand what or how God was going to do it.

There was no doubt in Abraham's mind that Abraham and Isaac would be returning home (Genesis 22:5)

Abraham believed the promise that God had given him --- Isaac was going to have a future.

Hebrews 11:17-19 tells us about the faith that Abraham had.

(CSB) By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. He received the promises and yet he was offering his one and only son (18) the one to whom it had been said, your offspring will be called through Isaac. (19) He considered God to be able even to raise someone from the dead; therefore, he received him back, figuratively speaking.

This brings us to the point Paul wanted to make ...

Abraham was not justified by going up the mountain.

He was righteous because he was prepared to obey God when he didn't understand.

Abraham was righteous for one reason ---

He believed God and faith to show it.

Paul had an airtight argument to the Judaizers.

Abraham believed God and was justified by his faith in God.

This was a brilliant portrayal in using Abraham as a picture of faith to confront these false teachers.

Notice the references to the Old Testament that Paul makes in Galatian 3 alone.

- A). Verses 6-7, we see a quotation from Genesis 15:6
- B). Verses 8-9 we see a quote from Genesis 22:3
- C). Verse 10 we see a quote from Deuteronomy 22:26.
- D). Verse 11 we see a quote from Habakkuk 2:4
- E). Verse 12 there is a quote from Leviticus 18:5
- F). Verses 13-14 we have a quote from Deuteronomy 21:23

We have quite a list of Scriptures for Paul's sermon to the Galatians.

Paul knew the **PEOPLE** and he was dealing with Judaizers.

Paul knew the **PROBLEMS** they were causing by forcing people to turn from their faith back to works.

Paul use their own book to **PROCLAIM** the truth about faith in God.

SECOND – The **BROTHERHOOD** of faith (v 7)

Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham

Only true Christ-Followers – those who are of faith – have any claim to a spiritual relationship with Abraham or God.

The brotherhood of Abraham is made up of everyone who believes in God just as Abraham believed in God.

Is it even possible to be a Jew and not be a Son of Abraham? **YES!**

What is even more incredible is that Gentiles can be included in this brother hood of Abraham.

Jews that have not placed their faith in our LORD Jesus Christ are not among the sons of Abraham.

The brotherhood of Abraham – the sons of Abraham – are the people that believe God and put their faith in Jehovah God.

This is the brotherhood of faith that is being referred to.

THIRD – The **BLESSING** of Faith (3:8-9)

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “in you shall all nations be blessed (9) so then those who are of the faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of Faith.

This portion of our Scripture is an exposition of Genesis 12:1-3, where God told Abraham that through him all the nations of the world would be blessed.

Now the LORD said to Abram, “go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. (2) and I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

When Paul writes that the Gospel was preached to Abraham, he is saying that Abraham was taught the Good News that salvation was by faith alone and not by works of the flesh.

Salvation does not come by works.
It never was, and it never will be!

As true Christ-followers, we are blessed today because of Abraham.

Abraham’s legacy is his life of faith.

Our legacy will be one of our faith in Christ Jesus.

We come to a place where Paul needs to shift Gears and present the second way of salvation – the alternative to faith.

II. THE **ALTERNATIVE TO FAITH (3:10-12)**

FIRST – The **POSSIBILITIES** of salvation by the works of the law.

Verse 10, *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”.*

The Old Testament literally teaches that one can be saved by the law.

You can be justified by the law if you keep every part of the law completely.

Paul supports his point by quoting Scripture from Leviticus 18:5 in verse 12 of Galatian 3.

You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgements, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.

Paul is saying if you keep all the LORD's Commands and statutes, you can be justified by them.

Has anyone ever been able to do that?
Only One - Christ Jesus

Christ Jesus was perfect in everyway from before the beginning of time.

Verse 11 ***Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the Law, for "the righteous shall live by faith."***

As humans we are stained with sin and the only way we get to heaven is by placing our faith alone in the sinless Lamb of God.

There is no other name given among men whereby to be save than Jesus.

He is the only way to get to heaven.

Illustration – Today in America alone each one of us are responsible to obey over 35, 000 laws created by our government.

SECOND – The **PROBLEM** of salvation by the works of the law. (v 12)

But the Law is not of faith, rather the one who does them shall live by them.

Paul is saying that it is impossible to be justified by the law.

Again, Paul quotes Scripture that supports his words.

Deuteronomy 27:26, ***Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law by observing them.***

It is not just the letter of the law that was demanded ...
It was also the Spirit of the law.

Jesus explains the real nature of the law and what is required in Matthew 5:27-28, ***you have heard that it was said, "you shall not commit adultery". (28) But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.***

Jesus took the law to the original intent.

The law was to keep one holy.

The commandment was not just about the outward acceptance of the law.

It was about the letter and the spirit of the law being obeyed every day in every moment.

James 2:10, raises the bar even higher when he says, *for whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumbles in one point, he is guilty of all.*

The law is considered one unit, so this is the reason for James' statement.

The law can not be divided into segments.

A chain is as strong as its weakest link.

So is the one who tries to come to God by their own perfection and break even one law along the way.

This is the principle Paul is making clear to his readers regarding the Law.

Verse 11, *Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the Law, for "the righteous shall live by faith."*

Man can not be justified by the law.

It is not that the law is frail or weak but that humans trying to keep the whole law is weak.

THIRD – The **PENALTY** of salvation by the works of the law. (v 10b)

Curse is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them

Paul is quoting from Deuteronomy which is the last book of the law.

Paul is preaching the fact that those who would trust in the works of the law are required to keep all things in the law.

This is without exception.

This places them under a curse because no one has the ability to fully keep the whole law without exception.

Paul confesses, even as a good Pharisee as he was, he was not able to keep all the law.

III. THE **ANSWER** TO FAITH (3:13-14)

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” (Deuteronomy 24:23) (14) So that in Christ Jesus the blessings of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith.

Paul’s message is that the curse that was intended for man, Christ Jesus took that curse on Himself for all mankind.

Christ was able to redeem us from the curse of the law.

Only because God allowed Christ, His only Son, to become the curse for us ... in turn we are able to become the righteousness of God.

This takes place because of God’s mercy on us.

Look again at verse 11 (NLT) *So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, “it is through faith that a righteous person has life.”*

This verse is a quote from Habakkuk 2:4 and is also reference to Roman 1:17 and Hebrews 10:38.

Illustration (p89)

According to the 3rd century rabbi, Moses gave 365 prohibitions and 248 positive commands.

David reduced the to 11 in Psalms 15.

Isaiah took the 11 down to 6 (33:14-15)

Micah 6:8 tied them together into 6 commands.

Habakkuk reduced then all into one great statement...

The just shall live by faith

Paul has made a complete circle.

He as brought his readers right back to where he started – one is saved by faith and not by works.

Did You Know (p94)

Most believers are familiar with the basic genealogy involving Abraham, including his sons Isaac and Ishmael, as well as his grandsons Jacob and Esau.

But most people are not aware of other aspects of his lineage.

For instance, Abraham was a descendent of Shem, one of Noah's three sons.

Eventless well known as his wife Sarah died at the age of 127.

Abraham took another wife name Keturah (Genesis 25:1)

Well advance in age, Keturah bore him 6 more sons before Abraham died.

Abraham's name was truly appropriate, for it means *Father of a multitude*.

The Law and The Promise Galatians 3:15-19

Theme: The purpose of the Law has always been to point us toward Christ Jesus.

Every sport has established rules that serve a good and real purpose.

These rules lay out a consistent framework that allows the game to be played in an orderly manner and fair to all involved.

But the point of the game is not to live by the rules; the point of the game is to be played.

In the same train of thought, the Law of God is a framework under which we live our lives.

It is not why we live our lives.

Rather, it shows us how we should live our life.

The Law reminds us how much we need Christ Jesus so that we may live.

Overview

In our study we have learned that in the first 15 verses of Galatians 3, Paul quoted the Old Testament Scriptures to prove that Abraham was justified by faith not by the Law.

Paul quotes 6 different Scriptures from Genesis, Deuteronomy, Leviticus, and Habakkuk.

He did this just to drive home his point that man is not justified by works or by any combination of works and grace.

Therefore, teachers from Jerusalem were teaching these Galatian believers that the law was meant to be a fuller expression of the Abrahamic Covenant.

They also were insinuating that the Promise to Abraham was only meant for Abraham's biological descendants.

Paul figured out how satan was using these false teachers to mislead these believers.

Paul brilliantly put a silence on them and their deceptions.

Now that Paul has used the Scriptures to effectively prove them to be in error, he turns their attention to address another problem.

Namely – that if salvation does not involve the law, then why was the law given in the first place.

Paul has quoted *six* times from the law to prove the insignificance of the law.

If the law is now set aside, then his very arguments are worthless because they are taken from the Law.

In our next Scriptural text, Paul is going to make *four* statements that will help us understand the relationship between the promise that was made to Abraham and the law that was given to Moses.

I. THE LAW IS **INCIDENTAL** TO THE PROMISE (3:15-18)

It is important to remember that Paul, himself, was a well-trained Rabbi.

This meant he was an expert in the scholastic method of the Rabbinic schools.

Paul was an incredibly gifted intellectual who knew the Old Testament by heart.

He could quote it at length to argue his point with the best.

It should be no surprise that here in this chapter Paul sets for an argument that is so airtight that there can be no response.

Paul had a goal – to show the superiority of grace and the promise to Abraham over the Law and the instructions to Moses.

So, to begin, he used the word **Promise** eight times in verses 15-29.

This word is used throughout the chapter to refer to God's promises to Abraham that in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3)

Now the LORD said to Abram, Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. (2) And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

That promise involved being justified by faith and having all the blessings of salvation as we saw in Galatian 3:6-9.

It is important to note that the promise to Abraham was given about 2000 B.C.

The giving of the Law to Moses took place about 1450 B.C.

The false teachers from Jerusalem were teaching that when the law was given to Moses it changed the provisions of the Covenant Promise.

Paul will take us through the fact that such a thing did not and could not happen.

FIRST – A **HUMANS** illustration (v 15)

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.

Paul is writing to his fellow believers here and he is being very tender with his teaching to them.

This is a sharp contrast to his tone he used in the first chapter of his writing to the Galatians.

Paul has softened up a bit as he now turns the conversation to the Covenant.

The word Paul uses for Covenant is the word for *will and testament* which is a term we use today.

Paul is saying that the formation of a human covenant is like *two parties coming together and making a covenant together. One party cannot break the covenant without the consent of the other party.*

Our marriage vows are a covenant we make with the person we will spend our life with.

Paul is arguing that you can't put Moses into the Covenant between God and Abraham.

Moses wasn't there when the Covenant was sealed between God and Abraham.

SECOND – The **HISTORIC** explanation (v 16)

Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "and to offspirngs" referring to many, but referring to one, "and to your offspring" who is Christ Jesus.

And interesting passage of Scripture to say the least.

This is because it gives the verbal inspiration of the Word of God.
This is the very Word of God.

Paul's argument is based on the number of words.

The argument is whether the word (s) are singular or plural.

By the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, Paul takes the Old Testament and interprets it in such a way as to say that when God made His Covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), He made it to a *seed* (singular) and not to a plural seeds.

We know that Abraham grew impatient with God and decided to help God out.

He tried to produce the promise seed in the energy of the flesh.

He involved himself with the Egyptian bondswoman Hagar.

God still affirmed His Promise to bless Abraham through his son Isaac (Gen. 21:12)

Paul tells us that God had something particular in His mind about this.

Notice what Paul says, *Now to Abraham and his SEED were the promises made.*

He does not say, "and to seeds" as of many, but only one seed.

The seed that came from Abraham that God was going to use to bless the whole earth is Christ Jesus!

In the first prophecy of the Word of God, a clearly singular use of seed also refers to Christ Jesus.

We find this prophecy in Genesis 3:15.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring (seed) and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

Satan was only able to bruise the heel of Christ Jesus.

Jesus was able to fulfill every promise given in the Abrahamic Covenant.

Jesus Christ was the Promised Seed of Abraham.

THIRD – The **HELPFUL** application (vv 17-18)

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, (18) For if the inheritance comes by the Law, it no longer comes by Promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

This Covenant was confirmed before God in Christ Jesus.

When they confirmed the Covenant during Abraham's time, they didn't sign any papers or get them notarized.

Neither did they get a signet ring and stamp the seal.

Nor did they shake hands on it.

So how did they seal this covenant?

They took an animal and cut it in half and they put a fire in between it. Then the two people who were making the Covenant would walk together between the two parts of the animal. In doing this they confirmed their covenant with one another.

When God confirmed His covenant with Abram to bless him and his descendants, Abram was asleep. (Gen 15:12).

As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abraham. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.

This Covenant that God confirmed with Abraham wasn't even a covenant between God and Abraham.

Abraham didn't have anything to do with it.

This Covenant between God and God.

God made the Covenant and God made the Promise.

God didn't lay down any conditions for Abraham to meet.

This was a Covenant of Grace in that God made promises to Abraham.

Abraham did not make any promise to God.

Abraham was sound to sleep when the Covenant was confirmed.

Not even a great leader like Moses could alter the Covenant.

Man was not involved with the process.

This is an incredible act of the love that God revealed to mankind when He made this Covenant on our behalf.

II. THE LAW IS **INFERIOR** TO THE PROMISE (3:19-20)

FIRST – The Law is **TEMPORARY** (v 19a)

The Promise is **PERENAMENT**.

Why then the Law?

What purpose then does the Law serve?

It should be obvious that a temporary law can never be greater than the permanent Covenant.

This brings up the question – so why do we even have the Law?

The Law was given to define sin because of our propensity toward transgressions.

The Law could **DEFINE** sin, but it could never **DEFEAT** sin.

The Law could tell us the **CAUSE** of the sickness, but the Law could never **CURE** the sickness.

The Law set God's standard for a holy life.

SECOND – The Law **REQUIRED** a mediator;

The Promise was **RECEIVED** daily (3:19b-20)

The Law was added because of transgressions, until the offspring come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through Angels by an intermediary, (20) Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

(NLT) God gave His Law through Angels to Moses, who was the mediator between God and the people. (20) Now a mediator is helpful if more than one party must reach an agreement. But God, who is One, did not use a mediator when He gave His promise to Abraham.

A mediator stands between two parties and helps them reach an agreement.

Paul is teaching:

With the Law, you must have a mediator to bring both parties to an agreement.

With the Promise all you need is God.

III. THE LAW IS **IMPORTANT** TO THE PROMISE (3:21-26)

Some people might be tempted to disregard the Ten Commandments all together.

The Law still serves a purpose even through we have our freedom in Christ Jesus.

Let's look at *three* reasons why the Law is still important in a Christian's life.

FIRST – The Law was given to **DEMONSTRATE** man's weakness (v 21)

Is the Law contrary to the promise of God? Certainly not! For if a Law had been given that could give life, the righteousness would indeed be by the Law.

The Law and the Promise are not in completion with each other.

The Law wasn't the problem.

The problem was our inability to keep the Law.

J B Phillips puts it this way, *The Law was given to prove something – our utter inability to attain a standard of righteousness acceptable to a holy God by any amount of Law keeping and the fact that no law exist that can give life.* (Exploring Galatians – An Expository Commentary p 108)

SECOND – The Law was given to **DISPLAY** man's sinfulness (vv 19a, 22)

What purpose then does the Law serve? (22) But the Scripture imprisoned everything under the sin, so that the promise by faith in Christ Jesus might be given to those who believe.

It is at this point we see how the Law and God's grace cooperate in bringing the lost sinner to our Savior, Christ Jesus.

The Law shows the sinner is guilt.

God's grace shows the sinner is forgiven in Christ Jesus.

The Law does not make us sinners.

The Law **REVEALS** we are sinners.

The Law is like a mirror that only **REFLECTS** our true state in God's sight.

It only shows us what is there.

It can clean up what is it shows.

THIRD – The Law was giving to **DRIVE** us to Christ Jesus (vv 22-25)

But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Christ Jesus might be given to those who believe (23) Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. (24) So then, the law was our guardian until Christ Jesus came, in order that we might be justified by faith. (25) But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guarding.

Paul was writing to a Greco-Roman world where the education system of children was different than our modern-day school system.

The education of a child was accomplished through a child's guardian.

This was usually done by a well-educated slave.

The guarding would take the child to and from school and watch over them during the day.

This tutor (guardian) was the equivalent of a governor.

He lived with he family and had absolute authority over the child.

The child was answerable only to the guardian.

The guardian was only answerable to the father of the child.

The child remains under the authority only until he reached maturity.

Then the guardian had no other responsibility for the child.

Paul is teaching that just as the slave was not the child's father, so to the law did not give life to Israel.

The Law just regulated one's life for a while.

Paul was comparing a child coming of age – mature to the law.

Paul is teaching that the fruition of the law (the guarding) was the seed of Abraham which is Christ Jesus.

IV. THE LAW IS **INCLUSIVE**, AND SO IS THE PROMISE (3:26-29)

For Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. (27) for as many of you as were baptized into Christ Jesus have put on Christ. (28) 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. (29) And if you are one in Christ Jesus, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Notice in verse 22, *But the Scriptures has confined all under sin that the promise by faith in Christ Jesus might be given t those who believe.*

The Law was given to put us all in the same **PRISON**.

It locked all of us in the same cell.

All means Jews, Gentiles, Male and Female, slaves and free, young and old.

The Law put all of us in the same **PLACE**.

So that all of us could receive the same **PARDON**.

The Law confined us.

God's promise - His love – freed us.

There is one more inclusion that Paul wants to tell us about.

1). Paul is going to tell us that Christ Jesus, all **SPIRITUAL** differences are abolished.

Neither Jew nor Gentiles

2). In Christ, all **SOCIAL** differences are abolished.

Neither slave nor free.

3). In Christ Jesus, all **SEXUAL** differences are abolished.

Neither male nor female.

Paul is describing the church and he gives us its dimensions.

FIRST – The **HEIGHT** of the family (v 26)

For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

The church reaches up to the very throne of God.

Everyone in this family of faith has access to that very throne.

The throne represents God who has the highest authority in all the universe.

SECOND – The **DEPTH** of the family. (v 27)

For as many of you that were baptized into Christ Jesus have put on Christ.

If you are in his family of faith, you have been baptized into Christ Jesus.

If you have an intimate relationship with Christ Jesus, He is your Savior, He is your friend.

THIRD – The **WIDTH** of the family (v 28)

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

It is difficult for us to comprehend the meaning of this statement.

We are not living in the first century and this hinders our understanding.

This was a magnificent statement read and understood by the Galatian readers.

There were all kinds of divisive functions during that day.

Jews looked down on the Gentiles.

Free looked down and degraded slaves

Men look down and disrespected women.

Gentiles were not allowed in the Synagogue.

Women (Samaritans) were not allowed to worship with the Jews (John 4)

The Pharisees prayed they were not like the publicans. (Gal.2:15; Luke 18:11)

This led to a lot of hatred aimed at each other.

A normal ritual in a pharisee's morning prayer was, *I thank thee, God, that I am a Jew, not a Gentile, that I am a man – not a woman, and a free man – not a slave.*

Then one day all of this changed (Acts 2)

The day God sent His Holy Spirit into this environment and miraculously birthed His church.

The ground shook, tongue of fire was seen, the Gospel broke through the language barriers.

Something that had never been heard before was happening now.

This was called the “church”

This is what Paul is telling us about the last verse in Galatian 3.

FOURTH – The **LENGTH** of the family (v 29)

And if you are in Christ Jesus, then you are part of Abraham's offspring, you are a part of God's promise.

Now when we read Galatians 3:6-9, we will be able to understand it better than before.

With incredible eloquence, Paul has established that the Galatians are in error by trying to add Moses and the Law to Abraham and God's promise to Christ Jesus.

John 14:6, Christ Jesus is *the way, the truth, and the life – no one comes to the Father than by Him.*

Acts 4:12, *There is no other name given whereby man must be saved.*

Introduction to Section Two of Galatians

Illustration

If you have ever watched a bicycle race you have noticed how members of the same team ride their bikes together in a single file line – practically right on top of each other. Every once in a while, the lead rider will move to the back of the pack, and a new rider will take the lead. No matter who is in the front, the team is always in single line.

They are not doing this out of the kindness of their heart. There is actually a scientific reason behind this practice. It is called DRAFTING. It is the same reason why flocks of migrating birds fly in a “V” shape.

The science behind “drafting” makes sense when you consider aerodynamics and wind resistance. Basically, the principle of drafting is: in things that are moving at a great speed, the forerunner is doing the hardest work because the leader is facing the greatest resistance to the air. Those following behind the leader are shielded and don’t have to work as hard to go the same speed as the one in front. By periodically changing positions between the leader and the next in line, the whole team can move faster and go further with less fatigue.

This is a classic example of how teamwork allows each individual to shine brighter and longer than they would on their own merit.

As we begin our study of the second half of the Book of Galatians, Paul is going to use the concept of *drafting* to communicate to his readers, it is not just about confronting legalism, but it is about how a born-again believer is to live a life for Christ Jesus who has set us free.

Paul is saying that we should recognize those former believers who were out front setting the path and the pace as we advance the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

We are to confront those who are entangled in sin and lovingly bring them back into the fold.

We are to openly celebrate the freedom in Christ Jesus we have as born-again believers.

So what does this have to do with *drafting*?

FIRST – Drafting requires a leader.

Someone out front to take the brunt of the force.

SECOND – Paul is reminding us that we are to be our front confronting sin.

We are to keep the flock on the right path and moving at the right pace.

THIRD – Paul is saying that as leaders we are to keep the team close together and to carry the burdens of our brothers.

It's Time To Grow Up Galatians 4:1-11

Theme

In this portion of our Scripture, Paul reminds us that we need to put away our former selves and embrace who we are in Christ Jesus.

Illustration

Imagine someone growing up in the worst slums, living under the worst conditions. There was no clean water to drink, food was scavaged from the trash. A place where there was no hope of ever clawing or crawling your way out.

Now imagine a wealthy individual comes along and handed you a title to a mansion filled with ever conceivable comfort and delight available to man. It is yours for the claiming.

Then that same person, after enjoying the luxury of the new life, after a while returns back to living that life of the slums. That person walked away from everything provided for him and found himself digging through the dumpster searching for food.

This is exactly what happens when one walks away from the freedom the King of Kings has provided for the believer.

That person chooses to return to their old way of living under the bondage of the Law.

Illustration

Dr. J Vernon McGee, a well-known pastor/teacher in former years told a story about an occasion while he was teaching at Dallas Seminary. *A lady who lived in the deep south fell in love with her childhood sweet heart. She ultimately married him, and their marriage lasted for many years. Then her husband suddenly died of a heart attack.*

Not being able to let go of him visibly, she decided to have him embalmed. Then she put him in his favorite chair and sealed him up in a glass case. She had him placed immediately inside the front door of their large plantation home. Every time she walked through the door, she would smile and say, 'hi, John. How are you?' then she would walk right up the stairs and go on with life as usual. Her life moved on as the months passed. But John just sat there, day after day. After a year or so, she decided to take a trip to Europe. It was a delightful change of scenery. In fact, she met a fine American gentleman who also was vacationing there. He swept her off her feet. After a whirlwind romance, they got married and honeymooned all over Europe. But she said nothing of old John back on the farm.

When they finally got back to her home in the states, her husband decided to lift his new bride and carry her over the threshold into her home. He picked her up, bumped the door open with his hip, walked in and almost dropped his bride on the floor.

Who is this? He said. 'Well, she said, this is John. He's my old husband from ...' the new husband immediately dug a big hole in the back yard and buried her former husband, case and all. It was never discussed between the two of them again.

The accuracy of Dr. McGee's story may be in question, but the lesson it teaches is vitally important.

The story asks the same question that the Book of Galatians asked.

Is the Law dead as a means of justification, or is it enshrined setting by the front door of our hearts?

Paul was rightly concerned about this situation because he knew you can not mix law and grace.

The do not go together.

Paul will use our Text to make a clear distinction for the new believers in Christ Jesus.

I. OUR **CONDITION** (4:1-3)

Paul is a master at using illustrations that support his teachings.

In 3:22, Paul compared the Law to a prison guard.

In 3:23, Paul compared the Law to a school master of guarding.

In 3:24, Paul compares the Law to a tutor.

Now in chapter four, Paul will continue his comparison to help the Galatians understand that salvation is not grained nor maintained by one's merit or their works.

Salvation comes totally – completely by God's grace expressed through Christ Jesus.

In Chapter Four, Paul is going to compare the Law to a legal guardian.

FIRST – The **ILLUSTRATION** (vv 1-2)

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, (2) but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.

In these two verses, Paul describes our condition under the Law before Christ Jesus.

In the days of which Paul is writing in the New Testament, the division between childhood and adulthood was far more important and distinct than what we are use too.

The passage of a child into adulthood (a boy to a man) was a time of great celebration in every culture.

In the Roman culture:

The celebration was called *toga virilis*

It hit ritual the boy's long hair would be cut off and offered to the god Apollo.

In the Jewish culture:

The passing of a boy to a man was called *bar mitzva*.

Until the age of 12, a Jewish boy was under the direct and absolute control of his father.

But at the *bar mitzva* which was observed on the Sabbath after the child's 12th birthday, the boy's father would pray, *Blessed be thou, O God and God of my Father, on this solemn and sacred day which marks my passage from boyhood into manhood, I humbly raise my eyes to Thee, and declare with sincerity and truth that, henceforth, I will keep Thy commandments and under take to bear the responsibility of my actions toward Thee.*

Before children came to the age in Jewish families, they were placed under the guardianship of a tutor, usually an educated dependable slave.

This is the context that Paul is referring to when he writes verse 1, ***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.***

Even though a child may one day inherit his father's property and wealth, but while he is a child, he will be no better off than a slave or a servant because that is whose authority he is under.

Until that child reaches adulthood and out grows the guardianship of the slave, he is in bondage on different than the slave who oversees him.
(John R W Scott, The Message of Galatians p104)

Paul uses this illustration to show that the Law was meant for the Spiritual childhood of God's people until they were able to become fully mature with the coming of Christ Jesus.

When Christ came the Law lost all authority.

Paul's example clearly instructs Christians to live freely as mature sons in Christ and not revert back under the rules, rituals, and regulations placed on them by the legalism and the Law.

SECOND – The **IMPLICATION** (v 3)

In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

In the Old Testament days, before Christ came and when we were under the Law, the Word of God says we were still heirs of the promise that God gave Abraham. (Genesis 12:3)

But we were under the Law like children under the authority of a slave.

Until we spiritually came of age through faith in Christ Jesus – we were all slaves.

We too were under the control of the elemental things of the world.

The word for *children* used in this verse is *nepios* and refers to a child too young to talk.

This would be a minor, someone spiritually and intellectually immature.

One not ready for the privileges and responsibilities that come with adulthood.

Everything has to be done for an infant.

Nearly all of their decisions have to be made for them.

Paul is saying the Law treated us in the same fashion.

This is what legalism does.

Tells us what to do, when to do it, and how to do it and where to go, what to wear.

Absolute bondage.

Christ Jesus has freed us from all these man-made rules, rituals, and regulations.

Paul says that people governed by Law are *under the elements of the world*.

The word *elements* signify a row or a rank.

It means things that are in a list, things under a hierarchy, things that are consistently the same.

This is exactly what legalism does.

Laws are nothing more than a list of do's and don'ts.

You are required to live up to the list or suffer the consequences.

If you don't live up to the Law, you cannot be God's person.

Legalism says there are outward things you must do to be acceptable to God

In Colossians 2:8, Paul, dealing with false teachings by false teachers in the church says, *see that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition (legalism), according to the elemental spirits of the world and not according to Christ Jesus.*

The word *tradition* refers to the letters of the alphabet and ordered elements of speech.

This perfectly describes how the Jews saw their Jewish religion.

The heart of the Jewish religion during the New Testament was the Rabbinic traditions that ruled and reigned over the truth of the Old Testament.

These traditions were nothing more or less than the idea that man, by his on achievements, could affect God's approval.

The Law tells us what is wrong or what is right.

But the Law cannot do anything to change us.

That is why the Word of God says that the law can only point us to Christ.

Christ is the only One who can truly make a change in our hearts which directs how we believe and behave.

II. OUR CONVERSATION (4:4-7)

At this point, Paul is going to show us how and why Christ is the sole source of our hope.

FIRST – The APPEARANCE of the Savior. (vv 4-5a)

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the Law, (5) to redeem those who were under the Law ...

Paul is affirming that there was a moment in history that God had appointed.

Just as the human father set the time of his son coming of age – passing from boyhood to manhood – so did God set the time to send Christ Jesus, His Son, to earth to redeem the lost man.

God set the time and the place that our Redeemer was to come into this world.

God sent His Son, they called Him Jesus to come at the perfect moment.

In fact, it was the most perfect time that it is possible the time was set at creation itself.

Even in our limited human ability, we can not *three* very evident reasons.

1). The timing of Christ Jesus' coming was perfect RELIGIOUSLY.

At this time, the Law had fully accomplished its purpose – it had run its course.

People had attempted to live up to the standards of the Law.

This was causing frustration and burn-out.

The religious climate had become a time of desperation and a sense of hopelessness – despair.

The Jews were looking for the Messiah who was promised thorough the Old Testament.

The Gentiles were fed up with paganism and were coming to the Jews for answers.

Also, during this time synagogues were springing up in almost every city in Asia Minor.

These were used as places of worship and education.

During Paul's mission trips, it was these synagogues that he would first go to when he entered a city to present the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

People were hungering for teachings of the Scriptures at this time.

2). The timing of Christ's coming was perfect **CULTURALLY** as well.

By the time Christ Jesus was born, Alexander the Great had clearly established the Greek culture and language throughout the known world.

By way of force, Greek had become the common language of the people.

When it came to the teaching/preaching of the Gospel message throughout the world, there was no language barrier.

Everyone knew the Greek language.

3). The timing of Christ Jesus' coming was perfect **POLITICALLY** also.

The Romans had created the *pax romana*

This was unheard of time of peace in the world.

Did You Know?

Literally translated as *aman peace* the *pax romana* begin when Augustus became emperor in 27 B.C. and lasted until Marcus Aurelius, the last of the five good emperors dies in 180 A.D.

This 200 year period of relative peace started from what is now England all the way through Europe into North Africa and the Middle east.

The Romans even had a tangible symbol of world peace.

The Gates of Janus were open when Roman was at war and during the *pax romana* they were ceremonially closed to not only show that world peace was at hand but also to display the subsequent power that Rome possessed because of it.

The Roman leaders had such a strong control over the culture that there were no great wars to be won.

The Gospel message could travel safely throughout the world.

The Romans had built roads connecting all the major cities and therefore the Gospel could travel quickly to all corners of the world.

There could not have been a more perfect time for Christ Jesus to come to this earth.

In verse 5 we find the word *redeem*

This word has an even greater meaning when put into the context of the culture of the day.

At this particular time in the Roman Empire, there were some 60 million slaves being bought and sold in the market places.

When someone purchased a slave, it was for one of two purposes:

Either to own him
Or to set him free.

Paul is telling these Galatian readers that in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son to set us free from the sure death penalty brought on by our sin.

God sent His only Son to redeem each of us.

SECOND – The **ADOPTION** of sons. (v 5b)

So that we might receive adoption as sons.

God's decision to pay for our freedom through the death of His Son – Jesus also led Him to adopt us into the Family of God

We are His kids.
We are a Family of Faith.

The word *adoption* used in the New Testament is a compound word that means *the placing of a child (son)*.

It refers to a man giving the status of sonship to someone who is not his natural child.

This is exactly what God has done for each one of us.

God has divinely adopted us and made us as His own when we put our faith and trust in Christ Jesus.

THIRD – The **ADVENT** of the Spirit (v 6)

And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of God's Son into our hearts, crying "Abba! Father!"

The adoption process is an interesting process.

You can adopt a child and bring him/her into your family, but you can not take your DNA and place it in a person.

But God can – and He does

The conformation of our adoption is the Holy Spirit of God's Son, Christ Jesus.

God has placed the spiritual DNA in each person that comes into His family.

This happens at the very moment we invite Christ Jesus into our hearts to save us.

Paul says the Spirit of God's Son is sent into our hearts.

Why our hearts?

Because our hearts control our entire personality.

When we receive Christ into our hearts, we are given His Holy Spirit to dwell in our very life-giving part of our being.

We go from being hateful to loving.

We go from being disobedient to obeying.

It is only when the Holy Spirit of God comes to reside in our hearts that it is possible to say Abba! Father!

Abba is an Aramaic word used by Christ Jesus that has been incorporated into the language of our Christian faith.

At this time, it was the most endearing term you could use for “father”.

We get our English word “Daddy” from this word.

In Matthew 22:37-40, Jesus says that love is the explanation of the Law.

We know the Ten Commandments are divided into two sections.

First section – the first four commandments describe how we love the LORD our God with all our heart, soul, and mind.

Our true love for God makes it necessary that we have no other gods in our life.

Second section – the last six commandments are to love our neighbors as ourselves.

This love for our fellowman prevents us from any abusing of others.

It is love – not law – that motivates the born-again believer to allow God to live in and through him.

III. OUR **CHOICE** (4:8-11)

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. (9) 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? (10) You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I must have labored over you in vain.

Paul wanted to know why anyone would want to return to the bondage of the Law when they have experienced the freedom given to them by the love of God found only in Christ Jesus?

Paul goes on to write that these Galatians were *observing days, months, seasons, and years*.

Then religion has degenerated into an external form of rituals.

This has now become a dreary routine of rules, rituals, regulations and routines.

Paul reveals a side of him when he writes in sorrow, *I am afraid ... I have labored vain.*

Paul has invested a lot of **TIME** and face a lot of **TROUBLE** in helping these Galatians find the freedom found only in Christ Jesus,

God has demonstrated His deep love for each of us:

By sending His one and only Son to die in our place in order to provide salvation or each of us.

By sending His Holy Spirit to put His DNA in each of us as a child of God.

That is the reason we can call Him our Heavenly Daddy.

VELVET STEEL
Galatians 4:12-20

Introduction

In 1986, Country Music Singer Holly Dunn had a top ten hit with the song, *Daddy's Hands*.

The chorus of the song reads as follows:

*Daddy's hands were soft and kind
When I was crying;
Daddy's hands were hard as steel
When I'd done wrong;
Daddy's hands weren't always gentle,
But I've come to understand.
There was always love in Daddy's hands.*

Sometimes, Paul had to be harsh toward the Galatian believers.

His occasional harshness in order to correct was always born and given out of the love he had for these believers.

In our study we are going to see two reasons why Paul corrected false teachings.

Up to this point in our study, Paul has chastised the Galatians for their waywardness.

He has called them *foolish* and *bewitched*.
He has scolded them like a parent.

Paul is trying to help his Galatian friends understand the dangers that threatened to ruin their Christian experience.

Illustration

Dr. James Dobson wrote a book entitled *Dare to Discipline* and he talks about *tough love*.

Tough love is when you must apply discipline to those you care deeply about in order to help them understand the detriment of their actions and words will be to their life.

Paul sees himself as a parent to these Galatian believers.

He has had to practice *tough love*.

If we judge Paul based only on the first three chapters of Galatians, we would conclude that he is an impressive scholar with very little heart of compassion.

As we advance in our study in to chapter four, we are going to see a different side of the Apostle Paul.

We are going to see Paul in a whole new light.

He is going to appeal to these Galatians with deep feelings and great tenderness.

Daddy's Hands

When Paul begin writing this letter, he didn't have anything good to say about these Galatians believers.

He called them *foolish* because they were turning away from the Truth and being led away by false teachers.

In Galatians Four, we are going to hear Paul use different tones for his readers.

In Verse 12, Paul calls them *brethren*.

In Verse 19, Paul calls them *my little children*.

Something has changed in how Paulo is approaching the Galatian believers.

What Paul was doing here is not found in the other letters he has written.

Paul has been a freedom fighter.

He has been the defender of the Gospel.

Now we see Paul, the man – the pastor, a shepherd, who cares about the flock and the passion for the souls of people.

I. PAUL'S **LOVE** FOR THE GALATIANS (4:12-16)

FIRST – Paul's **APPEAL** (v 12a)

Brother, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are.

NOTE – This reads, “brothers and sisters” here and in verse 28 and 31.

Some might think this is some type of riddle.

You become what I am and I become what you are.

Paul is simply pleading with his friends to become like him.

Paul was saying to his readers that he was free from the law, free from its rite, rituals, rules and regulations.

Paul was free from the endless legalistic lectures and traditions from the Jewish Rabbis

Paul says, *I am free, I am free, be like me.*

Get out from under these burdens of religion.

Get rid of this baggage

Friends become like me.

Don't forget this fact, Paul was the instrument God used to start these Galatian believers on their Christian walk.

These were Gentiles who were not encumbered by ceremonies and rituals.

They had started out free but now they were turning to the Jewish law.

They were never under these traditions to begin with.

This is why we find Paul insisting that they reject these false teachers and their false teachings.

That wasn't a part of their salvation to begin with, so why are they trying to make it a part of it now?

Paul once been a Jew bound by the law now, he had become as they once were at the time of their conversion.

They had been free from the **OBLIGATION** of legal *observance*.

The strength in Paul's appeal comes from the fact that he knows firsthand what these Galatian believers do not.

He knows the misery of the bondage that Jewish legalism places on people.

He had lived everyday of his life devoted to the Jewish legalism.

Paul carried the burden of trying to be justified by the law.

Paul was trained to be a Rabbi.

Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

Paul was more zealous for his belief than any other.

Let's jump ahead to Galatian 5:1 for a moment.

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

Paul's plea is perfectly summarized in this verse.

Don't get yourself entangled again in this legalistic bondage.

So, we see Paul's *appeal*.

SECOND – Paul's **AFFLICTION** (vv 12b-13)

You did not wrong (13) you know it was because of bodily ailment that I preached the Gospel to you at first.

Really the last part of verse 12 belongs with verse 13.

The Greek would read like this *no wrong you did to me*.

Paul wants the Galatians to recall the very first time they met.

They first met on Paul's first missionary trip.

When he and Barnabas went into Galatia preaching the Gospel and establishing churches.

Paul says in verse 13, when he first preached the Gospel to them, he had not been well.

They were not the reason he was hurting.

Paul had either become seriously ill while in Galatia or else he went there to recuperate.

We find no mention of his illness in Acts 13-14 that describes their trip.

We are not told what the illness was, so it is best to be silent and let the Scriptures guide us.

What we do know is that Paul preached the Gospel to the Galatians while he was under great stress and was in great physical discomfort.

We all can relate to going to work when we are not 100%.

Illustration

Emmitt Smith is a great example of someone who plays hurt. It was December 1992, Cowboys against the New York Giants during the first half Dallas star running back had a game ending injury of a separated shoulder. At halftime they took X Rays and told Emmitt their diagnosis. We suggest you sit out the second half. But it is your choice. He chose to play. Coach Jimmy Johnson was told of Emmitt's condition and decided to use him as a decoy. After a bit Emmitt came to his coach – I am a player not a decoy. Emmitt rushed for 78 more yards in the second half taking hit, vicious hits after another. It was said that Emmitt Smith beat the “Giants with one arm.” He was truly a person who played with pain.

Paul is an example of one who overcame many challenges to be faithful to God and his calling to carry the message of Christ Jesus to a lost dying people.

Listen to Paul as he is encouraging young Timothy (2 Timothy 3:10-11)

But you have followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, and endurance, (11) Along with the persecutions and sufferings that came to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. (All in Galatia) What persecution I endured – and yet the LORD rescued me from them all.

What is certain as we read this text is:

Paul never lost sight of what he was called to do.

Paul saw these Galatians needed to hear the Gospel and he was determined to deliver God's message and deliver these people from their destiny of hell.

Paul's entire ministry is a testimony of his faithfulness to heed his calling in spite of any painful physical condition or circumstances that confronted him.

We have looked at Paul's *appeal*, his *affliction* and now ...

THIRD – Paul's **ACCEPTANCE** (1:14-15)

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. (15) 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.

Here we catch a personal note about Paul.

These tidbits help us see Paul as a real human being – we can relate to this personal side of Paul’s life.

The language Paul uses here, seems to suggest that what ever pain Paul was suffering with physically could have been a hinderance or receiving him and his message.

There have been many speculations about the problem.

We can be sure of this, they did not have the medical training or supplies we have today.

Sometimes these diseases would cause disfigurement and that would be hard to look at.

There could also be a smell cause by the disease.

During the day, to most ancients, including the Jews, physical affliction was considered a form of divine judgement.

The fact that Paul’s afflictions was not a barrier to his credibility either to the Jews or Gentiles of Galatia was totally unexpected (John MacArthur commentary on Galatians p114)

The Galatians were not embarrassed by Paul’s physical condition.

They welcomed Paul with open arms.

Note Paul’s words, *you received me as if I were an Angel of the LORD Jesus Christ.*

In our verses, Paul is reminding the Galatians that the freedom and joy they once had – now they had traded all of it for allowing themselves to go into bondage.

Paul points out to them that their love for him was so sincere that they would have gladly given him their own eyes.

This could be the explanation of why he wrote Galatian 6:11:

See with what large letters I am using as I am writing to you with my own hand.

Paul had a problem with his eyes.

Because Paul's vision was limited, he would have used larger than normal letters in order to see what he was writing.

Whatever the case, the Galatians had fully and lovingly accepted him when Paul was in a painful time of his life.

So, we have looked at:

Paul's *appeal* (v 12a)

Paul's *afflictions* (vv 12b-13)

Paul's *acceptance* (vv 14-15)

In verse 16 we will see our fourth...

FOURTH – Paul's **ARGUMENT** (v 16)

Have I become your enemy because I tell you the Truth?

Paul was no different than we are.

He valued friendship and wanted to **CULTIVATE** it.

However, he was not going to **COMPROMISE** Truth to keep someone happy.

Paul was saying to the Galatians that it was the Truth of the Gospel that led to their friendship.

It was Truth that was the center of their friendship.

He would give up their friendship before he would go against his **CONVICTIONS**.

Paul valued their friendship to tell them the Truth

This is the true sign of friendship.

Our world today does not value Truth.

They are all about “going along to get along.”

The world wants to be *happy* at the cost of being **HOLY**.

Illustration

In our court system, a witness must be sworn in before they take the witness stand.

The oath was:

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, so help you God?

However, the oath has changed:

No longer is the phrase “*so help you God*” included.

Without God, there is no Truth

Many today seek out churches that only preach a feel-good message.

2 Timothy 4:3, For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear what they want to hear.

God is not pleased with this.

He does not feel good about a preaching that *waters down the Gospel*.

Watering down the Truth of God’s Word can be identified by two simple words: yea – *BUT!*

I Sure that was what was written for them, *but* we are not them, so it does not apply to me/us.

People are looking for the *easy way out*.

They want a message that make them feel good about their sin.

Sad to say, there are people standing before the multitudes spouting out half truths which by the way are no truths.

NOTE – There is no such thing as half-truths. It is either the whole truth or no truth.

Paul was a loving father figure to these Galatians and he wanted them to understand the seriousness of their situation – therefore he was willing to sacrifice his friendship for the Truth.

We have examined Paul’s **LOVE** for the Galatians in our verses 12-16.
This brings us to our next portion of our Text.

II. PAUL'S **LOYALTY** TO THE GALATIANS (4:17-20)

In describing his loyalty, Paul is going to show the **CONTRAST** between the false teachers and himself in the true Gospel.

FIRST – A **FALSE** loyalty (v 17)

Concerning these Judaizers, Paul writes (NLT) “those false teachers are so eager to win your favor, but their intentions are not good. They are trying to shut you off from me so that you will pay attention only to them.

Paul contrasting his own plain speaking to the Galatians with the way these false teachers have approached these Galatians.

The New King James Bible uses the word *zealously* to describe their passionate attempt to keep the Galatians away from the Truth.

Paul is writing to the Galatians to correct the error of their thinking.

These false teachers were **BUTTERING** up the *Galatians* and **WATERING** down the *Gospel*.

The goal of these false teachers was to get these Gentiles to adopt and obey the Jewish religious laws.

These Judaizers wanted to bring the Galatians under bondage of legalism.

To do this, they had to shut them off from all outside influence except their own,
They were “brain-washing” them.

These false teachers especially wanted to isolate them from Paul and say any words he had to say to them.

The Judaizes only interest in the Galatians was to seduce them into legalism.

Jesus dealt with these same things when He spoke the Words recorded in Matthew 23:15, *woe to you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to make one convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as fit for hell as you are!*

It was always Paul's desire for these Galatian believers to be faithful in following Christ Jesus.

Paul cared deeply for them and always sought their best interest.

However, the Judaizers were motivated by their own jealousy and self-interest.

Illustration

Dr. Warren Wiersby says it like this: (p99)

Beware of that religious worker who wants your exclusive allegiance because he is the only one who is right. He will use you as long as he can and then drop you for somebody else – and your fall will be a painful one. The task of the Spiritual leaders is to get people to love and follow Christ; not to promote himself or his teachings.

Matthew 7:15 (NLT) *Beware of false prophets who came disguised and harmless sleep but are really vicious wolves.*

So, we looked at the false loyalty (v 17)

SECOND – A **FAITHFUL** loyalty. (vv 18-20)

Paul has clearly illustrated what false loyalty looks like.

Now, he is going to demonstrate what faithful loyalty looks like, so the Galatians can have a visual understanding.

1). The **TURTH** of Paul's loyalty (v 18)

But it is always good to be pursued (zealously) in a good manner – and not just when I am with you.

There was never a **CONTEST** for Paul between him and these false teachers.

Even though Paul had failing eye sight he was not blind to what these legalistic Jews were desiring to do.

NOTE – One of the first signs of a false teacher is their attempt to separate individuals from outside influence.

Again, Warren Wiersby writes, *One of the marks of false teachers is that he tries to attract other men's converts to himself and not simply to the Truth of the Word of God. Like the cultist today, these false teachers were not winning the lost sinners to Christ but were stealing converts from those who were truly serving the LORD.*

False teachers focus on **STEALING** sheep rather than **SAVING** sheep.

2). The **TENDERNESS** of Paul's loyalty (v 19a)

Paul continues, *Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I am going through labor pains for you again ...*

We see the tender side of Paul here as he is speaking from his heart.
Paul is speaking as a parent to their child.

This is the only time Paul will use the Greek word *teknia* when referring to children in his writing of the Epistles.

This is a favorite word of the Apostle John.

Paul used the word to demonstrate the depth of his feeling he had for these Galatian believers.

Notice – also that Paul used the metaphor of child birth.

He is speaking of the pain and trouble he had to go through in order to see these Gentiles born into God's family of faith.

Now the Galatian believers were making a mockery of the pain and suffering Paul had to endure for them.

In essence, Paul is saying to them, *you are acting as if you are not even Christians – as if you had never been born into Christ Jesus's family.*

We have looked at:

The *Truth* of Paul's loyalty.

The *Tenderness* of Paul's loyalty.

This bring us to number three –

3). The **TEST** of Paul's loyalty (v 19b)

And they will continue until Christ Jesus is fully developed in your lives.

Paul's desire was that these Galatian believers would be developed in their faith and this would be visible on the outside.

Christ in me the ... hope of glory.

The idea of this verse then is to have *real Christ like character* not just the appearance of it.

This is just the opposite of the false teachers promoting their legalism.

They were insisting that one should conform to a set of rules.

Any religious system that does not produce the image of Christ Jesus in the lives of people has nothing to do with Christianity.

Paul's desire for these Galatian friends:

That Christ might be **FORMED** in them.

That their **FAITH** might be from the inside out.

4). The **TONE** of Paul's loyalty (v20)

I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

The trouble with letters is they often do not obtain the emotional feeling of the person writing or receiving the letter.

The letter is literally *black and white*.

The letter does not communicate the message for the **HEART**.

It is read with the **HEAD** knowledge.

The tone of Paul's writing has been **SEVER** and at times pretty **SHARP** tongued.

Paul understood this and knew that if he had been present, they would see his heart in what he was saying.

Paul does not regret what he is saying.

He knows that if he was there with them – they could see his heart.

Paul's letter to the Galatians seems **HARSH** but his words are not **HATEFUL**.

Paul cares deeply for his Galatian friends.

THE STORY

Galatians 4:21-31

Introduction

God gave Abraham a promise that changed the destiny of all mankind.

Story telling has developed into one of the best methods to communicate a message.

Paul illustrates this in the fourth chapter of Galatians.

The story he tells is true and the characters are real, but from the events that happened in their lives are great lessons on our Christian faith and life.

In the eleven verse of our Text, Paul is going to give us *three* key lessons we can learn from.

Overview of our Text.

This passage of Scripture is known as one of the most difficult to understand.

To understand it, we will need to break it down verse by verse.

But we must keep it in context of the entire passage of Scripture.

NOTE – it is best to read Galatians 4:21-31 from different translations of the Word of God.

At first, we would agree that this passage seems complicated and confusing.

To understand it, we need to see the story that is to clarify the central truth that Paul has been caring throughout the entire letter.

We must remember that Paul is writing to new born-again believers that had very little understanding of the Old Testament.

These were Gentiles who were not part of the Jewish heritage that people like Paul possessed.

Paul is very clear on the meaning and purpose of this passage and is reassuring his readers that they were included in the children of promise.

They were free from being under the bondage of the law.

So, let's break down the story using the number 2

- 2 sons – Ishmael and Isaac
- 2 women – Bond woman and free woman
- 2 spheres – flesh and spirit
- 2 covenants – the law and the promise
- 2 places – Arabia and Jerusalem
- 2 mountains – Sinai and Zion
- 2 homes – Earthly Jerusalem and heavenly Jerusalem

I. THE **ARGUMENT** (4:21)

Paul writes, *Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law?*

(NLT) *do you know what the law actually says?*

At first, this sounds rather strange.

Why would anyone want to be under the law?

In Paul's day, (ours as well) there were people who tried to get to God by observing certain rules.

They are convinced they must work their way to heaven.

Only by following strict obedience to regulations, traditions, and making sure they abide with all the dos and don'ts can they make it to heaven.

This was the message the false teachers were putting out.

This is the reason Paul asked this rather sarcastic question.

Have you even heard the law?
Do you even know what it says?

You claim to be under the law, but you don't even know what the law says.

Up to this point, Paul has pulled everything out of his bag to get his point across.

He has used threats, logic, and illustrations from the Old Testament.

Now he will try one more – *argument*.

II. THE **ALLEGORY** (4:22-27)

Paul writes in verse 24 that the things he is about to expound on *are symbolic*.

Paul is telling his readers that they are about to study using illustrations.

The Text in Word of God you are using might say *Allegory*.
(See “Did You Know” at the end of this section)

This is where persons and actions represent hidden meanings so that the narrative can be read on two levels:

The *literal* level.

The *symbolic* level.

While the events that Paul is going to describe really happened historically, Paul is going to show the deeper meaning behind the events.

Paul gets his story from Genesis 12-25.

In these Texts, there are five main characters: Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac.

Paul will use these five main characters to help his readers to draw a Spiritual lesson.

This lesson is going to be the serious nature of the temptation to return to bondage of the law.

FIRST – The Two **SONS** (v 22)

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman

Moses is the one God used to record this story and he did so with all accuracy.

The original story is not an allegory – it is history.

Moses tells us the facts.

Abraham had two wives and one son by each one of them.

Those two wives come from extremely different backgrounds.

The best way to look at the story is to look at the age of Abraham as Moses unfolds these events.

The story begins when Abraham is 75 years old.

At this age, God calls him to go to Canaan and he is promised that he would have many descendants (Gen 12:1-9)

Both he and his wife Sarah wanted children, but Sarah couldn't get pregnant.

God had patiently waiting until both of them were well past the age of having children.

Then God performed the miracle by sending them a son.

Now let's jump forward about 7 years.

Abraham is now 82.

His promised son and descents are nowhere to be seen.

So, Abraham draws the conclusion (according to the customs of that day) that his chief servant Eliezer of Damascus would be his heir.

But the LORD comes to Abraham and says that He has not changed His plans or His promise.

Genesis 15:4, *And behold, the Word of the LORD came to him: This man shall not be your heir, your very son shall be your heir.*

Time marches on and now three years later Abraham is 85.

There is still no sign of a son.

Sarah decides that she will not be waiting on God any longer.

So, she decides to give Hagar – her Egyptian handmaid – to Abraham with the hope that she will be able to provide the son they have been waiting 10 years for.

This was perfectly legal in Canaan for a barren woman to marry her slave to her husband and to take the child born out of that relationship as her own.

This might have been legal, but it was not the will of God.

Abraham disobeyed God and followed his wife's directions and married Hagar, the hand-maiden.

Now Abraham is 86, Hagar is pregnant, and Sarah becomes jealous.

This jealousy began before the boy was even born

Sarah's plan backfires.

As soon as Hagar discovered she was going to have Abraham's child, she begins to mock Sarah and ridiculing her.

Things went downhill from there fast.

Finally, Sarah could not stand it any longer, so she threw Hagar out of her house.

The LORD intervenes and sends Hagar back, promising to take care of her and her son.

Abraham turns 87, when Hagar gives birth to a son and they name him Ishmael.

Abraham immediately falls in love with his first offspring.

Now he has a son – a precious little boy.

Abraham is prepared to let Ishmael be the answer to the promise he had been given by God.

Genesis 17:18, Abraham says to God, *Oh, that Ishmael might live before You.*

It is clear that Abraham desperately wanted Ishmael to be that son God had promised.

Genesis 17:19, God responds with these words, *God said, no, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.*

Now turn the calendar a head 13 years.

Abraham is now 100 and finally Isaac is born.

The birth of Isaac was through the promise.

His conception was supernatural.

God enable Abraham and Sarah to have a child after Sarah was far beyond the age of child bearing.

At the time of Isaac was born, his mom was 90 years old.

This new arrival created some even more trouble in the home.

Isaac would become a rival for Ishmael.

For 14 year, he was his dad's only boy.

Even though Ishmael was a **PRODUCT** of his relationship with Hagar, Abraham still loved him.

Isaac was the **PROMISED** son.

At the age of 103, Abraham was faced with another dilemma.

Ishmael's jealousy over Isaac had reach an all-time high.

Isaac was now 3, and Abraham held a feast to celebrate the weaning of Isaac.

The 17-year-old Ishmael became angry as he watches all the celebration going on.

Out of angry or envy, Ishmael begins to ridicule, scoff, and even persecute little Isaac (Gen 21:9)

For Abraham and Sarah, there was only one solution to this problem.

Hagar and her 17-year-old son had to go.

Abrahams's heart was broken, the LORD instructed him (Gen. 21:12) what he had to do – send Hagar and Ishmael away.

This is a great story for any age person.

The **DRAMA** captivates our attention.

We hang on every **DETAIL** as the story unfolds.

Back to our study of the story telling of Paul in Galatians.

Paul is going to use this story as an allegory to teach his readers the lesson he wants them to understand.

We have first looked at the two sons.

SECOND – The Two **SYSTEMS** (v 23)

But the son of the slave (Ishmael) was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman (Isaac) was born through promise.

This whole dilemma started out because of the scheme for conception that was devised by Sarah and carried out by Abraham.

The scheme was motivated by selfish desires and fulfilled by human contrast to the will of God.

This is why it is of the flesh.

There is nothing miraculous at the birth of Ishmael.

It is just man's way of doing things.

So, the first of the two systems is man's way of doing things.

Now, the birth of Isaac was an entirely different process.

Isaac's parents were so far past child bearing age.

His birth had to be miraculous.

This means that the birth of Isaac represents God's way of accomplishing His promise.

The second system is God's way of fulfilling His promise.

Two *sons*.

Two *systems*

THIRD – The two **SYMBOLS** (vv 24-27)

According to Paul's story, Hagar being the bond woman and Sarah, the free woman, illustrates the two different covenants.

Hagar and Ishmael are the covenant of the law and works.

Sarah and Isaac represent the covenant of God's grace and faith.

1). The Covenant of the **LAW** (vv 24-25)

Now this may be interpreted allegorically. These women are two covenants. One is Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; She is Hagar. (25) Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

The descendants of Hagar through Ishmael eventually move into the desert area to the east and south of the Promised Land.

They became widely known as Arabs because their territory was called Arabia.

NOTE - It is significant and important to note that Mount Sanai is located in what is still known today as the Arabian Peninsula.

Paul is reference to Jerusalem is in the earthly present tense.

The earthly city of Jerusalem represented the center of Judaism and is so even today.

Both Mount Sani and Jerusalem are commonly associated with the Jewish people.

So, let's look at all these terms together.

Hagar, Ishmael, Mount Sinai, and Jerusalem all represent the covenant of the law.

This covenant is built on being self-sufficient, doing it by works of the flesh.

This is the first of the two symbols.

2). The Covenant of **LIBERTY** (vv 26-27)

But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. (27) for it is written, 'Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break froth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor! For the children of the desolated one will be more than those of the one who has a husband.

The covenant of the law is related to the **EARTHLY** Jerusalem
– Mt. Sinai.

The Covenant of Liberty is related to the **HEAVENLY** Jerusalem
– Mt. Zion.

Hebrews 12:18-24 contrast these *two* mountains.

You have not come to a physical mountain (something you can touch), to a place of flaming fire, darkness, gloom, and whirlwind, as the Israelites did at Mt. Sinai: (19) For they heard an awesome trumpet blast and a voice so terrible that they begged God to stop speaking, (20) They staggered back under God's command: if even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death (Ex 19:13). (21) Moses himself was so frightened at the sight that he said. 'I am terrified and trembling.' (22) No, you have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to Countless thousands of Angels in a joyful gathering. (23) you have come to the assembly of God's first-born children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God Himself, who is the Judge over all things. You have come to the Spirits of the Righteous ones in heaven with have now been made perfect. (24) You have come to Jesus, the One who mediates the New Covenant between God and people. And to the Sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.

The earthy Jerusalem is where our LORD Jesus was **REJECTED** and crucified.

The heavenly Jerusalem is the place where our LORD Jesus now **REIGNS**.

Each born-again believer now has a permanent home on **REDEEMED** Avenue.

Paul is telling the Galatians – why do you chose Mount Sinai as your residence when you have a permanent home in Mount Zion.

Paul again **COLLECTS** all these pieces and brings them together.

Sarah, Mount Zion, and heavenly Jerusalem all represent the freedom we have in and through Christ Jesus.

Paul **CALLS** upon the Galatians once again to decide what they want.

It cannot be both!

They can choose a life of bondage, represented by Hagar, Mt. Sinai, and the law.

Or they can choose a life of freedom represented by Sarah, Mt. Zion and freedom in Christ Jesus

The *Argument* (v 21)
The *Allegory* (vv 22-27)

III. THE **APPLICATION** (vv28-31)

Paul is brilliantly using this Old Testament story to apply and teach God's truth to all Christian believers.

In these last four verses, Paul is going to give us four principles that will help us understand the meaning of the story as we apply it to our own Christian experience.

FIRST – We are **CHILDREN** of Promise (v 28)

Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.

Isaac's birth was not based on **PERFORMANCE** but on **PROMISE**.

God deliberately waited 25 years before He fulfilled His promise to Abraham and Sarah to give them the first-born son.

God wanted everyone to know that Isaac's birth was based on faith.

Sarah was way beyond child bearing years when she became pregnant and this child – faith.

In verse 28, Paul brings the meaning of this verse home to us.

How are we born-again?
By faith!

How do we have Christ in our hearts?
By faith!

The works of the law did not bring about Isaac's birth.

The works of the law did not and will not bring new birth.

Isaac's birth was totally God's doing.

Abraham, Sarah, nor Isaac had nothing to do with the birth.

Abraham and Sarah tried to play god to produce an Isaac – they got an Ishmael.

Our spiritual birth was just as miraculous as Isaac's physical birth.

SECOND – We are **CANDIDATES** for Persecution (v 29)

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.

The **FRUIT** of persecution.

Remember in our story that Ishmael hated Isaac.

Also, Ishmael's mom Hagar hated Isaac's mom, Sarah

This is the **ROOT** of their persecution.

We can see three applications here.

1). This can be applied **HISTORICALLY**.

In the mocking laughter of Ishmael, we see the Arab's hatred for the Jews today.

Paul tells us that Ishmael persecuted Isaac.

Ishmael was the enemy of the one who was born of God.

He would have killed him if he could.

NOTE – Looking at the historical facts, it was between the sons of Hagar and Sarah that the modern Arab-Israel animosity began some 4,000 years ago. This has produced continual conflict between these two people groups who both claim Abraham as their father.

2). This can be applied **RELIGIOUSLY**.

Paul understood persecution better than anyone.

He has been on both ends of it.

He was the leading persecutor before his coming to faith in Christ Jesus.

Now, Paul's bitter enemies were the Jewish legalists who once looked up to Saul of Tarsus as the standard for the destruction of this faith

Paul's persecution came in different forms.

- They chased Paul everywhere he went.
- They spread lies about Paul.
- They stirred up the people against Paul.

- They would have killed Paul on more than one occasion if God had not stepped in to protect him.

Legalists have always been self-appointed persecutors.

This was true of Judaism.
It is true of Christianity.

NOTE – it is a fact that believers have always been more mistreated and opposed by other Christians and religionists than by atheists.

3). This can be applied **SPIRITUALLY**.

From the spiritual standpoint, Ishmael is symbolic of the flesh and Isaac is symbolic of the spirit.

In the same way, Ishmael tormented his younger brother, so does sin and our old sin nature come to persecute us.

The conflict between the flesh and the spirit has its roots in these two boys of Abraham.

Paul is going to address this in Galatians 5:17, when he writes: ***For the desires of the flesh are against the spirit, and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh, for these are oppose to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.***

When one becomes a born-again believer, the Holy Spirit begins to convict them of the things that they should not be doing or thinking.

This is the civil war that goes on between the flesh and the spirit.

Romans 7:19, ***For I do not do the good I want, but the evil, I do not want is what I keep on doing.***

Romans 7:18-19 (NLT) ***But I want to do what is right, but I can't. (19) I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.***

This is the war that goes on between the flesh and the spirit.

THIRD – We are not to **COMPROMISE** with the flesh.

Galatians 4:30, *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.*

When Sarah saw Ismael mocking Isaac, she immediately demands that Abraham remove Hagar and Ishmael from their home and their life.

Under God’s direct command, Abraham though reluctantly did what Sarah desired.

Ishmael was banished once and for all by Divine decree from the place of promise.

Paul is teaching the Galatians that when they bring back the works of the law into replace Christ Jesus it is like bringing back Hagar and Ishmael back into the house.

This is impossible to do and if they attempt such action this is a denial of God and His desires for them.

NOTE – You cannot mix legalism and love (law and grace) anymore than you can reconcile Hagar, Sarah, Ishmael and Isaac.

The flesh is incapable of keeping God’s law.

The Judaizers were trying to get the born-again believers to trade Christ’s love for their Jewish laws.

FOURTH – We are **CALLED** to *Liberty* not law. (v 31)

So, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman but of the free woman.

Under the covenant of the law, men and women worked for six days, and on the seventh day they rested.

This was as if to say, *if you work hard all week at the end of the week you will receive a blessing.*

However, under the Covenant of Promise, everything is changed.

Men and women who knew Christ Jesus began to worship on the First Day of the Week.

As Christians, we are blessed first, and everything flows out of that blessing.

We don't work **FOR** a blessing.

We work **FROM** our blessings.

DID YOU KNOW

The understanding of the use of allegory in Scripture is a critical topic for Christians to grasp.

According to Augustine, Allegory is *a mode of speech in which one thing is understood by another.*

Allegory can only be used when the writer of the Old or New Testament Scripture interprets events through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Otherwise, Scripture should be interpreted in a literal fashion.

One example of the use of allegory in the Old Testament is found in 2 Samuel 12, when Nathan told David the story about the rich man who stole a poor man's pet lamb to serve to his guests. Nathan's story was an allegory about David's own action concerning Bathsheba, and David's anger at the injustice in Nathan's story was soon aimed at himself.

THE LAW OF LIBERTY Galatians 5:1-12

Introduction

Many of us are not good at accepting gifts or complements.

We just don't feel comfortable receiving something that we don't think we deserve.

Think about this: If we can't accept a simple gesture of kindness from a friend, how are we to then accept the gift of salvation from God?

Christ Jesus is the greatest all-time gift.

He brings us freedom.

This is something we can never earn – it is His gift to each of us.

We are set free from the bondage of sin that only delivers one into hell.

Let's review for a moment and look again at the circumstances that got us to this point.

Paul and Barnabas went on their first mission trip (Acts 13-14). Paul preached the Gospel to the inhabitants in the providence of Galatia and these people gladly received it. These Galatians were turning to Christ for their salvation. They were turning away from heathenism, paganism, and idolatry.

While these new believers were rejoicing in the LORD because of their salvation, some Judaizes came from Jerusalem and began telling them that in addition to receiving Christ, they needed to add the works of the law to their lives in order to be accepted by God.

Paul has openly denounced their false teachers and he has instructed the Galatians that their salvation and walk with Christ is by grace alone.

I. THE **CALL** TO STAND FIRM IN OUR LIBERTY (5:1)

Chapter five is about encouraging these Galatians believers to stand in the freedom that Christ Jesus provided them.

FIRST – We see the positive **DEMAND** (v 1a)

Stand firm therefore in the liberty (freedom) by which Christ Jesus has made us free.

“For freedom, Christ has set us free.”

John 8:26, is Christ Jesus' words *so if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.*

John MacArthur writes in his commentary on Galatian (p64)

When Paul talks about "freedom" he doesn't mean freedom from prison bars. He is talking about a freedom that is even better than that – Freedom from legalistic tyranny, freedom from the terrible frustration of struggling to keep the law when you cannot, freedom from the pressure of trying to do things that will gain God's favor.

It was the goal of these Judaizers legalist to destroy any freedom the Galatians had discovered by becoming a Christ follower.

The legalist wanted to chain these people up to the man-made rules and regulations of their religion.

Paul says to these Galatians they should *stand firm*.

We will find it five other times in his letters

1 Corinthians 16:13

Philippians 1:27, 4:1

I Thessalonians 3:8

II Thessalonians 2:15

There are times when we must **FLEE**.

Then there are times when we must stand **FIRM**.

When Paul uses the phrase *stand firm*, he is reminding us of how the Romans fought a war.

When is duress, Roman soldiers would simply lock their shields together, plant their feet firmly on the ground and present an iron wall of steel and resolve against their enemies? (David Jeremiah p45 Study of Galatian)

This is a great picture of the way we should stand against our **ENEMY** or **ERROR** in our teaching.

For one to have freedom the must move from rules and regulations that bind us to placing our faith and total trust in Christ Jesus.

This freedom brings new choices.

This freedom brings a new way of thinking.

This freedom brings new possibilities, privileges, and priorities.

SECOND – The Negative **DECREE** (5:1b)

Paul continues, *Do not submit again to the yoke of slavery.*

Paul is saying that it is totally up to these people if they want to be yoked up again to this bondage.

They can allow it, or they can say, *No more and No way.*

This was the same argument Peter presented in Acts 15:10 when he spoke before the Jerusalem Council.

Now therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

The *yoke* is a great metaphor for bondage because an animal in a yoke has no freedom but to submit to the will of its master.

But let's recall what Jesus taught in Matthew 11:29-30, about trading the bondage yoke for His yoke.

Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (30) for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.

When we become a born-again believer, we are no longer **SLAVES** of satan.

We now have become servants to our **SAVIOR**.

II. THE **CONSEQUENCES** OF SUBMITTING TO THE LAW (5:2-4)

(NLT) Listen, I Paul, tell you this: if you are counting on circumcision to make you right with God, then Christ Jesus will be of no benefit to you. (3) I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favor with God by being circumcised, then you must obey every regulation in the whole law of Moses. (4) for if you are trying to make yourself right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ Jesus! You have fallen away from God's grace.

After Paul tells the Galatians to stand firm in their faith, he then tells them what will happen if they don't

Paul is going to describe the different consequences if they return to attempting to gain salvation by works rather than by grace.

FIRST – We are **DEPRIVED** of the Power of Christ Jesus. (v2)

Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be on no advantage to you.

It is important for us to remember that circumcision was the badge of the law for the Jewish people.

It wasn't the whole law, but it was the most outward thing a Jewish person did to keep the law.

Paul says, *You need to think about this – if circumcision was a requirement for one to be saved, then Christ's work would be inadequate.*

The problem rest here – if we think we can add anything to complete that which has already been completed – then our salvation through Christ Jesus will profit us not one thing.

There is no value in what Christ has done for our salvation if we go along with this false teaching.

It is impossible to have a requirement of the law attached to salvation by God's grace.

Christ's sacrifice was both perfect and totally complete.

Ephesians 2:8-10, (NLT) *God saved you by His grace when you believe. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. (9) Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. (10) For we are God's master piece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things Christ has planned for us long ago.*

We can only become Christians by placing our full trust in God's Son which is our Savior – Christ Jesus.

SECOND – We are **DEBATERS** to keep the whole law. (v3)

I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.

Paul is instructing his readers that if they do choose the way of the law – then they are **REQUIRED** to keep every bit of the law without exception.

A person does not have the privileges to pick and choose which law or what part of the law they are going to obey.

James adds his thoughts in 2:10-11 (NLT) his writings: *For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's law. (11) For the same God who said, "you must not commit adultery; also said, you must not murder" So if you murder someone but do not commit adultery, you have still broken the law.*

Think about what the Word of God is teaching us here.

If a person was somehow able to keep all of the law for his entire life and then broke the very slightest command of his final breath – he would forfeit his salvation. (David Jeremiah Vol. 2 p 47)

In short – you either keep every law perfectly or you keep none of them.

THIRD – We are **DIVORCED** from the grace of God (v4)

You are severed from Christ Jesus, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.

The NKJV uses the word *estranged* but a better word is our word *severed*.

When one turns back to the law, they will sever all ties to Christ Jesus and as Paul puts it *have fallen away from grace*.

The phrase *fallen from grace* needs to be clarified.

Fallen from grace does not mean one has lost their salvation.

It does mean that they have fallen out of the sphere of grace.

NOTE – When one “*falls from grace*” they have closed the door on their Christian growth and God's blessings in their life.

III. THE **CONTRAST** OF THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE (5:5-6)

(NLT) *But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the righteousness God has promised to us (6) For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, there is no benefit in being circumcised or being uncircumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love.*

Paul now turns his teaching to show the Galatians what a life led by faith in the Spirit is going to look like.

FIRST – As Born-again believers we **WAIT** in **HOPE**. (v5)

For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

The longer a person tries to live life by the law – the more they come to realize how impossible it is to achieve any lasting peace.

He may brag today about his accomplishments in keeping some laws – but it will not last.

Tomorrow he starts all over again trying to keep his salvation.

As born-again believers, save by God’s grace, we need not worry about working so we will not lose our salvation.

*We have a peace about that.

* We can focus on living our lives showing others of the love God has and what He provides for everyone.

SECOND – As born-again believers we **WORK** in **LOVE** (v6)

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

Salvation come to us the same way – by God’s grace.

This is true for all people – for the Jews (circumcised) and Gentiles (uncircumcised).

Salvation does not come to anyone because they do good works.

But because one is saved, they will want to produce good works.

Paul is not stranger this topic.

In many of Paul’s writings, he goes out of his way to address this subject.

There is a relationship between faith and works.

Ephesians 2:8-10, Paul writes (NLT)

God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. (9) Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. (10) For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.

We are saved, not by works, but that we might do good works.

God has planned and prepared the ministry each saved individual should be doing.

Note – We are not saved to **SIT**;
We are saved to **SERVE**.

Paul brings these thoughts together and ties them up when he writes in 5:14, *For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: LOVE – You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself.*

For a born-again Christ follower, good works is a by product of one's faith in Christ Jesus.

Our faith is what motivates us to make a difference in the lives God puts in our path each day.

IV. THE CHARACTER OF THE TEACHES OF THE LAW (5:7-12)

Paul has just about reached “the end of his rope” with these false teachers.

Paul has patiently attempted to try to persuade them through powerful arguments from the Scriptures they were familiar with.

So, we see now Paul is going to speak directly to these false teachers.

Paul's plan is to show the world their true colors.

Paul is going to uncover their true character.

Paul is going to use a very strong language.

There are *five* lessons Paul is going to show his readers about those who try to subvert one's faith in Christ Jesus.

FIRST – They **CONTRADICT** the Truth. (v7)

You were running so well. Who hindered you from obeying the Truth?

Paul says to the Galatians, *you had started out on this race so well, but you are now falling back – you are lagging behind.*

So, Paul asked them, *who has hindered you?*

This is a rhetorical question.

Paul was not **SEEKING** the names of these false teachers.

Paul was **SAYING** to them, *How could you allow this to happen?*

In Galatians 4:17, Paul has already revealed what motivated these false teachers to try to gain a following for themselves.

Later on, in Galatians 6:12, Paul is going to tell us what these false teachers had desired, *it is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would be forcing you to be circumcised.*

NOTE - It is very evident that false teachers plagued the church in Paul's day!

We are told in Scripture that they will continue to multiply and grow as we get closer to the end times. (Luke 21:8)

SECOND – False teachers are **CONTRARY** to God. (v8)

This persuasion is not from Him who calls you.

What is Paul referring to here?

False teachers were attempting to add works to God's grace for one to be saved.

God had not called these Galatians to legalism and the law.

They had been called by God's grace to place their faith alone in Christ Jesus.

Let's turn back to Galatians 1:6-7 (NLT)

I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to Himself through the loving mercy of Christ Jesus. You are following a different way that pretends to be the good news (7) but it is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the Truth concerning Christ Jesus.

The false teachers were trying to use Old Testament Scriptures on these Galatians in an attempt to undermine Paul's Gospel message.

These false teachers were not sent by God but by their Jewish Traditions.

Sure, they quoted Scripture but that did not mean they were sent by God.

Satan tries to quote Scripture when he was trying to deceive Christ Jesus in Matthew 4.

NOTE – Every cult leader will use the same technique to support their false teachings.

This is just what they do!

And Paul wants us to know that the doctrine of legalism did not come from God.

THIRD – The false teachers **CONTAMINATED** the church. (v9) (NLT)

This false teaching is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough.

It should be noted that throughout the Word of God, leaven is used as a symbol of corruption that spreads powerfully as well as secretly until it permeates everything.

Leaven was always considered to be a picture of evil.

Even today, during the Passover, the Jews cannot have anything that is leavened in their house – no bread.

Paul is saying, false doctrine will enter a church, and like yeast, it will begin to permeate every area of the fellowship until it has taken control of the whole body.

All it takes is one seed of false teaching to spoil the purity of the church.

FOURTH – The false teacher’s **CONDEMNATION** is certain (v10)

I myself am persuaded in the LORD you will not accept any other view. But whoever it is that is confusing you will pay the penalty.

Paul had full assurance that the Galatians would understand what he had been teaching and would return to growing in their faith they placed in Christ Jesus.

Paul then points out that these false teachers are not going to get away with this.

Those who were causing confusion were going to stand before God and face the music.

They were not going to get away with this corruption.

Their condemnation was certainly coming.

FIFTH – The false teachers will **CRITICIZE** teachers of the Truth. (vv 11-12) (NLT)

Dear brothers and sisters, if I were still peaching that you must be circumcised – as some say I do – why am I still being persecuted? If I were no longer preaching salvation through the cross of Christ Jesus, no one would be offended. (12) I just wish that those trouble-makers who want to mutilate you by circumcision would mutilate themselves.

NOTE – John Scott writes, *The Gospel is grievously offensive to the pride of man. It tells them that they are sinners, rebels, under the judgmental wrath and condemnation of God, that they can do nothing to escape it and can do nothing to save themselves or secure their salvation. It is only through Christ Jesus, whom they have cursed, will they be saved from the devil’s hell. The preachers of the True Gospel will be persecuted for speaking the Truth.*

CONCLUSION

Paul is right when he instructs the Galatians and us, *we cannot live under grace by trying to keep the law*

According to her personal testimony, it was on July 16, 1963, that she came to realize the truth of the following words: *Sin will take you further than you ever wanted to go; sin will keep you longer than you ever intended to stay; and sin will cost you far more that you ever expected to pay.*

Her first marriage had resulted in two sons and six years of unhappiness and disappointment. She was raising her two sons and living a life steeped in immorality. Although she tried, she could not stop on her own. She was literally a slave to her immorality.

On that July 16th morning, her soul-sickness cause her to flee in desperation to the privacy of her bedroom, and she cried out to God. In Grace, God responded by giving her the knowledge of the love of the Prince of Peace. At that point, she didn't know the Christian terminology for what had just transpired in her life. But she said, *I knew that when I got up, I was different. I knew that where ever I went, Jesus was going with me ... I got down on my knees – a harlot – and I got up a saint.*

God freed her to live a blessed life, dedicated to His glory. Many of you have personally benefited from her life as you have studied God's Word inductively by using her "Precepts Ministries International" Bible studies. Her name is Kay Arthur and God took her through some very deep valleys, but He brought her through with grace and a message of hope and fulfillment.

Kay Arthur's life represents the best that the Law can do and the best that God's **LOVE** can do.

God changed her life completely.

She god down on her knees as a harlot and she got up as a saint.

BE WHAT YOU ARE
Galatians 5:13-25

Introduction

The danger most born-again believers face is “to allow other people to define who we are”

The Word of God tells us we are to let our light shine before others.

As born-again believers, we have *the light of the world* as our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ.

This is the light that must shine bright in this world of darkness.

NOTE – The song is so true, *They will know we are Christians by our love.*

The Book of Galatians has taught us some valuable lessons.

FIRST - as born-again believers, we have been united with Christ Jesus, like a marriage.

When we learn that the LORD loved us so much that He did everything in His power to get us to spend the rest of eternity together, we exchanged our vows of commitment with Him.

And like a good marriage, we made the commitment to be faithful only to Him as long as we both shall live.

We are now known because of our relationship with Christ Jesus.

We have taken His name.
We are now CHRISTians.

The decision of becoming a born-again believer now defines who we are.

SECOND – The Book of Galatians has also taught us that we no longer have to try to measure up to any unattainable standard on our own.

All Christ asked of us is to try to live according to the standard He has set before us.

Christ Jesus has set us free from rules and regulations.

I. THE **POSSIBILITIES** OF FREEDOM (5:13-15)

FIRST – We can explore our freedom through **LICENSE**. (v 13a)

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh ...

Paul once again calls our attention to the freedom we have only because of our faith in Christ Jesus.

As born-again believers, we are free, and the rules and rituals of the law does not have any claim on us.

But we must understand that our freedom from the law does not give us a license to live as we please and to sin.

We must not use our freedom in a way that does not bring honor to the One we have made our lifelong commitment to.

We should no longer indulge in fleshly and earthly desires.

NOTE – This is one of the key points in the Book of Galatians because many people criticize the doctrine of freedom saying it is only a license to sin freely.

Paul used the word *opportunity* in verse 13.

This word comes from a Greek word that is a military term that refers to a base of operations for an attack upon an enemy.

We should never use our freedom as a staging area, a springboard to leap into or indulge in the sins of the flesh.

SECOND – We can explore our freedom through **LOVE**. (vv 13-14) (CSB)

For you were called to be free, brothers and sisters; only don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh but serve one another through love. (14) For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement "love your neighbor as yourself."

There are two ways, according to Paul, that we can express our freedom in acts of love.

1) The **INVITATION** to loving service (v 13b)

But serve one another through love

The freedom we received from Christ Jesus was not to **SIN** but to **SERVE**.

The Word of God illustrates this over and over again.
We are saved to serve!

Christ Jesus, the King of Kings, showed us how to do this when He took off His robe and put on a towel and washed the disciple's feet. (John 13:5)

This was an unglamorous act and a dirty job – but Christ did it.

Christ came to *save*.
He also came to *serve*.

As Christ-followers, we have been called to do the same!

2). The **IMPACT** of loving service (v 14)

For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement: “love your neighbor as yourself”

Paul is stating, love is both the summary and the realization of the entire God-given moral law.

Paul explained himself in Romans 13:9-10.

The commandment, do not commit adultery; do not murder, do not steal do not covet – and any other commandment, are summed up by this commandment: “love your neighbor as yourself.” (10) Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law.

Now it makes perfect sense that if you love your neighbor, you want commit adultery with his wife, steal his property, etc.

The **LAW** tells us of the punishment.

God's **LOVE** teaches us what motivates our actions.

THIRD – We can express our freedom by **LIVING** in harmony with one another (v 15)

Paul gives a warning in verse 15 when he writes, ***But if you bite and devour one another, watch out, or you will be consumed by one another.***

Paul is not talking about the Judaizers or any non-believers here.

These words are directed and describing the Christians themselves.

Most of us have personally seen and experienced this harshness by fellow Christians in our churches.

There is no doubt that every church has stubborn, head hearted, and difficult people who insist on having their way.

It is these individuals that destroy the harmony and fellowship within the congregation.

Every day we face the possibility of church conflict and self-destruction.

These individuals believe they have the freedom to do or say anything they want.

They are using their freedom to sin in the flesh.

NOTE – It is a proven fact that churches are destroyed by its own members and not by outsiders.

II. THE PRACTICE OF FREEDOM (5:16-26)

At this point, Paul is going to take his readers from the doctrinal section of his writing to how to put these thoughts into practice.

FIRST – The **COMMAND** to walk in the Spirit. (v 16)

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

As born-again believers we have been given the Holy Spirit that guides us.

We do not live under the demands of the law.

When one is controlled by the flesh, their natural temptation is to satisfy their own desires.

They live under their fallen sinful nature and it is controlling them.

Flip Wilson had a saying “The devil made me do it” only because he was under the influence of the sin nature and not the Savior’s love.

The natural person living by the flesh is spiritually dead and does nothing to honor or please God.

It is **SELF** and not the Savior that is controlling their entire life.

When one becomes a born-again believer – a true Christian – several things begin to take place.

- 1). They receive a new nature.
- 2). The Holy Spirit has been invited to take His permanent residence in their heart.
- 3). They receive eternal live in heaven through Christ Jesus.

With all this being said, the sad news is, the old selfish nature still hangs around.

The **SELFISH** desires is the old nature.

It is the *carnal* man.

The **SPIRITUAL** desires is that new nature.

It is the *spiritual* man.

These two natures are a constant battle in every true Christian life.

Did you notice the command in verse 16?

We are to ***walk in the Spirit.***

We must be willing to let God be God.

This means we allow the Holy Spirit to control our actions.

This means that all of God’s resources are now available to us.

Philippians 4:13, ***I am able to do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens me.***

When we yield our life to the Spirit’s control all the lustful things are brought under God’s control.

Paul uses the word **walk** which literally means *step-by-step*.

The word is in the present tense and therefore means *a habitual way of life*.

The word is in the imperative mood so that means it is a command from God.

Our “walk” then becomes like that of Christ Jesus every day and in every step.

Oh, there will be temptations still knocking at your door, but the Holy Spirit will answer the door for you.

SECOND – The **CONTRAST** between the flesh and the Spirit. (v 17)

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.

Paul knew what he was talking about because he had personally struggled with this as well.

Listen to his testimony in Romans 7:15, 18, ***For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate ... (18) For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability in me, that is, in my flesh.***

Can I get a witness!!!!

Each one of us, as born-again believers, live in the daily battle and more times than not the battle is raging.

These folks have a motto: *You win some and you lose some.*

For these folks, “confession is 9/10th of the law.

Listen again to how the Spirit helped Paul deal with this daily difficulty.

2 Corinthians 12:9, ***But God said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in your weakness.”***

Paul offers a promise in verse 17 as well.

If we commit to walk in the Spirit ...***we are not going to gratify the desires of the flesh.***

Our life will be a living testimony of what the Spirit of God offers.
(Galatians 5:22-23)

THIRD – The **CHALLENGE** to be led by the Spirit. (v 18)

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Paul is speaking much more than simply being guided by the Spirit.

To be led by the Holy Spirit is to allow the Spirit of God to direct and enable us more and more and more defeat the powerful desires of the flesh and to walk in the way of righteousness.

When the Holy Spirit leads, He is in the driver's seat in full control of the **DIRECTION** we are going to get to our **DESTINATION**.

In order for us to accomplish we must get out to the driver's seat and allow ourselves to be led.

Living a holy life means we are going to be led by God's Holy Spirit.

III. THE **PICTURE** OF FREEDOM (5:19-26)

Paul is going to present his readers with a choice:

As born-again believers we can either live by the Spirit or we can live according to the flesh.

NOTE – You have to make a choice – one cannot live their life half in the flesh and half in the Spirit.

In the following verses Paul is going to paint a clear picture of these two life styles.

FIRST – The picture of the **SINFUL** man. (vv 19-21)

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, (20) idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, (21) envy drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warn you before that those who do such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Paul says the works of the flesh are evident.

He then gives a list of these works of the flesh.

1). **SENSUAL** sins of the flesh. (v 19)

Notice in verse 19, *now the works of the flesh are obvious sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity ...*

2). **SPIRITUAL** sin of the flesh (v 20a)

These sins are exhibited in the process of worship – namely idolatry and sorcery.

The word *idolatry* in this text describes the act of worshipping man-made images of any sort.

NOTE – We were created to worship God, love people, and use things; but too often we use people, love ourselves, and worship things.

An idol is not just some man-made statue or false god that is worshipped.

An idol is anything that you love more than your love God or anything that comes in between you and Jehovah God.

Now, let's look at the other word Paul uses.

The word *sorcery* has its roots a Greek word.

This is the word for drugs and it has given us a modern-day term *pharmacy*.

Paul is warning all of us not to get ourselves involved in any kind of worship that involves drugs.

NOTE – Many modern cults heavily involved in drugs which cause hallucinations as part of their worship.

3). **SOCIAL** sins of the flesh (vv 20b-21)

It is not unusual for Paul to finish his list of sins with:

Idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar, (21) I am warning you these things – as I warned you before – that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

The social sins list is the longest list.

They have more characteristics than the first two combined.

The vast majority of the evidences of the flesh are seen in these social sins.

Paul is reminding us that these sins of satan are demonstrated through our relationships with our fellow man.

This is only a short list.
There are more.

NOTE - The actions and attitudes of the flesh are so numerous that they are literally innumerable.

Flesh

Remove the “h” and read the work now in reverse --- *self*.

If Christ Jesus is not in and directing our daily life we are going to live for ourselves and our own selfish ambitions and lusts.

Will not inherit the kingdom of God

Paul wrote these words saying that eh one who lives selfish will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Paul is not saying that anyone who has ever done any of these things on this list will be excluded from heaven.

He is talking about a consistent habitual lifestyle of sin, not just an act of sin in itself.

SECOND – The **PICTURE** of the **SPIRITUAL** man.

Galatians 5:22-23, ***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience (longsuffering), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control, against such things there is no law.***

In contrast between he works of the flesh in the Fruit of the Spirit.

The Fruit of the Spirit can only be produced in the life of a believer.

Since an unbeliever is not indwelled by the Holy Spirit ...
They cannot possibly produce the Fruit of the Spirit.

The Fruit of the Spirit is the outward evidence that a person has genuinely been saved.

In these verses, Paul gives us a list of nine qualities produced by the Holy Spirit in a believer's life.

Christ Jesus has demonstrated to each believer that one can implement these qualities into their daily life.

FRUIT

This is a potent symbol that is seen through out the Word of God.

Obviously, we know about the role of fruit in the fall of man (Gen. 3:6)

Fruit is also used in other places in the Scripture for spiritual application.

Jeremiah writes about the fruitful life of one who is totally trusting in the LORD.

Jeremiah 17:7-8 (NLT) ***But blessed are those who trust in the LORD and have made the LORD their hope and confidence. (8) They are like trees planted along the riverbed, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green and they never stop producing fruit.***

NOTICE that the list of the Fruit of the Spirit falls into three categories.

FIRST – We have the **UPWARD** qualities.

For the person controlled by and committed to live by the Spirit.

Paul begins the list with *love, joy, and peace*.

1). **LOVE** – Paul tells us that this is the greatest of all virtues.

I Corinthians 13:13, ***Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love but the greatest of these is love.***

Ephesians 5:1-2, (CSB) ***Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, (2) walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.***

Paul is speaking of *AGAPE* love.

This love creates in us the power to respond to someone's need with no expectation of getting anything in return.

Christ loved us that He was willing to sacrifice His very life for us.

His only mandate was for us to imitate this love toward others.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 14:1, that we are to *pursue love and desire the spiritual gifts*.

- 2). **JOY** – Dr. Jeremiah reminds us that *happiness is determined by happenings, but true joy is only found in Jesus Christ*. (Vol 2, page 69 Galatians Study Guide.).

Joy was a major word in Christ’s vocabulary.

He spoke of His joy and the joy He desired for the disciples to experience daily.

John 15:11 (CSB) *I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.*

Hebrews 12:2, *Keep our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfection of our faith. For the joy that lay before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the Throne of God.*

- 3). **PEACE** – this is what is the product of love and joy.

The word *peace* comes from a word meaning *to bind together*.

Using a modern-day vernacular, it would be *having it all together*.

Christ Jesus is called the *Prince of Peace*.

John 14:27 *Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you.*

Again, back to Hebrews 12:14, *Pursue peace with everyone and holiness – without it no one will see the LORD.*

NOTE – As a born-again child of God, these three qualities of Godliness should be evident to all of our devotion to live our Christian life.

These are the hallmarks of a Christian life.

So, the *upward* qualities are love, joy, and peace.

Now let’s look at the next three of the nine Fruit of the Spirit.

SECOND – The **OUTWARD** qualities of the Fruit of the Spirit.

- 1). **LONGSUFFERING** (patience) – this is a calm willingness to accept situations that are irritating and/or painful in our life.

One who is willing to trust God in and through all things.

They are following God's plan and His timing rather than their own.

They have surrendered their own agenda totally over to God and His will for them.

Christ Jesus is our primary example of what longsuffering is all about.

Listen to His words He spoke at the zenith of His undeserved beating, spit upon, and mocked and cursed as well as nailed to the Cross.

Luke 23:34, *Father forgive them, for they do not know what they do!*

Paul writing to the believers in Colossi (3:12) says Christians are to *put on suffering*.

2). **KINDNESS** is the expression of the natural Spirit of Christ Jesus.

He showed kindness to those He met ... especially to the children.

In Titus 3:4 (CSB) *But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ... (5) (NLT) He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy ...*

Paul gives us an update of what Jesus desires from us as well in Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT)

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. (32) Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ Jesus has forgiven you.

KINDNESS means showing goodness, generosity, and sympathy toward others, which is also an attribute of God Paul mentions in Romans 2:4.

Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that His kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

(3). **GOODNESS** is a close cousin to kindness.

This Fruit of the Spirit is particularly expressing the moral excellence that is characteristic of Christ Jesus.

Acts 10:38 (AMP) *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; and He went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him.*

We are told in the Scripture (Gal. 6:10) as born-again Christ followers, *as we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

The idea behind the word **GOODNESS** means working for the benefit or others, not for oneself.

THIRD – The **INWARD** Qualities of the Spiritual Man. (5:22c-23)

Paul moves into the third set of the Fruit of the Spirit qualities here.

1). **FAITHFULNESS** is the word that describes loyalty and being trustworthy.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:24, Paul is describing our LORD and Savior as one who was faithful.

(AMP) *Faithful and absolutely trustworthy is He who is calling you to Himself for your salvation, and He will do it – He will fulfill His call by making you Holy, guarding you, watching over you, and protecting you as His own.*

The Apostle John writing in Revelation 2:10, says each one of us are called to this same faithfulness.

Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

FAITHFULNESS means one is consistent in doing what he says he will do.

2). **GENTLENESS** is something described as *meekness*.

Meekness is sometimes looked up on by non-believers as weakness.

This is one's ability to keep themselves in check.

They do not let circumstances nor other people take control of them.

They will “Pro-act” rather than “Re-act” to these situations.

When speaking of gentleness, it enables people to find rest in Him and to encourage and strengthen others.

3). **SELF-CONTROL** is the quality of restraining passion and appetites.

Christ Jesus constantly demonstrated self-control.

Self-control is the self-discipline given by the Holy Spirit that allows born-again believers to resist the drawing power of the flesh mentioned in Galatian 5:17.

He had all authority and power over every situation, but He chose to remain obedient to God’s plan for our salvation.

Matthew 26:53-54 (NLT) *Don’t you realize that I could ask My Father for thousands of Angels to protect us, and He would send them instantly? (54) But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen?*

JESUS COULD HAVE BUT HE DIDN’T

IV. THE PARTICIPATION IN OUR LIBERTY (5:24-26)

(NLT) *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of the sinful nature to His cross and crucified them there (25) Since we are living by the Spirit let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives. (26) Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.*

When one becomes a born-again believer, we have been adopted into God’s eternal family.

You have a future home provided for each of us by God the Father.

But as long as we live here on this earth even as born-again, the flesh is still going to try to control your actions and attitudes.

I Corinthians 10:13 (NLT), *The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. and God is faithful, He will not allow the temptations to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you can endure.*

Dr. David Jeremiah writes (p71), *the victory we desire to have will never come through struggling – it will only come through surrendering to Christ and allowing The Holy Spirit to lead you.*

When we do, our life may be **STAINED** with sin, but we will be **SUSTAINED** by the Fruit of the Holy Spirit of God.

This only happens through our trust and surrender totally to our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ.

HURTING BROTHERS AND HEAVY BURDENS

Galatians 6:1-5

Dr. David Jeremiah writes the following as he introduces us to the 13 lessons of his study guide on Galatians. *When it comes to things like cleaning out our garage or flossing our teeth daily, too many times we become adept at just ignoring things that we know we need to do. Sadly, when we see a fellow Christ-follower caught in the mire of sin, we look away in the very same manner. But God has called us not to ignore our fallen brethren, but to lift them up and restore them back into fellowship.* (p71)

Illustration – Gary Hart, 1988 Presidential campaign candidate, challenged the media. He told the New York Times in an interview published May 3, 1987, *That they should follow me around... They'll be very bored.*

As NBC anchor, John Chancellor explained a few days later, *we did. We weren't*

Seldom if ever has a major presidential candidacy crashed and burned so quickly. On May 8th, 1987, a mere 5 days after issuing his challenge, the Colorado Senator withdrew as a candidate. His down fall was being a womanizer.

There was a photo of him and a lady sitting on his lap on a Yacht. By the way the name of the Yacht was *Monkey Business.*

How often does this scenario play out in our life?

Politicians are not the only ones that have been caught in a compromising situation.

It is headline news in our national papers of leaders in religious entities caught up in this womanizing downfall as well.

NOTE – The one who is the most critical of others' stumble, only ends up falling himself.

In our Text, Paul warns of one's attitude as he deals with the proper way to restore a fallen brother.

There is an interesting point in our Text.

Paul does not have anything to say to the individual that is overtaken by sin.

However, Paul's silence doesn't mean he was not concerned about the holiness of the one being restored.

Paul's focus here is on the humility of the restorer.

I. **RESTORING** A BROTHER (6:1)

Galatians 6:1 (NLT) *Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer (Gr = Man) is overcome by some sin, you who are godly (spiritual) should gently and humbly help that person back on to the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself.*

It should be noted, even though verse 1 can be broken down into two different kinds of believers, we should always be aware that we are never far from falling from one into the other.

FIRST – Let's look at the **STUMBLING** Believer (v1a)

Even though Paul is presenting a hypothetical case of a believer who is suddenly tripped up and falls into sin ... the story is much too real in today's church.

Paul uses the word *overtaken (overcome)* suggesting it came as a surprise.

Paul's hypothetical case is a falling brother that is not involved of deliberate disobedience.

Some versions use the word *trespass* which means to *fall beside or to take a false step*.

This is a reality check that after we are saved, we are not free from the pitfalls of sin.

Anyone of us could stumble at any given time.

Sin is not erased from our lives when we become a born-again believer in Christ Jesus.

We are sinners that have been saved by God's grace, but we are still sinners.

I John 1:8, *If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and we are not living in the Truth.*

There are *two* possible meanings of Paul's wording *overtaken in any trespass*

1). It could literally mean that they were actually caught doing the sin.

John 8:4 tells of the *woman caught in the very act of adultery*.

2). The phrase could mean that the believer was overtaken by sin itself.

SECOND – The **SPIRITUAL** Believer (v 1b)

The **STUMBLING** believer is to be helped by the **SPIRITUAL** believer.

This can be view in *three* ways.

1). The **ACT** of *Restoration* (v 1b)

You who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit.

You who are *spiritual*

This means the one who is responsive to and guided by the Holy Spirit.

The spiritual person (either man or woman) is to be the one who dows the restoration.

They are the one who is walking in the Spirit and each step they seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The spiritual person can be a young Christian or a seasoned leader in the faith.

The issue is not the age or maturity.

It is the restorer is walking by means of the Holy Spirit and not functioning according to the flesh.

Illustration – Dr. Jeremiah tells of how Martin Luther summarized this verse (p80).

Brethren ... if any man be overtaken with a fault, do not aggravate his grief, do not scold him, do not condemn him, but lift him up and gently restore his faith. If you see a brother despondent over sin he has committed, run up to him, reach out to him, confront him with the Gospel and embrace him like a mother.

God is teaching us that it is not “**IF**” a believer stumbles, but “**WHEN**” a believer stumbles.

God also instructs us on how to the restoration is to take place.

We are to go to our fallen believer and speak to them in private about their fault.

The goal is to restore the person to their spiritual holiness.

It is the responsibility of the spiritual believer to take care of those who are caught in sin.

Yes, we are our brother’s keeper.

NOTE -Those who are spiritual are not to be looking for sin in the life of another, they are to acknowledge it when it becomes evident. Then they are to reach out to the stumbled believer with total compassion.

2). The **AIM** of *Restoration* (v 1c)

What is the purpose behind the ministry of restoration?

God gives us the answer in the third part of verse 1.

To **RESTORE** such a person with a gentle spirit.

This word comes from a Greek word (*katartizo*) which describes the setting of a broken bone.

Also, this same word is used when the disciples were mending their broken nets.

The word carries the idea of “to put in order” or “to bring something to its original condition”.

We hear the word used a lot.

Restore the old car to its original condition.

Restore order and bring harmony among quarreling factions.

Restore an antique piece of furniture.

Paul is right on target when he uses this word in the Christian context.

As Christians, our goal is to behave and bring harmony back to the ones who have fallen.

Sadly, this is not the norm in our churches today.

Illustration – I agree with John MacArthur when he said, *I have often felt that if I ever fell into a trespass, I pray that I do not fall into the censorious, crucial judges in the church. Let me rather fall into the hands of the barkeepers, streetwalkers, or dope peddlers, because such church members would surely tear me apart with their long, wagging, gossipy tongues, cutting me to shreds.* (pp80-81, taken from the Mac Arthur New Testament Commentary – Galatians pp 61-62)

Paul not only tells us what we should do for our fallen comrade.

He also tells us how we should do it.

The restoration is to be done with *gentleness*.

(NLT) *Should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path.*

One of the key reasons why only a genuine spiritual born-again believer should seek to restore a fallen individual is because they will do it gently as the Holy Spirit is at work in both parties.

The gentleness of the Holy Spirit will be done prayerfully and thoughtfully.

3). The **ATTITUDE** of *Restoration* (v 1d)

Paul brings this verse to a close by speaking of the attitude the restorer must have.

Watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted.

(NLT) ***and be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself.***

Dr. Jeremiah says (p81), *the spirit-led believer approaches restoration in a spirit of meekness and love. Why? Because the believer living by grace realizes that no man is immune from falling.*

This attitude comes because he realizes his own weakness and ability to stumble and fall in a like manner.

The Word of God does not abandon us when we face such temptations.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (AMP) No temptation, regardless of its source, has overtaken or enticed you that is not common to human experience, not is any temptation unusual or beyond human resistance, but God is faithful to His Word, He is both compassionate and trust worthy, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability to resist, but along with the temptation He will provide the way out as well so that you will be able to endure it and not yield or be overcome by the temptation.

It is not a sin to be tempted.

It only becomes a sin when we become fleshly weak and yield to that temptation.

Remember – Jesus was tempted.
But He did not stumble and fall.

We have a great example of how restoration really works.
Simon Peter and Jesus in John 20.

Here we see that God was not going to give upon Simon Peter even though Peter had given up on himself.

Notice how gently God restored Simon Peter.

He demonstrated the very manner the Spiritual believer is to undertake with one another.

II. RELIVING A **BURDEN** (6:2-5)

In Our text, Paul moves us now to focus on the act of taking on and relieving the burdens of our fallen friend.

FIRST – We have the **COMMAND** (v 2a)

Carry one another's burdens.

Your copy of God's Word may say *bear*.

In the New Testament, we find many instructions to the born-again believer on our responsibilities toward other people.

We are to **PRAY** for one another.

We are to **LOVE** one another.

We are to **EDIFY** one another.

We are to **FORGIVE** one another.

God has again set the example for how we are to relate to one another.

Someone has pointed out that all through the Scriptures we find God as the "Burden-Barer" for His people.

Here are a few Text we should learn and live by.

Psalms 55:22, (CSB) *Cast you burden on the LORD, and He will sustain you.*

Matthew 11:28-30, (CSB) *Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. (29) Take up My yoke and learn from Me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your soul. (30) For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*

1 Peter 5:7, (CSB) *Cast all your cares on Him, because He cares about you.*

God does some of His best work in people by working through born-again believers in burden bearing.

When we pick up the burdens from the fallen friend we are doing the will and work of God.

SECOND – We have the **CONSEQUENCE** (v 2b)

In this way you will fulfill the Law of Christ Jesus.

You may recall that we have the Law of Moses throughout the Old Testament and during the inner-biblical period.

We find it, lease throughout the New Testament as the Religious are committed to obeying it.

However, the New Testament is all about focusing on and following the Law of Christ Jesus.

John 13:34-35, (AMP) *I am giving you a new commandment, that you love (agape) one another. Just as I have loved (agape) you, so you too are to love (agape) one another. (35) By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you have love and unselfish concerns for one another.*

The Law of Christ Jesus is spelled out very clearly and it is not complicated.

When we do as God commands, we are fulfilling the Law of Christ Jesus.

Not only can we **LIFT** up a fallen friend, but God will use us to **LIGHTEN** their burden.

THIRD – We have the **CONCERN**. (v3)

(AMP) *For if anyone thinks he is something special when in fact he is nothing, he deceives himself.*

The Scripture is speaking of a person who, in his own eyes, thanks he is God's gift to mankind.

The though behind this verse is, that we refuse to carry another's burdens because we see ourselves above such activity.

This individual is filled with pride.

There is no sacrificial service toward one another.

Paul paints the picture pretty clear.

When one thanks he is something special – he is nothing at all in God’s eyes.

Romans 12:3 (NLT) *Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don’t think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourself, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.*

Measure your importance by God’s standards. Not your or any other person.

FOURTH – We have the **CONCLUSION** (vv 4-5)

(NLT) *Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won’t need to compare yourself to anyone else. (5) For we are each responsible (to God) for our own conduct.*

The (AMP) verse 5, *Every person will have to bear, with patience, his own burden, of faults and short comings for which he alone is responsible.*

Rather than scrutinize our neighbor and complain or compare ourselves with them, we are to examine our own work.

That is on you – nobody else.

Romans 14:12 is a harsh reminder of the consequences we face.

(AMP) *So then, each of us (there is no exceptions) will give an account of himself to God.*

We have no **RIGHT** to scoff at others.

Really, we have no **ROOM** to scoff at any one else.

In verse 2, we were told to *bear another’s burden*.

In verse 5, we are told we have a responsibility to bear our won burdens as well.

Paul is using two different words for burdens in these two verses.

- 1). In 6:2, Paul uses a word that describes a heavy burden.
One so difficult that one person cannot bear it alone.
- 2). In 6:5, Paul uses the word like a pack that a soldier throws over his
shoulder as he goes out to war.

We are to keep our own lives in order so we can go to battle for
our brothers.

Illustration – Warren Wiersbe says, *if my car breaks down, my neighbor can help by driving the children to school. But he cannot assume the responsibilities that belong only to me as their father. That is the difference. It is wrong for me to expect someone else to be the father of our family. That is a burden and a privilege that I alone can bear.* (taken from his commentary on Galatians) (p145)

As the Spiritual believer, we must keep our own house in order.

We do this by asking God to keep ourselves in a position here we are
available to do what He wants and when He wants.

We need to help a fallen brother and lift his heavy burden so that God can be
honored and glorified in His people.

The life of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) is another example of how God the Father
runs to the fallen son and by His love lifts the boy up.

Here we see that God is the one seeking restoration.

So, when it comes to helping a brother who has fallen into sin, we are to be like
God.

We are to rush to them with open arms and embrace them – then we are to
help them get back on their feet.

We are to *pick up* the brother.

We are to *lift up* the burdens.

We are to *bring them back* home restored.

Example – John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*

Dr. Jeremiah always closes each chapter of his Study Guide with a “Did You Know” thought.

He writes (p92), *The knowledge of willful sin in the believer’s life can weigh on them in an almost physical fashion.*

John Bunyan knew this and used it as his impetus to write the beloved story, “Pilgrim’s Progress.”

Christian’s journey away from home, and toward the Celestial City starts where he is weighted down by a great burden. What caused this burden? Reading the Bible and realizing the knowledge of his sin.

Bunyan’s image of Christian carrying the burden of sin on his back is a powerful, truthful, and relevant today as it was when he first wrote it three hundred years ago.

SOWING AND REAPING

Galatians 6:6-10

Introduction

We have heard great athletes described as being “Naturally Gifted.”

This is mostly true. However, it also discredits and over looks the thousands of hours of hard work, practice, and the sacrifices that have been made to create such a polished product.

In our study, just as the athlete, we will see that the hiding principle behind all is that “you reap what you sow.”

We have, in our Text, the universal principle found through out the Bible. But it is found in everyday life outside Scripture as well.

Paul states that principle very clearly in verse 7, *for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*

Paul is speaking of one’s spiritual life here.
But this principle is found elsewhere.

The farmer knows it – if you don’t plant you will not reap.

The financial advisers practice.
If you don’t invest it, you are going to get nothing in return.

Our technology industry knew this when computers were first developed.
They had a catchy phrase G. I. G. O. which stands for garbage in ---
garbage out.

We also see this principle in our relationships.
Treat others the way you want to be treated.

Listen to Luke 6:31, *Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them.*

I. THE **PRINCIPLE** OF SOWING AND REAPING (6:6)

(CSB), *Let the one who is taught the Word of God share all his good things with the teacher.*

How did this verse get in this portion of our Text?
It seems out of place here.

But it is a proper introduction to the principle of sowing and reaping.

Paul is simply saying that a Pastor/teacher should be supported by the congregation he serves.

This is the same principle Paul told the Corinthian congregation (1 Cor. 9:11) ***If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it too much if we reap material benefits from you?***

It would be great if the church would function on this principle.

The minister should not have to find a secular job to help support his family.

Members want their minister to be available and expects him to devote himself to his study, prayer, and ministering the Word of God.

Illustration - Martin Luther understood this and wrote, *it is impossible for one man both to Labor Day and night to get a living, and at the same time to give himself to the study of sacred learning as the preaching office requires* (p95).

Paul wrote to his young preacher friend in 1 Timothy 5:17-18 about this same issue.

(NLT) ***Elders (pastor/teachers) who do their work well should be respected and paid well, especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching. (18) for the scripture says, ‘you must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out the grain’ and in other places those who work deserve their pay (Deut 25:4; Luke 10:7).***

This is God’s intentions all along and if the congregation is not willing to faithfully follow God’s teachings – it is a sin against God.

II. THE **PROVERB** OF SOWING AND REAPING (6:7)

(NLT) ***Don’t be misled – you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant.***

(AMP) ***God is not mocked, He will not allow Himself to be ridiculed, nor treated with contempt nor allow His precepts to be scornfully set aside.”***

Dr. David Jeremiah gives us four simple statements that we need to remember from this verse.

FIRST – The Principle of **INVESTMENT** (v 7a)

Whatever a man sows

The idea is “*we reap only*” if we sow.

This is what Jesus was teaching in John 12:24 when He said, (CSB) *Truly I tell you, unless a seed falls into the ground and dies it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces much fruit.*

Only when you invest that seed you hold in your hand, trusting the earth, will it grow.

As long as you hold that seed in your hand – you will only have the one seed.

The principle of investment.

So “IF” you don’t sow – you are not going to reap.

SECOND – The principle of **IDENTITY**. (v 8)

(ESV) *For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will form the Spirit reap eternal life.*

Point # 1 – We will only reap “**IF**” we sow.

Point # 2 – We will only reap “**WHAT**” we sow.

The kind of harvest we get is determined by the kind of seeds we sow.

Any farmer will tell you this is an absolute law of nature.

What you plan will be what springs up and you will harvest.

The nature of the seed determines the crop it produces.

For the battle over the harvest, Paul is going to make it very clear.

1). *Sowing in the flesh*

When Paul uses the word *flesh*, he is speaking of one’s old nature.

Flesh is the seat of sin which still remains in a born-again believer’s life.

This sin nature has a hold on our life and is there to cause us to be that stumbling believer.

Remember the word *flesh* is made up of the word *self with hour* the “H”.

Paul also tells us of the harvest of sowing in the flesh.

Corruption is something that has gone from good to bad.

It is the word for decay

2). ***Sowing in the Spirit***

The one that sows in the Spirit is only going to have a life that is gooder and gooder.

What we allow into our mind is the fertilizer for the harvest.

Things like the book, friends, television, movies – all of these contribute to the kind of harvest we are going to receive.

Illustration – There is a saying that is so true. *The Word of God will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from the Word of God.*

These are the only two options.

So how does one assure the harvest they will receive?

Matthew 6:33 (CSB) ***But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.***

Philippians 4:8 (NLT) ***and now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix you thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.***

I believe the Word of God spells it out for us pretty clear ... when you **SOW** in the Spirit, you will **GROW** in the Spirit.

There are Spiritual disciplines that we must apply if we are going to have a Spiritual harvest.

These are:

Daily reading the Word of God.

Daily seeking God’s face through prayer.

Regularly having fellowship with other born-again believers.

Actively serving the world as you provide a ministry to another’s life.

My Ministry Motto is “*I serve the LORD by serving others.*”

We have looked at:

First – the principle of *Investment*.

Second – the principle of *Identity*.

Now the *third* principle.

THIRD – The principle of **INCREASE**.

We reap “**IF**” we sow.

We reap “**WHAT**” we sow.

Next, we reap “**MORE THAN**” we sow.

Illustration – Take the ear of corn. It starts out with one kernel place in the ground. And when it is ready for the harvest one stack will have 6 to 10 ears of corn and each ear contains some 7,000 kernels.

One ear of corn contains roughly 800 kernels in 16 rows.

The principle is best seen in relationships.

Sow a little hatred and reap a whirlwind of hatred in return.

Show a little kindness and it will affect not only the individual but others as well.

Illustration – Remember a smile is the same in any language.

2 Corinthians 9:6 (NLT) ***Remember this – a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop in return.***

FOURTH – The principle of **INTERVAL**.

We have talked about ...

We reap “**IF**” we sow.

We reap “**WHAT**” we sow.

We reap “**MORE THAN**” we sow.

Now let’s look at the fourth principle

We will reap “**LATER**” than we sow.

This principle is usually the most difficult one to accept.

We live in the age of microwave and fast food.

We are spoiled, and we want what we want NOW!

To say we are impatient people – well there are not enough words to describe us.

Again, the calendar plays a key role in the farmers life.

He does not plant in the morning and go out and harvest in the afternoon.

There is always a time between when you **PLANT** and when you **PLUCK**.

It is during this time God does His work whether it be the farmer or our faith.

Up to this point, we have studied ...

- 1 The practice of sowing and reaping (verse 6)
- 2 The proverb of sowing and reaping (verse 7)
 - The investment
 - The identity.
 - The increase.
 - The interval.

III. THE **PROMISE** OF SOWING AND REAPING. (v 9)

(NLT) *So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.*

Because of us being so impatient and the time of germination, we tend to become discouraged.

We all would like to see the results of our commitment of doing good.

Paul is reminding his readers that ***doing good*** can at time be disheartening.

This is a danger that lurks over everyone's head that becomes discouraged.

It is not unusual for us to become discouraged and wonder if what we are doing is making any difference.

It is in these times we must remember these words of Paul.

Don't give up.
Trust God.
Allow Him to do His work.

We must keep doing our last assignment until He opens the opportunity for us.

Paul writes some encouraging words to the Corinthian congregation about this same issue.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (CSB) ***Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the LORD's work, because you know that your labor in the LORD is not in vain.***

The farmer has learned this difficult lesson.
He cultivates the soil.
He sows the seeds.
He water's the seeds.
And he will wait for God to do His work.

Dr. Luke offers words of great encouragement to each of us in his writing in Luke 18:1

(NLT) ***One day Jesus told His disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up.***

IV. THE **PRIORITY** OF SOWING AND REAPING (v 10)

(AMP) ***So then, while we, as individual born-again believers, have the opportunity, let us do good to all people, not only being helpful but also doing that which promotes their spiritual wellbeing, and especially be a blessing to those of the household of faith.***

God has given to each one of us the opportunity to reap what we sow.

The Word of God is teaching us that we do not only have the privilege but a responsibility to be prepared spiritually and get out in the field and begin sowing the Gospel.

You cannot move from this portion of our study without seeing that big red flashing warning sign Paul spoke of in Galatians 6:7.

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked!

We have allowed the devil to teach us how to deceive ourselves.

Jeremiah 17:9 (NKJV) ***The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?***

The word ***mocked*** comes from a Greek word that means to *turn up your nose and sneer*.

When we knowingly sin and act as if there is no penalty to be paid, we mock God – we turn up our nose at God and scorn Him.

There are plenty of places where we can sow our seeds.

But the place we choose to invest our life and energy.

But remember, what you sow and where you sow it is where and what you shall reap.

Luke 8:4-8 is the Parable of the Seed and Sower.

How To Tell The Truth Galatians 6:11-18

As born-again believer, we are to live our lives that give evidence of God's grace.

The Book of Galatians s Paul's stance against the Judaizer of that day.
The Judaizes were continuing to attack their Christian beliefs.

Paul ends his writing on a high note.

He makes it very clear with a magnificent appeal to the supremacy of God's grace and the salvation God provides only through a personal faith in Christ Jesus.

NOTE – Phillip Yancy, wrote a great book entitled *What's So Amazing About Grace?* And calls grace *the last best word*. (pp12-13)

If we can understand these closing remarks, then we have comprehended the entire book of Galatians.

Not only should we adhere to the **MESSAGE**, but we should also notice the **METHOD** that Paul uses.

I. WE MUST PRESENT TRUTH CONVINCINGLY (6:11)

(CSB) *Look at what large letters I use as I write to you in my own hand writing.*

Scriptures tells us that as Paul aged physically, his eyes begin to fail him.

He has been using someone to help him with these letters. He would dictate, and his writer would record.

Galatians4:13-15, (CSB) *You know that previously I preached the Gospel to you because of a weakness of the flesh (14) You did not despise or reject me though my physical condition was a trial for you. On the contrary, you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus, Himself. (15) Where, then, is your blessing? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have torn out your es and give them to me.*

Even though Paul's eyes were failing him, his faith was stronger than ever.

Paul takes the Quill and writes these closing remarks.

These were the things that he wanted his readers to leave with.

Paul wanted to bring this final point home and make it clear so there would be no confusion.

Regardless of the large letters, the message, Paul wants us to take away from this is:

There is no such thing as presenting a convincing **MESSAGE** in an unconvincing **MANNER**.

II. WE MUST PRESENT TRUTH **CAREFULLY** (6:12-18)

Paul is concluding his message by drawing a sharp contrast between the true **GOSPEL** and the **GARBAGE** the Judaizers were dishing out.

FIRST – The **HIDDEN** motives of the *Persecutors* (vv 12-13)

(NLT) Those who are trying to force you to be circumcised want to look good to others. They don't want to be persecuted for teaching that the Cross of Christ alone can save. (13) And even those who advocate circumcision don't keep the whole law themselves. They only want you to be circumcised so they can boast about it and claim you as their disciples

Paul is reading between the lines and sees *four* things that motivated the opposition to the message of God's grace.

1). The **APPROVAL** of *People* (v 12a)

(NLT) Those who are trying to force you to be circumcised want to look good to others.

Paul had been teaching that salvation is not dependent on any outward work of the flesh.

Remember, the Judaizers had infiltrated this congregation and told them they could not really be saved unless they were circumcised according to the Jewish law.

The Judaizes were elevating circumcision to an ordinance of central importance.

Their motive – to impress one another and gain greater approval.

2). The **AVOIDANCE** of *Persecution* (v 12b)

(NLT) *They don't want to be persecuted for teaching that the Cross of Christ alone can save.*

Paul is stating a truth to these Galatians that is just as true for anyone today.

If there is anything one can do to earn his salvation, then the Cross is no longer central to the Gospel. (p112)

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NLT) *God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this, it is a gift from God. (9) Salvation is not a reward for the good things you have done, so none of us can boast about it. (10) For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things God planned for us long ago.*

Man can not take credit for his relationship with God.

Legalism will tell you that Christ Jesus is the only first step in your being saved.

There is so much more that you need to do to earn your salvation in God.

Circumcision

Watch what you eat.

Watch how you dress

Be baptized in a Baptist Church.

Read and Study the Bible.

These legalistic requirements diminish the perfect atoning death and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

Illustration – Jesus Christ plus _____ equals Salvation.

If you place anything in that blank, then you believe Jesus does not have the ability to save you.

The Gospel of God's grace is very offensive to many people because it leaves them helpless – They are not able to save themselves.

3). The **APPEARANCE** of perfection (v 13a)

(NLT) *And those who advocate circumcision don't keep the whole law themselves.*

Paul is known as a man who would back away from a fight.

When it comes to the Gospel, he would get right in your face to confront your heresy.

He is directly challenging and condemning those who were pushing their legalistic demands of the law on these Galatians.

If these Judaizers believe obeying the law was the means for their salvation, then why are they not keeping the whole law?

Paul was not the only one that confronted these hypocrites.

Look with me in Matthew 23:23, and listen to Christ Jesus.

(NLT) What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. HYPOCRITES! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, (mint, dill, cumin), but you ignore the more important aspects of the law – justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.

4). The **ATTITUDE** of pride (v 13b)

(NLT) They only want you to be circumcised so they can boast about it and claim you as their disciples.

These false teachers fed on their own personal pride.

They wanted to **BOAST** about their rules.

They wanted to **BRAG** about those they convinced to follow the and not Paul's teachings.

Their goal was to **BELITTLE** the Gospel and anyone who would believe that God's grace was all one needed to be saved.

SECOND – The **HIGHER** motives of Paul. (6:14-15)

We have looked at what Paul saw as the *hidden* motives of the legalist who were against the Gospel of God's grace.

Now, Paul wants to reveal his motives.

1). Paul was motivated by the **CROSS**.

(v 14) (AMP) ***But far be it from me to boast in anything or anyone, except in the cross of our LORD Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.***

The term Paul uses for the word ***boast*** is one that has no equivalent in our English language.

The word means *to glory in to trust in, to live only for.*

Paul is saying that the Gospel and the Cross is what gives his life purpose and the most delight.

Everything else takes second place.

Paul is always anxious to tell people about the love God had for them that was demonstrated through Christ Jesus and the Cross.

The cross and Christ have been a part of the Christian Life.

In Egypt, the blood of the spotless lamb was placed on the door frame of the Children of Israel and the death angel would pass by that house.

The blood placed was in the form of a Cross

2). Paul was motivated by **CHRIST** (v 15)

(NLT) ***It doesn't matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation.***

The Amplified Bible explains this last phrase like this:

... but only a new creation which is the results of a new birth ... a spiritual transformation ... a new nature in Christ Jesus.

Paul is continuing to drive the Gospel home in his concluding remarks of the Book of Galatians.

Circumcision was the central issue.

As born-again believers, Christ is the only relevant part of our salvation.

Circumcision is only the rite for the Jew.

Paul has already made it clear and now he is driving the final nail in this coffin.

He does this by the phrase, ***his own hand writing.***

New Creation deserves a bit more attention as well.

The word **NEW** is not referring to time – but in terms of character.

Jeremiah 18:1-4 (NLT) *The LORD gave another message to Jeremiah. He said, (2) “go down to the potter’s shop, and I will speak to you there.” (3) So I did as He told me and found the potter working at his wheel. (4) But the jar he was making did not turn out as he had hoped, so he crushed it into a lump of clay again and started over.”*

Judaism was wrapped up in a system of rules, rituals, and regulations.

All of these was not able to save anyone.

Christianity happen by a supernatural experience we know as “being born again.”

That places us in a supernatural family known as “the body of Christ.”

At the time we transfer our faith and trust into Christ Jesus, we have a supernatural filling of God’s Holy Spirit.

III. WE MUST PRESENT TRUTH **CLEARLY** (v 16)

(AMP) *Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, who discipline themselves and conduct their lives by the principle, and upon the TRUE Israel Of God, Jewish believers.*

Paul now wants to point out how these *new creatures* of Christ Jesus are to present the Truth that has set them free.

FIRST – This is how we are to **BEHAVE** (v 16a)

Walk by this rule

What rule?

The rule of Grace.

As many as walk according to the grace that has been shown you by God.

The whole question of rules, regulations, and rituals is irrelevant.

In Christ we are *new creatures* under a higher authority (p115)

SECOND – This is what we can **BELIEVE** (v 16b)

(NLT) *God's peace and mercy be upon all by this principle.*

This comes only to those who are **RESTING** in the comfort of God's grace.

God's grace let's us transfer our faith and trust into His Son, Christ Jesus.

With God's grace came the gift of God's mercy and God's peace.

There are many to day who are **WORKING** for their salvation.

These have been taught that they have to get a bicycle and spend 2 years going around promoting their cultic ideas to earn their salvation.

Then there are those who are required to get out every week and knock on doors for no less than 20 hours per week handing out their cultic magazines and literature.

There are also those who teach that unless you are baptized in a Baptist church you are not saved.

Paul was dealing with those who were teaching, you have to work at keeping the whole law and that will save you.

THIRD – This is what we will **BECOME**. (v 16c)

(ESV) *And upon the Israel of God*

(AMP) *and upon the true Israel of God, Jewish believers*

(NLT) *They are the new people of God.*

The Israel of God

This may mean:

1). The Gentile church, which through faith has inherited their promise God gave to Abraham (3:29)

2). More likely the *remnant* of believing Israel chose by Grace (Romans 11:5), as opposed to the *false brethren* among the Jews (Gal 2:4), who were seeking to be justified by *the works of the law*, (2:16)

A personal experience with God is what makes one a true Israelite.

To be a true Israelite meant you have personally accepted God's gift of salvation that only comes through Christ Jesus, His *only* Son.

John 14:6, (NLT) *Jesus told them, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through Me.*

Acts 4:12 (NLT) *There is salvation in no one else! God has give no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.*

Philippians 2:9-11 (NLT) *Therefore, God has elevated Him (Christ Jesus) to the place of highest honor and gave Him the name above all names. (10) That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, and one earth, and under the earth, (11) and every tongue will declare that Christ Jesus is LORD, to the glory of God the Father.*

You become a true Israelite when you are born again and not born from Abraham lineage.

Romans 9:6, (NLT) *well then, has God failed to fulfil His promise to Israel? No, for not all who are born into the nation of Israel are truly members of God's people.*

To be a true Israelite means you have accepted the One who came through Abraham and became our Savior.

Paul makes this final appeal, in his own hand writing.
Why should Gentile converts seek to become Jews first in the flesh?

Paul is restating a doctrinal truth he has already stated in writing in Galatians 3:28 (NLT) *There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

IV. WE MUST PRESENT TRUTH **CONFIDENTLY** (v 17)

(CSB) *From now on, let no one cause me trouble, because I bear on my own body the marks of Christ Jesus.*

Paul is saying that he has the scars to prove he has the authority as an Apostle of the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

These wounds, scars, as well as other outward evidences of persecution are testifying he is the real deal.

Paul believed in the message of God's grace and was so committed to suffer for what he believed.

What marks is he talking about?

2 Corinthians 11:23-25, *Are they servants of Christ? I know I should like a madman, but I have served Him far more! I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and face death again and again. (24) Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. (25) Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent the whole night and day adrift at sea. (26) ... I have faced danger from rivers and robbers.*

Because of these personal sufferings he faces to carry the Gospel of Christ Jesus to a lost world, Yes – I believe Paul has passed the test as God’s man for the job.

False teachers, what do you have to show for your false faith?

V. WE MUST PRESENT TRUTH **CONCLUSIVELY** (6:18)

(NLT) *Dear brothers and sisters, may the grace of our LORD Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen*

These are Paul’s final words to these Galatian friends.

Paul’s words are about the grace God has offered to them.

This has been his constant message throughout the whole letter.

Paul had earlier, revealed that h was upset with hem and called them *you foolish Galatians*.

Paul knew these false teachers had gotten into their minds.

They had nothing to offer but the law and the demands that they said went with it.

Now Paul calls them *brothers and sister* and saying *amen*.

This reminded his readers that the reason he **WROTE** this letter and **WORE** the scars was because h loved them and was committed to pray for them.

NOTE – We have not been called to fix the world – that is God’s job.

We are called to present the Gospel of God’s love for all people!