

BORN FREE ... LIVE FREE ... STAY FREE

A Devotional Commentary on the Book of Galatians

by Paul G. Apple, October 2001

NEVER SURRENDER THE LIBERTY OF OUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST TO THE BONDAGE OF RELIGIOUS LEGALISM

OUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST:

- ENTERED INTO BY FAITH (APART FROM ANY WORKS)
- ENERGIZED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT
- EXPRESSED IN LOVING SERVICE TO OTHERS

For each section:

- Thesis statement ... to focus on the big idea
- Analytical outline ... to guide the understanding
- Devotional questions ... to encourage life application
- Representative quotations ... to stimulate deeper insight

Galatians 5:1 *"It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."*

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Paul Apple, 304 N. Beechwood Ave., Baltimore MD 21228.
webmaster@bibleoutlines.com

Born Free

(Words by Don Black and Music by John Barry)

Oscar-winning title song from the 1966 film, Barry also won for soundtrack
Charted in 1966 at # 7 by Roger Williams and # 35 by Matt Monro
Soul version by the Hesitations hit #38 in 1968

Born free, as free as the wind blows
As free as the grass grows
Born free to follow your heart

Live free and beauty surrounds you
The world still astounds you
Each time you look at a star

Stay free, where no walls divide you
You're free as the roaring tide
So there's no need to hide

Born free, and life is worth living
But only worth living
'cause you're born free

(Stay free, where no walls divide you)
You're free as the roaring tide
So there's no need to hide

Born free, and life is worth living
But only worth living
'cause you're born free

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul majored in English at Princeton University and graduated with a Master of Divinity degree from Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, IN in 1979. He lives in the Baltimore area with his wife. His family is actively involved in local Christian ministries.



OUTLINE OF GALATIANS

BORN FREE ... LIVE FREE ... STAY FREE

NEVER SURRENDER THE LIBERTY OF OUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST TO THE BONDAGE OF RELIGIOUS LEGALISM

OUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST:

- ENTERED INTO BY FAITH (APART FROM ANY WORKS)
- ENERGIZED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT
- EXPRESSED IN LOVING SERVICE TO OTHERS

(1:1-10) INTRODUCTION -- LOYALTY TO THE ONLY TRUE GOSPEL (= PAUL'S GOSPEL)

A. (1:1-5)

LEGITIMATE DIVINE APOSTLESHIP PROMOTES THE ESSENCE OF THE TRUE GOSPEL = THE CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

B. (1:6-10)

ANY PERVERSION OF THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF CHRIST DESERVES GOD'S STRONGEST CONDEMNATION

I. (1:11-2:21) PERSONAL: DEFENSE OF PAUL'S APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

A. (1:11-24)

PAUL'S AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED BY DIVINE REVELATION -- PAUL'S PERSONAL TESTIMONY CONFIRMS THE DIVINE SOURCE OF HIS MESSAGE AND AUTHORITY

B. (2:1-10)

PAUL'S AUTHORITY RECOGNIZED BY THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM -- PAUL'S INDEPENDENT MESSAGE AND AUTHORITY WERE STILL VALIDATED BY THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

C. (2:11-21)

PAUL'S AUTHORITY DEMONSTRATED IN REBUKING ERROR --

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH LEAVES NO ROOM FOR LIVING BY THE PRINCIPLE OF LEGALISM

II. (3:1-4:31) POLEMIC: DEFENSE OF THE CORE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (WHICH HAS SET US FREE AND MADE US HEIRS)

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH EXCLUDES ANY DEPENDENCE ON RELIGIOUS LEGALISM FOR SALVATION OR SANCTIFICATION

A. (3:1-14)

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH PROVES THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO LIVE BY FAITH --

- 1. (3:1-9) SINCE FAITH WAS THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR**
 - (3:1-5) OUR OWN ENTRANCE INTO SPIRITUAL LIFE**
 - (3:6-9) ABRAHAM'S EXAMPLE OF BEING BLESSED**
- 2. (3:10-14) SINCE WE HAVE BEEN FREED FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW**

B. (3:15-22)

THE BLESSING OF JUSTIFICATION COULD ONLY COME VIA GOD'S UNCHANGING PROMISES RATHER THAN BY THE LAW

C. (3:23-4:7)

THE COMING OF CHRIST ELEVATED OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD TO THAT OF PRIVILEGED SONS AND HEIRS

D. (4:8-20)

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH MUST BE HELD ON TO DESPITE THE SEDUCING DECEPTIONS OF FANATICAL FALSE TEACHERS

E. (4:21-31)

THE OT ALLEGORY OF ISHMAEL AND ISAAC PICTURES OUR FREEDOM -- ACCOMPLISHED BY THE SPIRIT ACCORDING TO GOD'S PROMISE

III. (5:1-6:10) PRACTICAL: APPLICATION OF LIBERTY = TO WALK IN LOVE BY THE SPIRIT

A. (5:1-12)

STAND FIRM IN THE LIBERTY TO WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED

B. (5:13-26)

**USE FREEDOM AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO WALK IN LOVE BY WALKING
IN THE SPIRIT --**

(NOT AN OPPORTUNITY TO FULFIL THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH)

C. (6:1-10)

DO GOOD -- 2 PRACTICAL WAYS TO WALK IN LOVE BY THE SPIRIT

1. (6:1-5) HUMBLY HELP YOUR BROTHER IN NEED

**2. (6:6-10) CONSISTENTLY KEEP ON GIVING TO MEET THE NEEDS
OF OTHERS**

(6:11-18) CLOSING SUMMARY / BENEDICTION --

THE BRANDMARKS OF LOYALTY TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST

- BOAST ONLY IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST

- AND THE CORRESPONDING SCARS OF PERSECUTION

BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

MacArthur: Background and Destination

"The name *Galatia* is derived from the barbaric Gauls, or Celts, who settled in Asia Minor after several centuries of plundering the Greek and Roman empires. Under Roman rule, the original region of Galatia was made part of a larger province by the same name in central Asia Minor (modern Turkey) that encompassed an area some 250 miles north to south and up to 175 miles from east to west.

In Paul's day the name Galatia was used for the original smaller region as well as the province. On the first missionary journey Paul and Barnabas established four churches in the southern part of the province, in the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (Acts 13:14 - 14:23), and those churches apparently came to form something of a regional body of believers. The Galatian epistle itself does not identify the specific local churches, but they were churches in which Paul had personally ministered (4:13-15). The fact that the book of Acts mentions the four churches established by Paul in south Galatia and mentions none in the rest of the province makes it probable that the epistle was addressed primarily to those southern churches.

Also in favor of that theory is the fact that in Galatians Paul makes no reference to the Jerusalem Council or its momentous decision regarding the Judaizing controversy, a decision that would have given great additional weight to his argument against Judaistic legalism. Such an omission strongly suggests that the letter was written before the Council convened, which was shortly after Paul's first journey (see Acts 14:24 - 15:6) and therefore before he had opportunity to travel in northern Galatia. According to that chronology, the letter would have been written around A.D. 50.

While in Galatia, Paul nearly lost his life, having been stoned and left for dead by antagonistic Jewish leaders who followed him from Antioch and Iconium to Lystra (Acts 14:19-20). After establishing a church in Derbe, Paul and Barnabas revisited the other three cities, *'strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith'* (14:22). On his second journey Paul visited the Galatian churches with Silas, *'delivering the decrees, which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe. So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily'* (Acts 16:1-5)"

Stedman: "Galatians comes to grips with the question of what real Christian life is like. The answer can be characterized by one word, "liberty." The Christian is called to liberty in Jesus Christ. The cry of this epistle is that Christians might discover the liberty of the sons of God in accordance with all that God has planned for man in the way of freedom and enjoyment. Its aim is freedom of our human spirits to the utmost extent, restrained only as necessary for us to exist in harmony with the design of God. Therefore, this letter has been called the "Bill of Rights of the Christian Life," or the "Magna Carta of Christian Liberty," the "Emancipation Proclamation" from all forms of legalism and bondage in the Christian experience."

Martin Luther: "I have taken in hand, in the name of the Lord, yet once again to expound this Epistle of Paul to the Galatians; not because I desire to teach new things, or such as

yet have not heard before; but as I have often forewarned you, lest Satan take from us this doctrine of faith and bring into the church again the doctrine of works and men's traditions. Wherefore, it is necessary that this doctrine be kept in continual practice and public exercise both of reading and hearing."

Tenney: "Objectively, Galatians asserts that salvation is freely bestowed by God in response to faith which is founded upon His personal revelation through His gospel... Christian liberty originates in the revelation of God which define human weakness and which makes available God's saving power. In this truth man finds his true liberty, for liberty consists not in the ability to disobey God with impunity, but in the ability to obey Him spontaneously without effective hindrance..."

Subjectively, the inner life of the Christian is discussed here in its relation to God. The destruction of sin, the creation of a new man, the exercise of faith, and the enjoyment of consequent liberty are all presented in the natural setting of actual experience, illustrated by biographical allusions. This book is a series of pictures of what spiritual life should be, not just a formulary of precepts. The writer was describing what he himself was enjoying after having lived a large part of his life in legalistic bondage... Inner fruitfulness of the spirit is more important than outward conformity of the flesh; and if the Holy Spirit is dominant within, the action of the outward man will be governed accordingly...

Objectively and subjectively, then, Galatians is the charter of freedom from externalism in worship and from frustration in personal spiritual life."

Hogg: "In modern days there are no advocates of the circumcision of Gentile believers, indeed, but there are those who preach salvation through sacraments, baptism and the holy eucharist, through membership in some religious community, through keeping the law, generally, or the fourth commandment, specifically, or through following an inner light, which may or may not coincide with the light of the Holy Scriptures. But in no case is faith in Christ, as essential to salvation, repudiated. There must be faith in Christ indeed, but there must be something besides. And that something invariably implies merit on the part of him who has it, or who does it. This, affirms the Apostle, is to make the Cross of Christ of none effect."

McKnight: "Legalism, according to Galatians, was a religious system that combined Christianity with Mosaism in a way that demanded total commitment to Israel's law as the climax of one's conversion to Christ. This 'deeper commitment to the law,' according to Paul, was a subversion of the adequacy of Christ's work and an abandonment of the Holy Spirit as God's way of guiding Christian ethics. In other words, the legalism of the Judaizers is more than a problem: it has become a new message, a different gospel."

Ernest Burton: " INTRODUCTION (1:1-10)

Salutation, including assertion of the writer's apostolic authority
(:1--5)

Expression of indignant surprise at the threatened abandonment of his teaching by the Galatians, in which is disclosed the occasion of the letter (:6-10)

1. PERSONAL PORTION OF THE LETTER

The general theme established by proving the apostle's independence of all human authority and direct relation to Christ (1:11-2:21)

- a. Proposition: Paul received his gospel not from men, but immediately from God (:11-12)
- b. Evidence substantiating the preceding assertion of his independence of human authority drawn from various periods of his life (1:13-2:21)
 - 1) Evidence drawn from his life before his conversion (:13-14)
 - 2) Evidence drawn from the circumstances of his conversion and his conduct immediately thereafter (:15-17)
 - 3) Evidence drawn from a visit to Jerusalem three years after his conversion (:18-20)
 - 4) Evidence drawn from the period of his stay in Syria and Cilicia (:21-24)
 - 5) Evidence drawn from his conduct on a visit to Jerusalem fourteen years after the preceding one (2:1-10)
 - 6) Evidence drawn from his conduct in resisting Peter at Antioch (:11-14)
 - 7) Continuation and expansion of his address at Antioch so stated as to be for the Galatians, also an exposition of the gospel which he preached (:15-21)

2. REFUTATORY PORTION OF THE LETTER

The doctrine that men, both Jews and Gentiles, become acceptable to God through faith rather than by works of law, defended by refutation of the arguments of the judaisers, and chiefly by showing that the "heirs of Abraham" are such by faith, not by works of law (chap 3-4)

- a) Appeal to the early Christian experience of the Galatians (3:1-5)
- b) Argument from the faith of Abraham, refuting the contention of his opponents that only through conformity to law could men become "sons of Abraham" (:6-9)
- c) Counter argument, showing that those whose standing is fixed by law are by the logic of the legalists under the curse of the law (:10-14)
- d) Argument from the irrevocableness of a covenant and the priority of the covenant made with Abraham to the law, to the effect that the covenant is still in force (:15-18)
- e) Answer to the objection that the preceding argument leaves the law without a reason for being (:19-22)
- f) Characterization of the condition under law and, in contrast with it, the condition since faith came: then we were held in custody under law; now we are all sons of God, heirs of the promise (:22-29)
- g) Continuation of the argument for the inferiority of the condition under law, with the use of the illustration of guardianship (4:1-7)
- h) Description of the former condition of the Galatians as one of bondage to gods not really such, and exhortation to them not to return to that state (:8-11)

- i) Affectionate appeal to the Galatians to enter fully into their freedom from law, referring to their former enthusiastic reception of the apostle and affection for him (:12-20)
- j) A supplementary argument, based on an allegorical use of the story of the two sons of Abraham, and intended to convince the Galatians that they are joining the wrong branch of the family (:21-31)
- 3. HORTATORY PORTION OF THE LETTER (5:1-6:10)
 - a. Exhortations directly connected with the doctrine of the letter (5:1-6:5)
 - 1) Appeal to the Galatians to stand fast in their freedom in Christ (5:1-12)
 - 2) Exhortation not to convert their liberty in Christ into an occasion for yielding to the impulse of the flesh (5:13-26)
 - 3) Exhortation to restore those who fall, and to bear one another's burdens (6:1-5)
 - b. Exhortations having a less direct relation to the principal subject of the epistle (6:6-10)
- 4. CONCLUSION OF THE LETTER (6:11-18)
 - a. Final warning against the judaizers (6:11-18)
 - b. Appeal enforced by reference to his own sufferings (:17)
 - c. Final benediction (:18)"

Tenney: Outline -- "Galatians: The Charter of Christian Liberty

INTRODUCTION: 1:1-9

- A. Salutation: The Ground of Liberty 1:1-5
- B. Occasion: The Challenge to Liberty 1:6-9

I. THE BIOGRAPHICAL ARGUMENT: An Independent Revelation 1:10 - 2:21

- A. Independent of Human Teaching .. 1:10-17
- B. Independent of Judean Churches 1:18-24
- C. Independent of Judaizing Brethren 2:1-10
- D. Independent of Apostolic Pressure 2:11-18
- E. Independent of Selfish Interest 2:19-21

II. THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT: The Failure of Legalism 3:1 - 4:31

- A. From Personal Experience 3:1-5
- B. From Old Testament Teaching 3:6-14
- C. From Priority of Promise 3:15-22
- D. From Superiority of Mature Faith 3:23 - 4:7
- E. From Danger of Reaction 4:8-11
- F. From Contrast of Motives 4:12-20
- G. From Contrast of Bondage and Liberty 4:21-31

III. THE PRACTICAL ARGUMENT: The Effect of Liberty 5:1 - 6:10

- A. Introductory Statement 5:1
- B. The Consequences of Legalism 5:2-12

- C. The Definition of Freedom 5:13-15
- D. Individual Practice 5:16-24
- E. Social Practice 5:25 - 6:10

CONCLUSION 6:11-18

- A. The Motive of Liberty: The Cross 6:11-16
- B. The Price of Liberty: Suffering 6:17
- C. The Benediction of Liberty 6:18"

Campbell: "Paul's purpose in writing to them was to emphasize that they are not a part of the legal system of the earthly Jerusalem, but are of the above Jerusalem, children free from the Law (4:21 - 5:1). He tells them to expect righteousness on the basis of faith and through love to use their freedom to serve one another (5:2-15). They are to walk by the Spirit and to have His fruit in their lives (5:16-26).

Paul instructs them to mutually bear one another's burdens and to recognize that they will reap what they sow (6:1-10). He explicitly says that there is no value in circumcision or uncircumcision, the only thing that counts is a new creature (6:11-18)."

Swindoll: Theme -- Liberation Through the Gospel
(1:1-10) INTRODUCTION

I. (1:11-2:21) ISSUE OF TRUTH

Personal Narrative

The Gospel is Authentic (Its Source)

The Authority of Paul's Apostleship

- Confusion
- Clarification
- Correction

II. (3:1 - 4:31) NATURE OF SALVATION

Doctrinal Argument

The Gospel is Superior (Its Defense)

The Falsity of Legalism

- Works versus Faith
- Legalism versus Justification
- Bondage versus Freedom

III. (5:1 - 6:10) PRINCIPLE OF HOLINESS

Practical Application

The Gospel is Liberating (Its Impact)

The Power of God's Spirit

- Don't be enslaved.
- Serve thorough love.
- Walk in the Spirit.
- Bear one another's burdens.
- Let us do good.

(6:11-18) CONCLUSION

Malick: His Big Idea for the book --

"IN VIEW OF THE HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL VERACITY OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE THAT SALVATION AND SANCTIFICATION ARE ACQUIRED BY FAITH, PAUL URGES THE GALATIANS TO SEPARATE FROM THE FALSE TEACHERS WHO DESIRE TO ENTANGLE THEM, AND TO EXPRESS THEIR FREEDOM THROUGH LOVING SERVICE OF ONE ANOTHER UNDER THE ENABLEMENT OF THE SPIRIT."

Map of the Area from **James Fowler:**

Roman Province of Galatia
25 B.C. - 137 A.D.



Fowler: " Mention has already been made to the "sketchy" information available about the contextual situation that prompted this letter. Paul had obviously planted these churches (1:8,11; 4:19,20), and the Christians in the churches had a great fondness and appreciation for Paul as their founding father (4:14,15). Sometime (the interval of time is unknown, but it would appear not to be an extended period - cf. 1:6) after Paul had departed from their cities, having left designated men in charge as teacher/leaders, some other teachers arrived with a modified belief-system that inculcated adherence to the Judaic law of the old covenant. It is difficult to reconstruct the precise identity of these interlopers, but it is obvious that they were advocating the necessity of religious observances (4:10), as well as male circumcision (5:2; 6:12), and attempting to seduce these new Christians into legalistic old covenant concepts (3:2; 4:21)...

So when Paul was informed that foreign infiltrators had influenced the young Galatian Christians to revert to the performance of religious legalism, he was so incensed that he was compelled to write and set things straight. In this confrontational letter he delineates the dichotomous difference between the gospel of Jesus Christ that he had introduced them to, and the religious trappings of behavioral bondage that these subversive intruders were trying to impose upon them. The epistle is necessarily theological as Paul defends the ontological essence of Christianity in Jesus Christ, but whereas the epistle to the Romans explains Christian theology in logical sequence, Galatians defends Christian theology in the polemic "heat of the battle."

An underlying sub-theme of the epistle might be entitled, "The Gospel versus Religion." Though Paul does not use the word "religion" in the text of the letter, it is obvious that the performance-based "works" that the new Galatian Christians are being asked to add to the pure and simple gospel of grace in Jesus Christ is indeed the essence of all religion. This comprehensive theme thus becomes the lens through which the various details of the letter must be interpreted.

The abiding value of Paul's correspondence with the Galatians is that it perpetually reveals the propensity of mankind to revert to performance-based acceptance before God in religion, rather than accepting the ontological dynamic of God's grace in Jesus Christ to manifest divine character to the glory of God. Whenever a Christian begins to think that the performance standards of what they "do" or "don't do" is the basis of or the quality of their Christian life or their "spirituality," then they have lapsed into "Galatian thinking." "If only I didn't smoke, drink, swear, or fall into my besetting sin; If only I prayed more, read my Bible more, witnessed more, was more regular in church attendance, got along better with my spouse, or was a better parent..., then I would be a better Christian and would be more blessed by God." No! That is "Galatian thinking, that evaluates Christian life by achievement, merit, and reward, rather than by constant receptive trust in the grace-working of God in Christ. Such "Galatianism" is so pervasive and prevalent in the churches today as the religious legalists have duped Christians with the didactic declarations of "how-to" Christianity in prescribed procedures, formulas, techniques and duties which allegedly determine the distinguishing marks of a true

disciple. Like Paul, we must reject such as a false-gospel, and clearly explain that the only distinguishing mark of a genuine Christian is the manifestation of the life and activity of Jesus Christ in his or her life by the dynamic of God's grace."

TEXT: GALATIANS 1:1-5

TITLE: INTRODUCTION: TRUE MESSENGER WITH THE TRUE GOSPEL

BIG IDEA:

LEGITIMATE DIVINE APOSTLESHIP PROMOTES THE ESSENCE OF THE TRUE GOSPEL = THE CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

I. (:1-2a) AUTHOR: SOURCE OF PAUL'S LEGITIMATE APOSTLESHIP (AND AUTHORITY)

"Paul, an apostle"

A. Not Mediated by Man

1. Directly -- *"not sent from men"*
2. Indirectly -- *"nor through the agency of man"*

What were Paul's detractors charging him with? What types of false accusations were they making to seek to promote their own legitimacy and agenda?

B. Mediated by God

1. God the Son -- *"but through Jesus Christ"*
2. God the Father -- *"and God the Father"*

C. Essence of the True Gospel -- Significance of the Bodily Resurrection
"who raised Him from the dead"

Paul had been set aside by God to communicate the truth of the true gospel of God

D. Affirmation of Authority

"and all the brethren who are with me"

Not operating as some type of Lone Ranger

II. (:2b) RECIPIENTS: REALM OF APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

"to the churches of Galatia"

III. (:3) GREETING: BLESSING FROM APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

- A. 2 Key Ingredients:
 - 1. *"Grace to you"*
 - 2. *"and Peace"*
- B. 2 Key Providers:
 - 1. *"from God our Father"*
 - 2. *"and the Lord Jesus Christ"*

IV. (:4) ESSENCE OF THE TRUE GOSPEL -- SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CRUCIFIXION

- A. Provision of Salvation -- Substitutionary Atonement
 - "who gave Himself for our sins"*
 - cf. the gospel summary in 1 Cor. 15:3-4
- B. Purpose of Salvation -- Freedom from Sin
 - "that He might deliver us out of this present evil age"*
- C. Plan of Salvation -- Divine Plan
 - "according to the will of our God and Father"*

V. (:5) ULTIMATE GOAL = GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER

"to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen"

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Do we have a sense of being uniquely gifted directly by God to accomplish a specific role in the growth of the Church of Jesus Christ? How does this sense of mission impact our decisions regarding how to spend our time and what types of ministries to engage in? How are we developing this gift and giving it priority?
- 2) Are we careful to stick close to the basics of the gospel message = the significance of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ? Is our gospel message God-centered in that we are seeking His glory, or is it man-centered?
- 3) What type of *"deliverance"* does Paul have in mind in vs. 4? (Compare Ephesians chapter 1 to get a glimpse of God's master plan in this regard.)

4) What are some of the current manifestations of just how evil this "*present evil age*" is?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Wiersbe: Paul defends the authority that he has from the Lord. He has three sources of authority:

1. His ministry
 - called directly by God
 - had personally founded the churches in Galatia
2. His message
 - Christ paid the price to deliver sinners from bondage
3. His motive
 - the glory of God, not his own personal glory

Gromacki: "The apostle was under attack by his religious enemies and under suspicion by his supposed friends. The Judaizers, who taught that a sinner was justified by God through faith in Christ plus obedience to the Mosaic law, claimed that Paul was not a genuine apostle and that his message omitted the necessity of circumcision and legalism as an accommodation to pagan Gentile culture. Paul was accustomed to such false charges. What disturbed him greatly was that the very churches which he had founded on his first missionary journey were questioning his apostolic credentials. In fact, these Pauline converts began to wonder whether the apostle had communicated only partial truth to them.

These slanderous attacks had to be repelled. To Paul the authenticity of his apostleship and the integrity of his message were inseparably joined. He had to defend both in order to rescue the churches and to turn back his critics."

Pinnock: "Already at this early point in the letter, Paul has introduced us to his major themes. The gospel must not be tampered with because it is Christ's, not Paul's. Christ is also the center of the message. There is good news because Christ died in the sinner's place. We see three steps in the theology of this introduction. God has provided objective salvation for mankind in the finished work of Christ. He is announcing the gospel through His apostolic messengers. The subjective benefits of salvation He freely offers to bestow on those who trust Christ. Is it any surprise that Paul closes with a doxology? ... in the last analysis the issue at stake in his controversy with the Galatians is the glory of God. By their insistence on human achievement, the false teachers were downgrading and minimizing what God had done. By pointing to the all-sufficiency of Christ and His finished work, Paul was magnifying God's grace."

Deffinbaugh: "The structure of the Book of Galatians is the outflow of the claim of apostleship which Paul has made in this first verse. Chapters 1 and 2 contain Paul's defense of his apostleship, a fact denied by the Judaizers and now doubted by some of the Galatian saints. Having defended his authority in the first two chapters, Paul

reiterates the message of the gospel in chapters 3 and 4. Paul's gospel exposes the error into which some have fallen, by placing themselves under the Law after having been saved by grace. Chapters 5 and 6 spell out the practical outworkings of the gospel of God's grace, which enable the saint to live a godly life in a fallen world."

Criswell: "By the very tone of the language, by the very spirit of the word, one can see that Paul is passionately moved and deeply troubled. What is the trouble? It is twofold. First, the churches founded by the apostle are in danger of apostatizing. They are in danger of turning aside from the truth of God as it is revealed in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are in danger of going back to the beggarly elements of the law. There had been teachers who said to them that one could not be saved by trusting in Christ alone; but he was saved only by believing in Christ and keeping the law.

The second thing that troubled the apostle was the personal attack that was made upon him. The enemies who came in to subvert these churches said that Paul was a pseudo-emissary of Christ. He did not belong to one of the Twelve, nor was he a member of the original apostolic band, but, rather, he was a self-appointed apostle. He never saw Christ in the flesh. He was not commissioned by the Lord Jesus or ordained by Christ, but, rather, everything he knew he learned from the Twelve. Everything that he preached he got from other men, and he preached that in a perverted form. He was a false apostle."

Kent: "This rescue does not refer to some future deliverance at death or the second coming of Christ, but should be understood as already accomplished by the forgiveness of sins and the bestowal of eternal life."

TEXT: GALATIANS 1:6-10

TITLE: CONDEMNATION OF GOSPEL PERVERTERS

BIG IDEA:

**ANY PERVERSION OF THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF CHRIST
DESERVES GOD'S STRONGEST CONDEMNATION**

I. (:6-7) GOSPEL PERVERTERS ENTICE GOSPEL DESERTERS

A. Susceptibility to Fundamental Error is Shocking

"I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you"

"Deserter" is a nasty label

Note the emphasis on the sovereignty of God in the concept of *"calling"*

B. The Defining Characteristic of the True Gospel = The Grace of Christ

"by the grace of Christ"

C. There is Really Only One True Gospel

"for a different gospel; which is really not another"

really no such thing as "another gospel"

Greek word means another of a different kind

D. Gospel Perverters Cause Serious Problems

1. Disturbing the Brethren

"only there are some who are disturbing you"

2. Perverting the Gospel

"and want to distort the gospel of Christ"

**II. (:8-9) GOSPEL PERVERTERS DESERVE GOD'S STRONGEST
CONDEMNATION**

A. (:8) Pronouncement of the Curse

1. Universal in Scope

"But even though we, or an angel from heaven"

2. Measured Against a Known Standard = the Gospel Preached by Paul

"should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you"

3. Unwavering in its Execution
"let him be accursed"

B. (:9) Emphasis by Repetition

"As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed"

III. (:10) GOSPEL PERVERTERS OPERATE AS SLICK POLITICIANS

A. Paul is No Slick Politician = a Man-Pleaser

"For am I now seeking the favor of men"

*"Or am I striving to please men?
If I were still trying to please men"*

B. Paul is a True Bond-servant of Christ = a God-Pleaser

"or of God?"

"I would not be a bond-servant of Christ"

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How would you characterize Paul's tone in this opening section? Would modern day critics accuse him of being unloving and harsh? What ever happened to the modern virtue of tolerance?
- 2) What particularly shocks the Apostle Paul? Have we become calloused so that very little shocks us anymore?
- 3) What type of modern cults preach a different gospel that perverts the grace of Christ? How are these cultic leaders characterized by political manipulation rather than integrity?
- 4) What type of curse is Paul pronouncing? What does it mean to be *"accursed"*?

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Hendriksen: "The question might be asked, 'But was not Paul too severe in his denunciation and in his rebuke? Is it not true that even now the Judaizers believed in Jesus Christ for salvation, the only difference between Paul and those who differed with him being that to this required faith the latter *added* strict obedience to certain Mosaic regulations?' The answer is that the '*addition*' was in the nature of a complete

repudiation of the all-sufficiency of Christ's redemption. Read Gal. 5:2. A beverage may be very healthful and refreshing, but when a drop of poison is added to it, it becomes deadly. Christ, too, used severe language in condemning the hypocrites of his day (Matt. 23 especially verses 15 and 33). Pharisees and Judaizers had much in common, were in fact closely related (Acts 15:5; Luke 11:46; cf. Gal. 6:12, 13)."

Wiersbe: "Paul was not a politician; he was an ambassador. His task was not to 'play politics' but to proclaim a message... We have noted three steps Paul took toward engaging these false teachers in battle: he explained his authority, expressed his anxiety, and exposed his adversaries. But how is he going to attack his enemies? What approach will he use to convince the Galatian believers that all they need is faith in God's grace? A quick survey of the entire letter shows that Paul is a master defender of the Gospel..."

1) His first approach is *personal* (chaps. 1-2)... The autobiographical section of the letter proves that Paul was not a 'counterfeit apostle,' but that his message and ministry were true to the faith...

2) Chapters 3 and 4 are *doctrinal* and in them Paul presents several arguments to establish that sinners are saved by faith and grace, not by works and law...

3) The final two chapters of the letter are *practical* in emphasis, as Paul turns from argument to application... in this section, Paul explains the relationship between the grace of God and practical Christian living. He shows that living by grace means liberty, not bondage (5:1-12); depending on the Spirit, not the flesh (5:13-26); living for others, not for self (6:1-10); and living for the glory of God, not for man's approval (6:11-18). It is either one series of actions or the other -- law or grace -- but it cannot be both."

Criswell: "This message is a sermon on dogmatism, on finality, on authoritarianism, which is an unusual message to hear today in the midst of our studied broad-minded liberalism... The revelation of the Lord is not double-faced nor is it deceptively speculative. It is not as though we were selecting opinions. It is not as though we were in dilemmas choosing theories. It is not as though we were listening to blind, metaphysical gropings. The sound of the trumpet is clear in the Word of God. It is final. It is superlative, never comparative. The authoritarianism of the Gospel! *'My brethren, though I or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than ye have heard, anathema esto. Let him be accursed.'* One faith, one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father for us all, one Book, one way -- just one!"

Swindoll: Re vs. 10 -- "The Conviction: Nonconformity of the Christian Upheld -- A. Those who seek to please only God become invincible within.

When we serve the Lord diligently, our minds and hearts will not wander or become victimized by spiritual counterfeits. Our souls will become like steel, firmly cemented in the foundation of the Christian gospel. How solid is your foundation? Is it reinforced with a commitment of steel, bent on pleasing God only? Can it withstand the

weight of counterfeits? Or does it crumble under pressure? If so, maybe you need to take an engineer's look at your life to determine whether pleasing God is truly an undergirding motivation (2 Cor. 5:9).

B. Those who stop striving to please people are not intimidated by them.

There will always be those who try to lead us astray. But if our lives are centered on pleasing God rather than people, we will be able to stand strong when the lures come our way. Are you able to look intimidation in the face and stare it down?...

C. Those who are true servants of Christ think and act independently."

TEXT: GALATIANS 1:11-24

TITLE: NOT ACCORDING TO MAN BUT THROUGH REVELATION

BIG IDEA:

**PAUL'S AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED BY DIVINE REVELATION --
PAUL'S PERSONAL TESTIMONY CONFIRMS THE DIVINE SOURCE OF
HIS MESSAGE AND AUTHORITY**

I. (:11-12) THESIS: THE DIVINE SOURCE OF HIS GOSPEL MESSAGE

A. Importance of the Subject

"For I would have you know, brethren"

B. Negatively: Not According to Man

1. Summary

"that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man"

2. Details

a. Not received directly from man

"For I neither received it from man"

b. Not received indirectly from man

"nor was I taught it"

C. Positively: Received By Divine Revelation

"but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ"

**II. (:13-17) PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF HIS CONVERSION EXPERIENCE:
SOVEREIGNLY APPOINTED TO HIS APOSTOLIC MISSION**

A. (:13) Pre-Conversion Persecution of the Church

"For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it"

B. (:14) Pre-Conversion Loyalty to Jewish Traditions

"and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions."

C. (:15-16a) Sovereign Conversion

1. Sovereign Election to Salvation and Ministry -- Emphasis on Sanctification / Holiness

"But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb"

2. Sovereign (Effectual) Calling to Salvation and Ministry -- Emphasis on Grace
"and called me through His grace"
 3. Sovereign Revelation of Salvation -- Emphasis on a Personal Relationship with Christ
"was pleased to reveal His Son in me"
Christ in him became the power for his ministry
- D. (:16b) Sovereign Appointment to His Apostolic Ministry to the Gentiles
"that I might preach Him among the Gentiles"
very specific mission
- E. (:16c-17) Initial Isolation from Church Tutelage
1. No Immediate Contact with Other Believers
"I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood"
the believers would have been hesitant to receive him anyway because of his prominent opposition to the church
 2. No Immediate Consultation with Church Leaders
"nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me"
Including himself in the same class with the other apostles
 3. Private Isolation -- for Personal Development and Ministry Foundation
"but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus"

III. (:18-24) PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF HIS FORMATIVE YEARS: ALMOST NO CONTACT WITH BELIEVERS

- A. (:18-19) First Contact with the Apostles
1. Met with Peter -- Getting to know you
"Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days."
 2. Only Other Brief Contact = James (not officially one of the twelve)
"But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother"
- B. (:20) Aside: Veracity of His Testimony
"(Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.)"
- C. (:21-24) Interaction with the Church
1. (:21) Spent time Preaching in outlying regions
"Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia"
not exactly hotbeds of early church activity

Evans: "Why would Paul be sent to Cilicia? It is my opinion that it was for his protection and growth. Paul deserted Orthodox Judaism and needed someplace to study in relative safety. To this day hatred for Paul is pervasive among Orthodox Jews. One of the cities in Cilicia is Tarsus. That was Paul's hometown. In Tarsus, Paul would be safe from those who were trying to take his life."

2. (:22-24) Known Only by Reputation to the Churches of Judea

a. (:22) Not Known by Sight

"And I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ"

b. (:23) Known by Reputation

"but only, they kept hearing, 'He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy'"

c. (:24) Positive Reception

"And they were glorifying God because of me"

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) What type of direct revelation does Paul claim to have received from Christ? How would we respond to someone today who claimed to have the same type of experience as Paul?

2) Describe some of the dramatic conversions that you have been privileged to witness? Were there some individuals whom God chose to save that you had written off as a lost cause?

3) How important is it in our devotional reading that we first allow God to speak directly to us rather than be too quick to rely on outside commentaries and helps? Do we have a good balance in our use of outside resources (such as this devotional guide)?

4) How cautious should we be about encouraging relatively new converts to take any type of active teaching or preaching role? How long did Paul take for his preparation and what do you think was happening during this time period?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Gromacki: "The call of God to salvation is both sovereign and gracious. God '*called*' (*kalesas*) Paul, and He did it '*by his grace*.' This is not the general invitation to the

world to repent; rather, it is the efficacious call of God whereby He graciously secures the assent of man's will to believe. God does not force salvation on an unwilling sinner. Every person that God sovereignly calls will accept Christ as his Savior, but every one who believes does it because he wants to. The call is gracious in that no sinner deserves to be called to salvation. The sinner who has not been efficaciously called has no right to complain because he simply gets what he deserves."

Hendriksen: "The immediate purpose of this separation and calling is here said to have been '*to reveal his Son in me.*' To reveal, that is, 'to remove the scales from the eyes of my heart, as the scales were removed from my physical eyes' (Acts 9:18). Moreover, Paul does not say '*Jesus*' or '*Christ Jesus,*' but '*his Son,*' for God wanted him to see that the Jesus whom in his disciples Paul had been persecuting, was indeed God's only Son, partaker of God's very essence, himself God! Yet, the words '*to reveal his Son in me*' mean vastly more than 'to my intellect.' The phrase has reference to illumining grace ('to reveal') which is at the same time transforming. Cf. II Cor. 3:18. The more Paul sees that it was this very Son of God whom he had been persecuting but who, nevertheless, had taken pity on him, and in his infinite and tender love had sought him, had stopped him in his tracks, and had changed him into an enthusiastic ambassador of the mysteries of grace, so much the more he also loves and adores this Christ! And the more he adores him, so much the more his own mind, his inner disposition, is patterned after that of his Savior (cf. Phil. 2:5). It is thus that God's Son '*was revealed*' in Paul!"

Ridderbos: Re vs 24 -- "The final thought, namely, that these churches glorified God in Paul, incidentally suggests that these churches did *not* doubt the genuineness and integrity of Paul's calling and preaching. And that, if you please, from those who had suffered so much on his account! How different the attitude in the churches of Galatia, even though these had experienced only good from him, and had not the slightest reason to doubt his apostolic calling and authority!"

Criswell: "Not only was his call independent, and not only was his message -- his gospel -- independent, separate from the Twelve, but the work that he did was an independent work. Compare Romans 15:18-21 ... His ministry flowed in no wise in the channel and in the form and pattern of the original Twelve."

TEXT: GALATIANS 2:1-10

TITLE: THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP

BIG IDEA:

**PAUL'S AUTHORITY RECOGNIZED --
PAUL'S INDEPENDENT MESSAGE AND AUTHORITY WERE STILL
VALIDATED BY THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM**

INTRODUCTION:

Setting was probably the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 -- a pivotal point for the early church

I. (:1-3) THE VOLUNTARY SUBMISSION OF PAUL'S GOSPEL MESSAGE FOR REVIEW BY THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

A. (:1-2a) The Occasion -- Paul's Second Visit to the Church in Jerusalem

1. Time Interval

"Then after an interval of fourteen years"

No question that Paul had been ministering on an independent basis, rather than dependent on the Church in Jerusalem for the content of his message

2. Voluntary Initiative

"I went up again to Jerusalem"

not summoned by some church council; his hand was not forced by man

3. Bold Approach

"with Barnabas, taking Titus along also"

not ducking the central issue of circumcision and Jewish legalism

Swindoll: "Titus was a test case for the validity of the gospel of faith plus nothing."

4. Divine Summons

"And it was because of a revelation that I went up"

B. (:2b) The Review of the Gospel Message

1. Respectful Approach -- But not Submissive as an inferior to superiors

"and I submitted to them"

2. Objective Approach -- Consistent Content

"the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles"

Gromacki: "... he declared or laid before them his message for their

consideration. He did not go to find out what to preach or to be corrected."

3. Wise Approach

"but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain"

C. (:3) The Proof of the Approval

"But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a greek, was compelled to be circumcised."

II. (:4-5) THE PROBLEM: FALSE TEACHERS WHO WERE PROMOTING THEIR FALSE GOSPEL OF LEGALISM OVER PAUL'S TRUE GOSPEL OF LIBERTY IN CHRIST

A. (:4) Identifying the Troublemakers

1. Their Counterfeit Nature

"But it was because of the false brethren"

2. Their Deceptive Methodology

"who had sneaked in to spy out"

3. Their Point of Stumbling

"our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus"

Why should this have been such a problem for them?

4. Their True Agenda

"in order to bring us into bondage"

B. (:5) Refusing to Exchange Liberty for Legalism

1. Not Giving in to their Pressure (to fall back into Legalism)

"But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour"

2. Maintaining the Truth of the Gospel (a life of Liberty in the Spirit)

"so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you"

III. (:6-10) THE UNQUALIFIED RECOGNITION OF PAUL'S GENUINE AUTHORITY AND EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

A. (:6) Paul's Apostolic Authority Not Dependent on Human Commendation

"But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality) -- well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me."

Transition: *"But on the contrary"*

B. (:7-9a) Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles Comparable to Peter's Ministry to the Jews
(note chiasmic structure)

1. Comparable Calling

a. Ministry of Paul -- Distinctive Emphasis

"seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised"

b. Ministry of Peter -- Distinctive Emphasis

"just as Peter had been to the circumcised"

2. Same Power of God at Work

a. Ministry of Peter

"for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised"

b. Ministry of Paul

"effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles."

3. Same Grace of God at Work

"and recognizing the grace that had been given to me"

Evans: "Paul also contrasts his mission with that of Peter. Peter was given the ministry to the Jews. This has caused many to assume that Jews are saved by one method, and Gentiles by another. Such is not the case. On what grounds do Jews base their being chosen by God? It is on the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant. What is the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant? Grace! God chose Abraham Due to grace. God did not choose Abraham because He was indebted to him. When Abraham (Abram) was chosen he was not a Jew. In Abram's day there were NO Jews. Abram was a Gentile by birth. Abraham believed God, and because of that God accepted him. That acceptance was the result of grace. Today, we believe God. We trust that He sent His only begotten Son Jesus, and the Father accepts that as righteous. We are saved by the same method that brought Abram righteousness. Abram was a Gentile convert. Both Paul and Peter had God's power resident in them. Peter for the work among the Jews, Paul for work among the Gentiles."

C. (:9b-10) Formal Recognition of Ministry Partnership

1. Impressive Commendation by the Leaders of the Jerusalem Church

a. Their Names

James

Cephas

John

b. Their Reputation

"who were reputed to be pillars"

2. Grateful Reception by the Ministers to the Gentile Church
"gave to me and Barnabas"
Why no mention of Titus?

3. Symbol of Ministry Partnership
"the right hand of fellowship"

Lovett: "The other apostles give full sanction to Paul's ministry, acknowledging his commission, received by *revelation*, to be identical with the one they received from Jesus in *Person*."

4. Division of Responsibility (Validating the Status Quo)
a. *"that we might go to the Gentiles"*
b. *"and they to the circumcised"*

5. Practical Show of Brotherly Love
a. Request by the Apostles
"They only asked us to remember the poor"
b. Response from Paul
"the very thing I also was eager to do."

(Rom. 15:25 ff., 1 Cor. 16:1 ff., 2 Cor. 8:1 ff., 9:1 ff., Acts 11:29 ff., 12:25, and 24:17)

Pinnock: "As a fraternal gesture, motivated by real love, Paul agreed to do what he could to help the *'poor.'* This is a reference to the saints in the Jerusalem church who were extremely destitute. None of Paul's Gentile churches were so poor. Later on Paul was able to raise a collection from them in fulfilment of his promise here."

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Are there any laborers in the gospel ministry who would benefit from an encouraging word from us? Can we help to validate the legitimacy of someone's ministry in the eyes of another? Paul did not need this endorsement for himself, but it was a major help in answering his critics and keeping the church unified.

2) Do we appreciate the different callings and distinctive ministries that God has for each of us or do we try to force everyone into the same mold? There can be unity and partnership in the gospel despite very wide differences in methodology and emphasis. The key is whether we are preaching the same true gospel.

3) How is this incident an example of Paul yielding his rights and adopting a very meek and humble posture (while still maintaining his boldness and the power of his ministry -- no sign of weakness here)?

4) Are we overly impressed with the human credentials of certain individuals? Do we end up being a respecter of persons in some sense?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Swindoll: "Paul addresses a different charge in Galatians 2. In chapter 1, he shows his independence from the other apostles concerning his reception and understanding of the Christian gospel. This separation refutes the legalists' objection that his message is a distorted, human version of the true gospel. In chapter 2, however, Paul spends his energy spelling out his close relationship with the apostolic church leaders. He does this to answer the argument that the gospel he taught was not approved by these high officials. Paul explains that not only he but also his message was accepted and affirmed by the apostles, launching him into a ministry greater than he had before."

Wiersbe: Re "*run in vain*" (vs. 2) -- "... does not mean that Paul was unsure either of his message or his ministry. His conduct on the way to the conference indicates that he had no doubts (Acts 15:3). What he was concerned about was the future of the Gospel among the Gentiles, because this was his specific ministry from Christ. If the '*pillars*' sided with the Judaizers, or tried to compromise, then Paul's ministry would be in jeopardy. He wanted to get their approval before he faced the whole assembly; otherwise a three-way division could result."

Gromacki: "They agreed on their respective areas of ministry ... They saw no conflict in what each was doing; there was neither competition nor jealousy. They recognized that they were both doing what God had wanted them to do. They both preached the same message but with different approaches to different people."

Hendriksen: "In verses 7-9 the following lessons stand out:

(1) Under God Paul's gospel is independent; that is, it is able to maintain itself in relation to friends and foes. It vanquishes the arguments of its foes, and is enthusiastically endorsed by its friends, who recognize it as the gospel which they themselves cherish.

(2) One gospel suffices for every age and every clime. Methods of presentation may have to vary, but essentially the gospel for the first century A.D. is the gospel for today. Those who maintain that it is 'not relevant' for this day and age are committing a tragic error. Only then when the message of the love of God in Christ has penetrated heart and mind, resulting in a life of unselfish dedication to God and grateful observance of the principles of conduct he has laid down in his Word, will solutions be found for the

problems that now vex the individual, the family, society, the church, the nation, and the world.

(3) The New Testament is not a hodgepodge of conflicting theologies -- the theology of John, the theology of Paul, etc. -- but a harmonious, beautifully variegated, unit. It is a remarkable fact that the five men, whose handclaps of ringing harmony is here described, produced, between them, no less than twenty-one of the twenty-seven New Testament books!"

Hogg: Re "*liberty*" in vs. 4 -- "A word here used to describe the unfettered condition of the Christian soul in contrast with the Jewish condition of bondage to law, and so in 5. 1. This liberty is said to be '*in Christ Jesus*', and is secured by the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit, Who frees the mind from mistaken notions about God and Christ, 2 Cor. 3. 17. It secures to the individual freedom of choice and of action, 1 Cor. 10. 29, but always within the limits imposed by consideration for the welfare of others, Gal. 5:13, and this because Christ's freeman is the bondservant of God, 1 Peter 2. 16. Hence Christian liberty is far removed from the carnal license which false teachers promise their dupes, 2 Peter 2. 19. James, speaking of the restraints of the gospel on those who profess it, finely describes Christianity as '*the perfect law, the law of liberty*', 1. 25, and reminds his readers that by this law the Christian is about to be judged for the use of his liberty in his words and deeds, 2. 12."

TEXT: GALATIANS 2:11-21

TITLE: JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ... LIVING BY FAITH
NO ROOM FOR HYPOCRISY OR LEGALISM

BIG IDEA:

**PAUL'S AUTHORITY DEMONSTRATED IN REBUKING PETER'S ERROR --
JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH LEAVES NO ROOM FOR HYPOCRISY OR
LEGALISM**

**I. (:11-13) PETER'S HYPOCRISY DESERVED PAUL'S STRONG
OPPOSITION**

- A. (:11a) Paul Did Not Shrink Back From His Responsibility of Confrontation
"But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face"

- B. (:11b-13) Peter's Hypocrisy Was Causing Serious Problems -- for Himself and Others
 - 1. (:11b) His own actions condemned him
"because he stood condemned"

 - 2. (:12-13) His bad example was leading others astray
 - a. His Hypocrisy
 - (1) Acted first one way
"For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles"
Reference is probably to the fellowship meals, the agape love-feasts of the early church.

 - (2) Then another way
"but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof"

 - (3) Motivated by Peer Pressure
"fearing the party of the circumcision"

 - b. Its Negative Effect on the other Jewish Believers
"And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy"

 - c. Its Negative Effect on His Ministry Partner = Barnabas
"with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy"

II. (:14) PETER'S HYPOCRISY COMPROMISED THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL

- A. Any Addition of Legalism Perverts the Gospel of Grace
"But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel"
- B. Public Error Demands Public Censure
"I said to Cephas in the presence of all"
- C. Inconsistency is the Essence of Hypocrisy
"If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

III. (:15-21) JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH UNITES US ALL (JEW AND GENTILE) TO CHRIST SO THAT WE CAN WALK BY FAITH

- A. (:15-16) Even Jews (just like Gentiles) Can Only Be Justified by Faith Alone
 - 1. Different Spiritual Pedigree
 - a. Jews
"We are Jews by nature"
 - b. Not Gentiles
"and not sinners from among the Gentiles"
 - 2. Same Gospel of Justification by Faith in Christ Alone (Apart from the Works of the Law)
"nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."
Same principle stated 3 times for emphasis
- B. (:17) Our Inconsistent Practice of Sin Can Never be Attributed to Our Perfect Savior
"But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!"
- C. (:18-21) The Key to Righteousness is Living by Grace Through Faith
 - 1. (:18) The Old Principle of living in obedience to the ceremonial law of Judaism is inconsistent with Justification by Faith
"For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor."

Hogg: Re "those things which I destroyed" -- "*kataluo*, = to loosen down, used of the demolition of a building, Matt. 24. 2, of the death of the body, 2 Cor. 5. 1, of the failure of purposes, Acts 5. 38, 39, and of the marring of a person's spiritual well-being, Rom. 14. 20. The Lord Jesus declared that He came '*not to destroy [kataluo] the law*', Matt. 5. 17, that is to say, not to lower the standard of Divine righteousness, not to abrogate the least of God's requirements, but, on the contrary, in His own life to '*magnify the law and make it honourable*', Isa. 42. 21."

2. (:19) The New Principle of living by faith in Christ involves living to God
"For through the Law I died to the Law, that I might live to God."
3. (:20) Our Union with Christ in His Death and Resurrection makes this new life of faith possible
"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me."

Hogg: "Faith is the characteristic function of the new life."

4. (:21) Any Continued Dependence on the Law:
 - a. Compromises the Grace of God
"I do not nullify the grace of God"
 - b. Minimizes the Atonement of Christ
"for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly"

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Which is more important: Peace (in terms of not making a scene and being disruptive) or maintaining the purity of the truth of the gospel? When is public confrontation necessary? Where have we seen compromise with regard to the integrity of the gospel message?
- 2) Do we fully comprehend how our actions can impact the lives of others? Do Christian leaders realize what type of influence they have by way of example over the lives of others? (cf. Rom. 14:7)
- 3) Does the doctrine of justification by faith lessen our motivation to live a life of holiness and righteousness? Is it possible to enjoy assurance of eternal life apart from the evidence of a changed life?

4) Do we truly live our life as an outflowing of the life of Christ within us? What is our concept of the reality of our union with Jesus Christ in terms of the practical impact on our daily living?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Wuest: "Here the argument for Paul's apostolic independence has come to the highest level yet attained. In Jerusalem Paul faced Peter as an equal in rank and in the gospel ministry. At Antioch he faced him as his superior in character and courage."

Wuest: Re vs. 17 -- "Paul repudiates the false assumption of the Judaizers who charged that Christ is the promoter and encourager of sin in that He causes the Jew to abandon the law as a justifying agency, and in doing so, puts himself on the common plane of a Gentile whom he calls a sinner and a dog. The Judaizers argued that in view of the fact that violation of the law is sin, therefore, abandonment of the law in an effort to be justified in Christ is also sin. Thus Christ is the promoter of sin."

Wuest: Re vs. 20 -- "The new life is no longer, like the former one, dependent upon the ineffectual efforts of a man attempting to draw near to God in his own righteousness. The new life is a Person within a person, living out His life in that person. Instead of attempting to live his life in obedience to a set of rules in the form of the legal enactments of the Mosaic law, Paul now yields to the indwelling Holy Spirit and cooperates with Him in the production of a life pleasing to God, energized by the divine life resident in him through the regenerating work of the Spirit. Instead of a sinner with a totally depraved nature attempting to find acceptance with God by attempted obedience to a set of outward laws, it is now the saint living his life on a new principle, that of the indwelling Holy Spirit manifesting forth the Lord Jesus."

Hendriksen: "If a Jew who, having turned to Christ, has learned that strict obedience to legal requirements, divine and human, will not bring even him into the kingdom, tries, nevertheless, to impose such legalism upon Gentiles, his effort to place this yoke upon them is inexcusable."

Ridderbos: Re vs. 17 -- "The objection has reference to the seeming ethical danger of the doctrine. Does it (the doctrine of justification by faith alone) not make for godless and normless living? The objection begins by saying something that cannot be denied: if even we (Jews) ourselves, quite as much as the Gentiles, are found to be sinners, and there is, therefore, no essential difference between those who observe the law and the sinners of the Gentiles ... And thence the question which, on the basis of that clause, can be asked, and is as a matter of fact always being asked anew: Is this Christ, then, a minister of sin, serving in its cause? The answer could not be more definitely negative. Paul nowhere does injustice to the gravity of sin or to the holiness of the law. Both are always totally assumed."

Lovett: "It should be noted that Peter did not do this action out of conviction, but FEAR. He dreaded the reproach of those visiting from Jerusalem. Many there, including James, believed natural-born Jews were under obligation to observe the Law of meats. By joining them, Peter behaved as though he felt the Gentile Christians were still separate from Jewish Christians. He gave no explanation, but acted in cowardice. His great rank made the action divisive. He stumbled other Jewish Christians by his action. So great was his influence even Barnabas, Paul's fellow-champion in asserting the freedom of Gentiles and possibly the pastor of the Antiochian church, was swept into the evil. This may have been the beginning of the break between Paul and Barnabas, for they never again appear together after this. The disgrace of Peter's action in withdrawing from the agape or frequent Lord's Supper, is that he treated the Gentile Christians as though they were unclean."

Gromacki: "The doctrine of justification is described in seven ways: (1) its source is God (Rom. 3:26; 8:30); (2) its essence is grace (Rom. 3:24); (3) its means is faith (Rom. 5:1); (4) its ground is the blood of Christ (Rom. 5:9); (5) its position is in Christ (I Cor. 6:11); (6) its divine agent is the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:11); and (7) its evidence is works (James 2:21, 24)."

Gromacki: "The heresy of the Judaizers discredited the divine program of redemption in two ways.

First, *'it frustrates the grace of God.'* If a man can earn salvation, then God must give him what he deserves. However, the essence of grace is for God to give men what they do not deserve...

Second, it deprecates the cross of Christ (*'then Christ is dead in vain'*). He died unnecessarily if a man can gain the righteousness of God through legal obedience. The issue is clear: Did Jesus Christ completely satisfy the righteous demands of God on the cross? What did He mean when He said, *'It is finished.'*"

Swindoll: Re illustration of the exchanged life -- "Suppose you want to become a concert pianist, but you can't play a note of music. A virtuoso pianist comes to you and says, 'I have the ability to join with you in such a way that I can play the piano through you, using your hands, feet, will, and mind. But I won't unless you believe I can and will do it. Will you trust me?' Delighted, you trustingly sit down at the piano and begin to play. Your fingers caress the keys, creating a brilliant blend of harmony and melody. Soon a crowd gathers, enjoying every note. When you stop, the audience applauds heartily. Instead of taking a bow for yourself, you explain that you were merely a trusting instrument of the real maestro. Someone else performed through you. Without help, you could not have played even a simple scale. Likewise, Christ is the master musician who wants to perform beautiful music through us, if we will only believe in Him and stop trying to play the instrument by ourselves."

TEXT: GALATIANS 3:1-9

TITLE: REMEMBER YOUR ROOTS

BIG IDEA:

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH PROVES THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO LIVE BY FAITH

I. (:1-5) THE ARGUMENT FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE = OUR OWN ENTRANCE INTO SPIRITUAL LIFE WAS BY FAITH NOT WORKS

MacArthur: "Although experience in itself is not entirely reliable evidence of spiritual reality, it is nevertheless a powerful apologetic when closely linked with and built on scriptural truth."

A. (:1) The Foolishness of Forgetfulness

1. Stinging Rebuke

"You foolish Galatians"

Difficult for the Galatians to hear these words. They needed to be set straight.

2. Serious Deception

"who has bewitched you"

Gromacki: "In a sense, the Galatians were victims of an evil spell. They must have been hypnotized or awe struck by the forceful oratory of the key Judaizer."

3. Clarity of the Gospel Message

"before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified"

Wiersbe: "It was 'Christ and Him crucified' that Paul had preached in Galatia, and with such effectiveness that the people could almost see Jesus crucified for them on the cross."

Almost as clear as if they had been standing at the cross observing.

B. (:2) The Only GamePlan That Works

1. KISS = "Keep it Simple, Stupid" ; Fundamentalism = emphasis on the basic essentials

"This is the only thing I want to find out from you"

2. How did you enter into the Spiritual Life?

"did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?"

Law vs Faith

Reception of the Spirit is evidence of salvation and union with God -- Rom. 8:9

- C. (:3) The Foolishness of Switching Horses Mid-Race
"Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit are you now being perfected by the flesh?"
 Spirit vs Flesh
- D. (:4) The Need for Perseverance
"Did you suffer so many things in vain -- if indeed it was in vain?"
- E. (:5) The Key to the Distribution of Spiritual Blessings
 On what basis does God provide these blessings?
"Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?"

II. (:6-9) THE ARGUMENT FROM THE EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM = FAITH IS THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES

- A. (:6) Abraham was Justified by Faith
"Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness"

Before the law was given; before Abraham was circumcised.

- B. (:7) Faith = The Common Denominator for Believing Jews and Gentiles
"Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham"
- C. (:8) OT Prophecy Paved the Way for the Inclusion of the Gentiles in the Blessing of Justification by Faith
"And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the nations shall be blessed in you.'"
- D. (:9) Summary: The Bottom Line for God's Blessing = Faith
"So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer."

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How are Christians today overly impressed by fancy oratory and entertainment and emotional appeals in a way which makes them susceptible to being "bewitched" about the truth of the gospel?
- 2) How valuable is it to recall our own conversion experience and the faith which accompanied it? In what ways are we trying to live the Christian life at odds with how

we entered into the Christian life?

3) Is the crucifixion of Jesus Christ ever before our eyes as the defining redemptive act of our relationship with God? Do we appreciate the simplicity of the fundamentals of the Christian faith? Do we grasp the significance of the cross and the resurrection to our everyday living out of the Christian life?

4) What are some examples of how we can be tempted to try to live out our Christian life and make progress "by the works of the law" or "by the flesh"?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

MacArthur: "Defection and desertion are contemptible because they involve disloyalty and betrayal. Few things are more tragic or disappointing than a Christian who deserts the purity of the gospel for a false form of Christianity that presumes to improve on the finished work of Christ. Yet that is what many believers in the Galatian churches had done or were in danger of doing because of the Judaizers.

Swindoll: "Theologian **Charles Ryrie** makes some helpful distinctions concerning what legalism is and is not. He points out that 'legalism is not the presence of laws'; otherwise, 'God would have to be charged with promoting it since He has given man innumerable laws during human history.' Neither is legalism 'the imposition of law on someone else,' for if it were, God would be a legalist of the highest order. Furthermore, legalism is not the opposite of liberty, meaning that a person can live a lawless existence. As Ryrie explains, 'Christian liberty does not give the believer the option of living any way he pleases; it is not license. It places him in a position where he can live as God pleases, something he was unable to do as an unregenerated person. Liberated living is not unrestricted living.' What is legalism, then?

'It is a wrong attitude toward the code of laws under which a person lives.

Legalism involves the presence of law, the wrong motive toward obeying that law and often the wrong use of the power provided to keep the law, but it is basically a wrong attitude. Thus legalism may be defined as a fleshly attitude which conforms to a code for the purpose of exalting self...'"

Wiersbe: "The key to this section is in the word '*suffered*' (v. 4), which can be translated 'experienced.' Paul asks, '*Have you experienced so many things in vain?*' The argument from Christian experience was a wise one with which to begin, because Paul had been with them when they had trusted Christ. Of course, to argue from experience can be dangerous, because experiences can be counterfeited and they can be misunderstood. Subjective experience must be balanced with objective evidence, because experiences can change, but truth never changes. Paul balances the subjective experience of the Galatian Christians with the objective teaching of the unchanging Word of God (vv. 6-14)."

Gromacki: Re vs. 2 -- "If the Judaizers had been correct, then it would have been impossible for the uncircumcized Gentile converts to have received the Spirit at all. Yet the Galatians *'were filled with joy, and with the Holy Spirit'* as the result of Paul's evangelistic efforts (Acts 13:52). To accept the heresy of the Judaizers would be to deny the presence of the Spirit in their lives."

Gromacki: Re vs. 6 -- "... the time of his faith was before he was circumcised (Gen. 15:6; cf. Gen. 17:9-27). The Judaizers argued that since Abraham believed and was circumcised, the Galatians would also have to be circumcised in order to receive the righteousness of God. However, a righteous standing was imputed to the patriarch at the moment of faith. The argument is decisive: If circumcision is necessary for salvation, then why did God give His righteousness to the patriarch before he submitted to the rite? A man is not justified before he is saved."

TEXT: GALATIANS 3:10-14

TITLE: REDEEMED FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW

BIG IDEA:

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH PROVES THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO LIVE BY FAITH -- SINCE WE HAVE BEEN FREED FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW

I. (:10) DEPENDENCE ON THE LAW (FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE GOD) CARRIES WITH IT AN INESCAPABLE CURSE

Quote from Deut. 27:26

MacArthur: "A curse is a divine judgment that brings the sentence of condemnation."

A. Inescapability of the Curse

"For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse"

If you choose this route (of trusting in the works of the Law), there is no escape.

B. Hopelessness of the Curse

"for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them'"

The emphasis is on "everyone" and "all" -- these are universally applicable principles. God's standard for righteousness = Perfection = impossible for any man to measure up. Good intentions will get you nowhere. 90% compliance will get you nowhere.

II. (:11) THE OT SUPPORTS JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH -- NOT BY KEEPING THE LAW

Quote from Hab. 2:4

"Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, 'The righteous man shall live by faith.'"

III. (:12) THE LAW AND FAITH ARE MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE WHEN IT COMES TO THE ISSUE OF JUSTIFICATION

Quote from Lev. 18:5

"However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, 'He who practices them shall live by them.'"

MacArthur: "To live by law is to live by self-effort and leads inevitably to failure, condemnation, and death. To live by faith is to respond to God's grace and leads to justification and eternal life."

Wiersbe: "Law says, 'Do and live!' but grace says, 'Believe and live!'"

IV. (:13-14) CHRIST HAS REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW

Quote from Deut. 21:23

A. Person Accomplishing Our Redemption: *"Christ"*

B. Nature of Redemption (points taken from **Gromacki** here)

1. It is a Finished Redemption -- *"redeemed"* -- aorist active indicative

2. It is a Personal Redemption -- *"us"*

3. It is a Purposeful Redemption -- *"from the curse of the Law"*

4. It is a Substitutionary Redemption -- very costly
"having become a curse for us"

C. Aside -- Consistent with the Fabric of OT Prophecy

"for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'"

D. Purposes of Redemption

1. Right Position -- Gentile participation in the Blessing of Abraham

"in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles"

2. Right Power -- Gentile inclusion in the receiving of the indwelling Holy

Spirit -- *"that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith"*

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) How can a loving God pronounce such a universal curse upon mankind? What is the impact upon your heart for missions as you ponder the exclusivity of God's appointed plan of salvation?

2) What differences do you find between Law and Faith? As you study *good works* in the New Testament, try to discern whether these works are viewed as pre-conversion or post-conversion works, and then try to discern their significance.

3) How can the Law be called *"good"* if it is associated with such an inescapable curse?

4) What all is contained in the *"promise of the Spirit"*?

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

MacArthur: " In ancient Judaism a criminal who was executed, usually by stoning, was then tied to a post, a type of tree, where his body would hang until sunset as a visible representation of rejection by God. It was not that a person became cursed by being hanged on a tree but that he was hanged on a tree because he was cursed. Jesus did not become a curse because He was crucified but was crucified because he was cursed in taking the full sin of the world upon Himself."

Wiersbe: "Yes, there is a fascination to the law, but it is only bait that leads to a trap; and once the believer takes the bait, he finds himself in bondage. Far better to take God at His Word and rest on His grace. We were saved 'by grace, through faith' and we must live 'by grace, through faith.' This is the way to blessing. The other way is the way to bondage."

Lovett: "The Law requires perfect obedience in all things -- continually. It demands perfection. There is no room for failure. Seeking righteousness under the Law is like a man scaling a cliff -- one slip and he's dead -- for the Law demands the full penalty for even the tiniest transgression. He who violates any part of the Law is guilty of breaking the whole Law (Ja. 2:10). As breaking a single link causes a chain to fail, so does breaking a single requirement of the Law cause one's righteousness to crumble."

Pinnock: "Thanks to the grace of God, man's universal failure to live up to God's standards has been taken care of in the death of Jesus on the cross."

Strauss: "This secret which God made known to the prophet Habakkuk had its primary application to Israel in those dark days following the cutting-off of King Josiah. Israel's hope was in the coming of Messiah, and it is to His coming that the five '*its*' of verse three refer. They were to wait for HIM. But the Hope of Israel is also the Hope of all nations in all ages, for the five '*its*' in the prophecy of Habakkuk become '*He*' in Hebrews 10:37, where we read: '*For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*' If all seemed hopeless to Israel, God would assure His people that there was still hope if they would but believe in Him who was to come. But faith must be exercised. In this vision given to Habakkuk Israel would find food for her faith. Though circumstances all around them seemed to contradict their hopes, they would live in the present through faith in Messiah's coming."

TEXT: GALATIANS 3:15-22

TITLE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD'S PROMISES AND GOD'S LAW

BIG IDEA:

THE BLESSING OF JUSTIFICATION COULD ONLY COME VIA GOD'S UNCHANGING PROMISES RATHER THAN BY THE LAW

Dealing here with the Abrahamic Covenant -- background on the provisions of this covenant

I. (:15-18) GOD'S UNCHANGING PROMISES CANNOT BE SUPERCEDED BY THE LAW

A. (:15) God's Covenant Promises Can Never Be Changed or Annulled

Argument from the lesser (man's covenants) to the greater (God's covenants).

"Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it."

Significance of Ratification

- by man
- by God

cf. business contracts -- any change must be initialed by both parties

B. (:16) God's Promises Find Their Ultimate Fulfillment in Christ

"Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as referring to many, but rather to one, 'And to your seed,' that is Christ."

C. (:17) God's Promises Came Way Before the Law and were not Set Aside by the Law

1. God's Promises Came Way Before the Law

"What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later"

Wiersbe: "Paul is counting from the time Jacob went into Egypt, when God appeared to him and reaffirmed the covenant (Gen. 46:1-4). The 430 years is the time from God's confirmation of His promise to Jacob until the giving of the law at Sinai."

2. God's Promises were not Set Aside by the Law

"does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise."

D. (:18) The Blessing of the Promised Inheritance Came Via God's Promises -- not

God's Law

"For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise."

TRANSITION: *"Why the Law then?"*

II. (:19-22) THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S LAW WAS NEVER TO PROVIDE JUSTIFICATION

A. (:19-20) God's Law was Necessary But Clearly Inferior to God's Promises

1. (:19a) The Law was Necessary Because of Sin

"It was added because of transgressions"

Again, the emphasis on the law having been *"added"* after the Promises.

2. (:19b-20) The Law was Clearly Inferior to God's Promises --

a. Proven by the nature of mediation

"having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator"

mediated through angels and Moses rather than directly given by God as the promises were to Abraham

b. Proven by the intended duration -- Only Temporary

"until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made"

c. Proven by the need for a mediator

"Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one."

MacArthur: "Paul seems to be pointing out that a mediator (literally one who stands between two parties) is needed only when more than one party is involved. God gave the covenant directly to Abraham without a mediator because He was the only one involved in making the covenant. Abraham was a witness to the covenant and was a beneficiary, but he was not a party to it. Abraham had no part in establishing or keeping the covenant. That responsibility was God's alone. The covenant of law, however, not only involved mediators (angels and Moses) but mutual obligations on the two parties (God and Israel)."

B. (:21-22) God's Law Should Not be Stretched Beyond Its Intended Purpose

1. God's Law is Not an Enemy to God's Promises

"Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be!"

2. God's Law Can Never Provide Justification

"For if a law had been given, which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law."

3. God's Law Accomplished Its Intended Purpose

"But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What are some examples of man's covenants which have proven to be dependable and others which have proven to be unreliable? What makes God's covenants 100% dependable?
- 2) What is the nature of the "*inheritance*" which God promised back to Abraham and in which we Gentile believers share? Were there some elements of God's promise to Abraham that were strictly for national Israel or do present day believers share in all these blessings as the "true Israel" of God? Why does the nature of an inheritance demand that it come as a grace gift rather than as a reward for works? What is the basic difference between a contract between two parties and a will executed by one?
- 3) How does our relationship to Christ as the heir of God determine what level of inheritance we enjoy?
- 4) How has God's law been effective in your life in terms of convicting you of sin and highlighting God's perfect standards?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

MacArthur: "Four reasons are given for affirming the superiority of the covenant of promise: its confirmation, its Christ-centeredness, its chronology, and its completeness... The one and only heir of every promise of God is Christ. Every promise given in the covenant with Abraham was fulfilled in Jesus Christ and only Jesus Christ. Therefore the only way a person can participate in the promised blessings to Abraham is to be a fellow heir with Christ through faith in Him..."

After showing the superiority of the covenant of promise, Paul shows the inferiority of the covenant of law -- first in regard to its purpose, then in regard to its mediator, and finally in regard to its accomplishment."

Hendriksen: "If the law given at Sinai was unable to impart righteousness, then what possible good could it do? Of what use was it? ... it was given to man in addition to the promise in order to bring about within his heart and mind an awakened sense of guilt. A vague awareness of the fact that all is not right with him will not drive him to the Savior. Only when he realizes that his sins are transgressions of the law of that God who is also his Judge and whose holiness cannot brook such digressions, such constant stepping aside from the appointed path, will he, when this knowledge is applied to his heart by the Holy Spirit, cry out for deliverance."

Gromacki: "The reason for the addition of the law was *'because of transgression.'* It was designed to restrain fallen human nature. If no restrictions were ever placed on unregenerate wills, then sinners would manifest their position in every conceivable evil practice. The intent of the law, therefore, was to reduce the amount of sin that could be committed. In a sense, sinful man is not as bad as he could be (his practice), although he is as bad off as he can be (his position). Moral anarchy could not be tolerated by either God or man. The aim of the law was to give to sin the character of transgression and to create within the sinner a consciousness of guilt. It removed the excuse of an innate human weakness caused by evolutionary heredity or a hostile environment. It showed to man that he had willfully violated the decree of the personal, sovereign God of the universe."

Wiersbe: "The Judaizers were impressed by the incidentals of the law -- glory, thunder, lightning, angels, and other externals. But Paul looked beyond incidentals to the essentials. The law was temporary, and required a mediator. The covenant of promise was permanent, and no mediator was required. There could be but one conclusion: the covenant was greater than the law."

TEXT: GALATIANS 3:23 - 4:7

TITLE: BEFORE AND AFTER FAMILY SNAPSHOTS --
PRIVILEGE OF SONSHIP THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST

BIG IDEA:

THE COMING OF CHRIST ELEVATED OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD TO THAT OF PRIVILEGED SONS AND HEIRS

I. (3:23-29) BEFORE AND AFTER SNAPSHOT #1 -- FULL SONS AND HEIRS

A. (3:23-24) Before Justification by Faith in Christ Came -- Preparation / Restrictions

1. Timeframe -- "*But before faith came*"

Is Paul talking about Jews in OT times (probably) or anybody in their pre-conversion days (more of an application)?

2. Limitations of the Law -- Only a Schoolmaster

a. Function of Guarding -- but not Delivering

"we were kept in custody under the law"

Gromacki: "... under constant surveillance. They were in the prison house of sin with no way of escape. The law was like a jailor or a sentry, watching every act of moral disobedience. They were being guarded at all times."

b. Looking Forward to the Coming Faith

"being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed"

3. Purpose of the Law = to Lead us to Christ

"Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."

B. (3:25-29) After Justification by Faith in Christ Has Come -- Fulfillment /
Enjoyment of Privileges

1. (:25a) Timeframe -- "*But now that faith has come*"

2. (:25b) Graduated to a Higher Level

"we are no longer under a tutor"

3. (:26) Full Sonship

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus"

4. (:27-28) Fully United with Christ = No Distinction

a. (:27) Fully United with Christ

"For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

Gromacki: "This change of spiritual clothing was taken from a cultural custom. In ancient times a Roman lad wore the *toa praetexta*, a toga with an elaborately embroidered purple hem. When the boy reached manhood he put off this sign of immaturity and put on the white toga. Thus, under law, a person could never merit the clothing of spiritual sonship."

b. (:28) No Distinction

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

The law created all types of differences -- between Jews and Gentiles; between clean and unclean animals; etc.

5. (:29) Full Heirs

"And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."

II. (4:1-7) BEFORE AND AFTER SNAPSHOT #2 -- FULL SONS AND HEIRS

A. (4:1-3) Before Christ Came -- Preparation / Restrictions

1. (:1) A Child Lives Like a Servant

"Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything."

2. (:2) A Child Chafes Under Supervision

"but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father."

3. (:3) A Child is Restricted Under Bondage

"So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world."

Wiersbe: "This word *elements* means *the basic principles, the ABCs*. For some 15 centuries, Israel had been in kindergarten and grade school, learning their 'spiritual ABCs,' so that they would be ready when Christ would come. Then they would get the full revelation, for Jesus Christ is '*the Alpha and the Omega*' (Rev. 22:13); He encompasses all the alphabet of God's revelation to man. He is God's last Word (Heb. 1:1-3)."

B. (4:4-5) Fulcrum Point = The Coming of Christ

1. Timeframe -- "*But when the fulness of the time came*"

2. Divine Plan -- "*God sent forth His Son*" -- Fully God

3. Qualifications to Redeem

- a. *"born of a woman"* -- Fully Man

Pinnock: "The humanity of Christ is one of the underdeveloped doctrines of orthodox Christianity. We have been so zealous to preserve a good testimony to the deity of Christ that we have often allowed His humanity to become unreal and obscured. Yet the New Testament is eager to stress God's self-disclosure in our flesh and history. The chief Christological heresy it had to combat was docetism, the denial of His full humanity. Paul teaches that God entered fully into the conditions of human life."

- b. *"born under the Law"* -- Fully Obedient to God's Law
our Substitute to bear the full penalty of the law

4. Mission = Accomplishing Redemption

"in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law"

5. Goal = Full Sonship

"that we might receive the adoption as sons"

C. (4:6-7) After Christ Has Come -- Fulfillment / Enjoyment of Privileges

Gromacki: "How can a person know that he is a son? What are the evidences of the fact that he is no longer a spiritual child under legal supervision? The opening causal clause (*'because ye are sons'*) introduces the reader to two spiritual realities that will exist in the life of every genuine Christian. They are results of sonship which actually confirm that position."

1. New Privileged Experience of Full Sonship -- Introduction

"And because you are sons"

2. New Privilege of Intimacy (through the indwelling Holy Spirit)

"God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'"

MacArthur: "*Abba* is a diminutive of the Aramaic word for father. It was a term of endearment used by young children of their fathers and could be translated 'daddy' or 'papa.' The Holy Spirit brings us into a personal, intimate relationship with our heavenly Father, whom we may approach at any time and under any circumstance, knowing that He always hears us and lovingly cares for us, because we are truly His own."

3. New Privileged Position of Full Heirship

"Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God."

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What types of religious cults or other religions teach some form of reliance upon keeping a set of laws? What are some of those laws? How do we use laws in our household?
- 2) Is there a different emphasis in the NT being being a "*child of God*" and being a "*son of God*"?
- 3) How does this baptism into Christ compare to the type of Holy Spirit baptism which is one of the core distinctives for those of charismatic persuasion?
- 4) If the role of parents is to prepare their children for independence and maturity and adulthood ... do some parents continue to provide too much direction to their adult children? How is this harmful?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Wiersbe: "No matter how wealthy a father may be, his infant son or toddling child cannot really enjoy that wealth. In the Roman world, the children of wealthy people were cared for by slaves. No matter who his father was, the child was still a child, under the supervision of a servant. In fact, the child himself was not much different from the servant who guarded him. The servant was commanded by the master of the house, and the child was commanded by the servant."

Gromacki: "Thus, the law as a *paidagogos* performed a needed function before justification, but it has no authority over the regenerated child of God. The redeemed sinner does not have to obey the law to maintain his justified position or to achieve sanctification. Of course, at all times he is '*not without law to God, but under the law to Christ*' (I Cor. 9:21). He must never be morally lawless; rather he should always be submissive to the righteous, eternal law of God which transcends all ages and which reflects the holy character of God."

Hendriksen: "In the figure here used the '*pedagogue*' is the man--generally a slave--in whose custody the slave-owner's boys were placed, in order that this trusted servant might conduct them to and from school, and might, in fact, watch over their conduct throughout the day. He was, accordingly, an escort or attendant, and also at the same time a disciplinarian. The discipline which he exercised was often of a severe character, so that those placed under his guardianship would yearn for the day of freedom."

MacArthur: *The fulness of time* refers to the completion of the period of preparation in God's sovereign timetable of redemption. When the law had fully accomplished its purpose of showing man his utter sinfulness and inability to live up to God's perfect standard of righteousness, God ushered in a new era of redemption. When He sent forth His Son, He provided the righteousness for man that man could not provide for himself.

When Jesus was born, everything was right for the coming of the Messiah. First of all, the time was right religiously. During the Babylonian captivity, Israel once and for all forsook the idolatry into which she had so often fallen. Despite their many other sins and failures, including the national rejection of their own Messiah, no significant number of Jews has ever again turned to idolatry.

Also during the Exile, Jews developed synagogues, which they used as places of worship, as schools, and as courts. In addition to that, they at last had the completed Old Testament, assembled by Ezra and others after the return from Babylon. Those features facilitated the proclaiming of the Messiah's gospel among the people of Israel.

Second, the time was right culturally. Christians who propagated the gospel during the first several centuries had a common language with those to whom they witnessed and with whom they worshiped. Alexander the Great had thoroughly established Greek culture and language throughout the known world, and these continued their dominating influence long after Rome succeeded Greece as world ruler.

Third, the time was right politically. Rome had instituted the *pax Romana* (Roman peace), which provided economic and political stability. The apostles and other early preachers and teachers could travel freely and safely throughout the empire and could do so on the magnificent system of roads built by the Romans.

Each of those factors was in some unique way a key to the spread of the gospel. God's timing was perfect."

TEXT: GALATIANS 4:8-20

TITLE: APOSTASY IS A PERPLEXING DANGER

BIG IDEA:

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH MUST BE HELD ON TO DESPITE THE SEDUCING DECEPTIONS OF FANATICAL FALSE TEACHERS

I. (:8-11) DON'T TURN BACK TO A LIFESTYLE OF LEGALISTIC BONDAGE

Gromacki: "Paul wanted to prove that legalism was no better than paganism. In principle they were identical because both required strict observance of rituals and laws to gain salvation. To the apostle the Judaizers were similar to the pagan religious priests who once supervised the Galatians before their conversion."

A. (:8) Legalistic Bondage Was their Lifestyle Prior to Conversion

1. Timestamp = Pre-conversion days

"However at that time"

1. No Knowledge of the True God

"when you did not know God"

2. Serving False Gods

"you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods"

B. (:9-10) A Turning Back to a Lifestyle of Legalistic Bondage after Conversion is Shocking

1. Timestamp = after Conversion

"But now"

2. Essence of Salvation

a. From man's perspective

"that you have come to know God"

b. From God's perspective

"or rather to be known by God"

Campbell: "This statement refutes the idea that man is the one who reaches out to God, and it emphasizes the fact that God is the One who does the reaching out. God is the One who draws men unto Christ the Redeemer (John 6:44)."

3. Enigma of Reverting back to Legalistic Bondage

"how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?"

Hogg: "Weak in the sense of powerless to produce results, an epithet elsewhere applied to the law and in the same sense, Rom. 8. 3, Heb. 7. 18... Beggarly in the sense of powerless to enrich. Without spiritual wealth, without an inheritance, present or prospective, without any gift of life or of the Spirit, these religions of childhood, v. 1, and of bondage, were *'poverty-stricken'* indeed and could give nothing, for they had nothing to give. With this poverty contrast the riches of God..."

4. Examples of Dependence Upon Legalistic Ritual

"You observe days and months and seasons and years."

Fung: "In this enumeration Paul apparently intends to say that the Galatians had taken over the entire Jewish system of religious observances. In his view this religious observance of sacred days and seasons according to the Jewish calendar--as an obligation imposed by the law, and not simply as a matter of custom--was a form of subservience to the *stoicheia* which could neither save nor justify its adherents but only cast them into bondage."

C. (:11) The Perplexity of Apostasy

"I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain."

Piper: "It's not surprising then that the Judaizers should find a foothold for their false teaching in the hearts of the recent Galatian converts, just like all kinds of cults and ego-centric fads are able to gain a foothold in the church today. The teaching of the Judaizers did not oppose the pride left in the Galatian believers. It catered to that pride. They said, move on from faith to works; move on from the booster rocket of the Holy Spirit and kick in with the efforts of your flesh (Gal. 3:1-5). They offered the law as a means of enjoying one's pride in a morally acceptable way. And so their teaching was not as radical and humbling as Paul's was. It was very appealing to people who wanted to be religious and moral but did not want to become putty in the hands of God."

II. (:12-16) DON'T REJECT THE LOVING INSTRUCTION OF YOUR ORIGINAL DISCIPLER (REMEMBER OUR BONDS OF AFFECTION)

A. (:12-14) Appeal to Love and Affection Based on Their Initial Acceptance of Paul -- the Evangelist

"I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong; but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself."

Fung: "The point of reference is probably freedom from the law."

B. (:15) Appeal to Love and Affection Based on Their Earlier Willingness to Love Paul Sacrificially (Based on the Spiritual Blessing He Had Communicated in the Discipleship Process)

"Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness, that if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me."

C. (:16) Exhortation to Not Stumble Over Paul's Present Loving Instruction

"Have I therefore become your enemy by telling you the truth?"

MacArthur: "Many people appreciate a preacher or teacher only as long as he says what they want to hear. The confused and defecting believers in Galatia had once greatly admired Paul, but now they looked on him as their enemy, because he confronted them with the truth about the genuine gospel of God, which had saved them, and the false teaching of the Judaizers, which led them back into the bondage of legalism."

III. (:17-20) DON'T BE DECEIVED BY RELIGIOUS FANATICISM

A. (:17-18) Discern the Motives of Those Desiring to Minister to You

1. Beware of the Ulterior Motives of Fanatical False Teachers

"They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out, in order that you may seek them."

Watch out for spiritual leaders that try to make you dependent on their ministry.

Campbell: "The context indicates that with a selfish zeal the Judaizers affectionately courted the friendship of the Galatians."

2. Appreciate the Commendable Motives of All Godly Disciplers

"But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you."

Paul was not expressing jealousy at the fact that they would respond to other teachers ... he just wanted them to be discerning in their response.

B. (:19-20) Respond to the Pastoral Care Offered By Those Who Genuinely Love You

1. (:19) Paul Renews His Commitment to Lovingly Disciple Them

"My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you --"

What a tremendous description of the goal of all discipleship!

2. (:20) Paul Reiterates His Pastoral Care to Keep Them On Track

a. This Pastoral Care may well involve the need for discipline -- at least it will involve saying some hard things to them in a confrontational tone

"but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone"

b. This Pastoral Care includes an Element of Perplexity
"for I am perplexed about you"

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Is it possible for a Christian worker to "*labor in vain*"? How would this plea have motivated the Galatians to respond to Paul's appeals?
- 2) Why had the Galatian believers turned against Paul in some sense and were now treating him differently than they had previously? How does Paul show us a good example in terms of how to deal with conflict and controversy within the local church?
- 3) How is the concept of *Tough Love* shown in how Paul dearly expresses his love and affection and yet strongly expresses his opposition to the error of the Judaizers?
- 4) What type of "*bodily illness*" might have made Paul seem so contemptible and loathsome to the Galatians? Do we ever miss the impact in our heart of the message that God is trying to communicate because we allow some of the external oddities of the messenger to distract us?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Barclay: "He calls the elementary things, the religion based on law, *weak and poverty-stricken*. (i) It is *weak* because it is helpless. It can define sin; it can convict a man of sin; but it can neither find for him forgiveness for past sin nor strength to conquer future sin. (ii) It is *poverty-stricken* in comparison with the splendour of grace. By its very nature the law can deal with only one situation. For every fresh situation man needs a fresh law; but the wonder of grace is that it is *poikilos*, which means *variegated, many-coloured*. That is to say, there is no possible situation in life which grace cannot match; it is sufficient for all things."

Swindoll: "The Galatians turned from treating Paul like an angel to looking on him as an enemy. Who changed? Not Paul – his message and method remained the same. But when he confronted the Galatians with their break from the true gospel, they turned on him, becoming defensive and spiteful. Christian unity was threatened because Paul had spoken the truth. How ironic! Yet the same problem arises today. Churches split, friendships shatter, pastors resign . . . frequently because someone has dared to tell the truth. It doesn't have to be this way. Truth can heal our relationships if we will take off our pride and clothe ourselves with humility, compassion, and tact. This approach will

not ensure that conflicts will disappear, but it will bring honor to God and help facilitate reconciliation.”

Cambell: Re vs. 12 -- "He wants them to thoroughly understand that he holds '*nothing*' (*ouden*) against them; they have no reason to feel ashamed of the way they have treated him in the past; and there is no reason they should feel that there are any barriers hindering them from becoming like he is. This is a good example of Paul's desire to remove all psychological hindrances that might keep others from obeying the Gospel."

McKnight: Re vv.8-11 -- "What is revolutionary here is that Paul considers '*moving into Judaism*' as nothing other than a reversion to '*paganism*,' to '*non-gods*' (cf. Gal. 1:6). He asks, '*Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?*' Their move from idolatry to Christianity and now to Judaism is for Paul no different than a venture back into '*idolatry*' or '*paganism*.'"

Piper: "So the Judaizers -- these rigorous, moral monotheists out of Jerusalem -- must have been thunderstruck to hear Paul say to the Galatians: if you begin to use the Jewish law to show God the merit of your virtue you come under the sway of demons and are no better off than in your former idolatry. In other words, Paul has uncovered for us a typical demonic scheme which is just as prevalent in the religions of the twentieth century as it was in Paul's day. It is clean, it is moral, it is religious and it is hellish."

MacArthur: Re vv. 12-20 -- "But the apostle's approach changes dramatically in verse 12 of chapter 4. His anger at the Judaizers subsides, and he moves from the purely doctrinal to the more personal. In fact, verses 12-20 are the stoniest words of personal affection Paul uses in any of his letters. He does not so much preach or teach as simply pour out his heart in personal exhortation. He says, in effect, 'I cared about you more than I can say. I love you dearly just as you have loved me dearly. Please listen to what I'm saying, because it's so vitally essential.'"

Hendriksen: Re vv. 12-20 -- "It is characteristic of Paul, the tactful shepherd of souls, the warm-hearted master-psychologist, that his rather sharp reproof (verses 8-11) is followed immediately by tender, urgent, intensely personal appeal. This paragraph is one of the most gripping in all of Paul's epistles. The apostle implores and agonizes, because he cannot endure the thought that those whom he addresses and who at one time had treated him with such sympathetic consideration and had accepted his gospel with such enthusiasm would now continue to wander farther and farther away from home. Hence, lovingly, as a parent speaking to children ..."

Piper: " So the answer to the question, How is Christ formed in your life? is: by your faith.

It's really quite simple: the Son of God comes and shapes us from within if we rely on him to come and shape us. The Son takes shape in those who abandon themselves to him. Christ forms himself in the lives of those who will let go of all the forms of life in which they have shaped on their own. Christ takes shape in a life that is willing to

become putty in God's hands. Christ presses the shape of his own face into the clay of our soul when we cease to be hard and resistant, and when we take our own amateur hands off and admit that we are not such good artists as he is.

Here we can see clearly what faith is. Faith is the assurance that what God will make of you, as Christ is formed in your life, is vastly to be preferred over what you can make of yourself. Faith is the confidence that the demonstration of Christ's work in your life is more wonderful than all the praise you could get for yourself by being a self-made man -- or woman. Faith is a happy resting in the all-sufficiency of what Christ did on the cross, what he is doing now in our heart and what he promises to do for us for ever."

TEXT: GALATIANS 4:21-31

TITLE: THE ARGUMENT FROM OT ALLEGORY

BIG IDEA:

**THE OT ALLEGORY OF ISHMAEL AND ISAAC PICTURES OUR FREEDOM
-- ACCOMPLISHED BY THE SPIRIT ACCORDING TO GOD'S PROMISE**

(:21) INTRODUCTION – Pay attention to the OT allegory in order to see the absurdity of your inconsistency.

“Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?”

I. (:22-27) THE KEY DISTINCTIONS IN THE OT ALLEGORY REGARDING ABRAHAM'S TWO SONS = ISHMAEL AND ISAAC

SETTING THE STAGE:

"For it is written that Abraham had two sons"

"This is allegorically speaking"

A. (:22) The Distinction in the Social Position of the Mother

1. Slave -- *"one by the bondwoman"*

2. Free -- *"one by the free woman"*

B. (:23) The Distinction in the Divine Initiative -- (Resulting in a Difference in the Faith Approach on the part of the parents)

1. Human Plotting

"But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh"

2. Divine Promise

"and the son by the free woman through the promise"

Piper: " Isaac was not born according to the flesh because his birth was the result of God's supernatural intervention in fulfillment of his own promise. Abraham had learned his lesson: the only acceptable response to God's merciful promise is trust in that promise, not works of the flesh that try, to bring down God's blessing with our efforts...

Abraham and Hagar tried to get God's promised blessing by their own strength without relying on God's supernatural enablement. That is just what happened when the law was given at Mt. Sinai. Instead of humbling themselves and trusting God for help to obey his commands Israel says confidently, *'All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do'* (Ex. 24:3; Deut. 5:27). But they did not have hearts inclined to trust in God (Heb. 4:2) or truly depend on him (Deut. 5:29). And so like Hagar and Abraham they

depended on their own resources.

Our real life is not, like Ishmael's, simply owing to the work of man. Our real life is owing to the work of God in us fulfilling his promise to make for himself a people (Gen. 12:1-3) and to put his Spirit within them (Ezek. 36:27) and write his law on their hearts (Jer. 31:33)."

C. (24-27) The Distinction in the Two Covenants -- "*these women are two covenants*"

1. The Old Covenant -- fleshly Jerusalem representing bondage to the Law

The Covenant of Law and Works

a. Fleshly Jerusalem = the Source

"one proceeding from Mount Sinai"

b. Issueing in Slavery

"bearing children who are to be slaves"

c. Identified as Hagar =

"she is Hagar"

"this present Jerusalem"

Hendriksen: "Over against '*the Jerusalem of today*' we might have expected Paul to mention '*the Jerusalem of the future.*' But he cannot very well do this, for the church, as the sum-total of all believers, here contrasted with carnal Israel, is being gathered even now, though her glorious consummation belongs, indeed, to the future. Not until Christ's return will she have been brought to completion, to shine forth in all her beauty, to the glory of God Triune."

2. The New Covenant -- spiritual Jerusalem representing freedom

The Covenant of Grace and Faith

a. Spiritual Jerusalem = the Source

"But the Jerusalem above"

b. Issueing in Freedom

"is free"

c. Identified as "*the Jerusalem above*"

3. Summary

a. (:25) The Old Covenant -- Don't regress back to this

"Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children."

b. (:26) The New Covenant -- Embrace this

"But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother."

c. (:27) The Surpassing Blessing of the New Covenant

"For it is written, 'Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear;

Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor; For more are the children of the desolate than of the one who has a husband."

II. (:28-31) THE KEY APPLICATIONS OF THE OT ALLEGORY REGARDING ABRAHAM'S TWO SONS = ISHMAEL AND ISAAC

A. (:28) Privilege of Promise

"And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise."

B. (:29) Pattern of Persecution

"But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also."

C. (:30) Priority of Purification (Putting Away the Old Vestiges of Legalism)

"But what does the Scripture say? 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son, For the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman.'"

Paul was calling for church discipline to be exercised against the false teaching Judaizers and their heretical adherents.

(:31) CONCLUSION – We have been born to freedom not to bondage.

"So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman."

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) As you reread the OT account of Ishmael and Isaac, what are the points of comparison and distinction that you see in the story? cf. Romans 15:4
If Paul uses this method of allegorical interpretation, why do we insist on a literal, grammatical, historical approach?
- 2) In what sense did Ishmael attempt to persecute Isaac? How was Paul being persecuted by the Judaizers?
- 3) What type of freedom is realized under the New Covenant and what type of bondage is Paul accusing the Judaizers of trying to inflict upon the Galatians?
- 4) How does this passage teach the need for proper church discipline when heresy is present that undermines the essence of the true gospel message? Why are churches today so lax in this area of discipline?

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Barclay: “The man who makes law the principle of his life is in the position of a slave; whereas the man who makes grace the principle of his life is free, for, as a great saint put it, the Christian’s maxim is, ‘Love God and do what you like.’ It is the power of that love, and not the constraint of law, that will keep us right; for love is always more powerful than law.”

Gromacki: “It is impossible to be born of two mothers. The heir could not be born of both Sarah and Hagar. Even so, spiritual heirs cannot be begotten out of grace and out of works at the same time. The Judaizers claimed that a person had to be saved by both faith and works of legalism. In essence, that concept is impossible. That view actually reduces to salvation by works alone.”

Swindoll: “Paul’s doctrinal case against the legalistic Judaizers is brought to a climax and a close in Galatians 4:21-31. Here he uses the Judaizers’ method of argument and exegesis to disprove their position. He opens with a question (v. 21), provides some historical background from the life of Abraham (vv. 22-23), allegorizes the history given (vv. 24-27), and, finally, applies the allegory to the Galatians’ situation (vv. 28-31).”

Swindoll: Re vs. 21 – “The legalists, and the Christians who joined them, were not forced to live according to the Law. They made that choice freely; therefore, they were responsible for it. Focusing on their decision, Paul wants to know if they have really thought it through. Have they come to grips with the whole Law—Genesis through Deuteronomy—or have they just narrowed their sights to particular aspects of the Law?”

Piper: "Full freedom Is what you have when no lack of opportunity, no lack of ability and no lack of desire prevents you from doing what will make you happiest In a thousand years. In order to be free in the fullest sense you have to have opportunity, ability and desire to do what will make you happy in a thousand years. Another way to say it would be that there are four kinds of freedom, or better, four stages of freedom on the way to the full freedom all of us long for: the freedom of opportunity to do what we can, the freedom of ability to do what we desire and the freedom of desire to do what will bring us unending joy...

In order to be fully free it is not enough to have opportunity, ability and desire to act. The acts you desire and perform have to lead to life indeed, eternal life not destruction."

Hendriksen: "The chapter closes with a reminder--in the form of an allegory--that those who hear the law should take it to heart. When the Judaizers pride themselves in the fact that they are '*sons of Abraham*,' and the Galatians are influenced by this boast, let it be remembered that Abraham had two sons: one by the slave-woman, the other by the free-woman. Slavish law-observance, as if this were the pathway to salvation, makes one similar to Ishmael, slave-son of a slave-woman (Hagar). On the contrary, the exercise of one's freedom in Christ, basing one's trust in him alone, makes one a true

son of Abraham, similar to the free-born son Isaac, born to the free-woman, Sarah."

MacArthur: "The Old Covenant of law was given through Moses at Mount Sinai and required God's chosen people, the Jews, to keep all the commands He gave in conjunction with that covenant. Because the terms of the covenant were humanly impossible to keep, it produced a type of religious slaves, as it were, bound to a master from whom they could never escape. Anyone, including a Jew, who attempted to satisfy God and gain freedom from condemnation by trying to live up to that covenant in his own self-righteousness was spiritually like a child of Hagar, the bondwoman. He was a slave, struggling for a freedom he could not obtain by his own efforts..."

In one sweep Paul sets forth the common factor of divine power in behalf of Sarah, the captive Jews, and the church. The common element of all three is divine power granting freedom and fruitfulness. Everything in this trilogy is the result of regenerating grace, not human effort."

McKnight: Re persecution -- "The gospel, properly understood and persuasively presented, is offensive to sinful people. There is no getting around this. To be a follower of Christ means an inevitable conflict, and that means being offensive. We should not shirk the opportunity; it is not we who are actually being rejected (Matt. 10:40-42). Through the experience of being opposed, however, comes the confirmation that we are simply being treated the way all of our faithful brothers and sisters have been taught. Since Day One, God's people have been opposed. 'It is the same now,' wrote Paul (Gal. 4:29)."

Girdlestone: "This allegorical interpretation of Hagar would be quite unlooked for among Jewish teachers. It would never occur to them that Hagar could represent Jerusalem, and they would repel the insinuation that the children of Jerusalem were in bondage. When the Lord Jesus told them that He was prepared to set them free they had answered, '*We are Abraham's seed, and we have never been in bondage to anyone.*' They were bond-slaves without knowing it. Judaism had become legalism, and so had become a system of bondage. Where, then, was spiritual emancipation to be found? '*Jerusalem which is above is free, and is the mother of us all*' -- if we are Christians. The child of promise was the seed of Sarah, not of Hagar. The Seed was Christ; and those who are one with Christ, form the heavenly city of the saints."

TEXT: GALATIANS 5:1-12

TITLE: STAY FREE!

BIG IDEA:

STAND FIRM IN THE LIBERTY TO WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED

Gromacki: “After the Civil War a great majority of the slaves became sharecroppers. Although they were free, they did not enjoy their freedom. In some cases they were worse off than before. Under the influence of the Judaizers, the Galatians were beginning to find themselves in a similar situation. Set free by the great emancipator of the soul, Jesus Christ, they soon were acquiescing to the demands of the legalists. The apostle wanted them to take a stand, to act like free men, not like slaves.”

(:1) THESIS OF THE EPISTLE: STAND FIRM IN THE LIBERTY TO WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED

A. Our Calling – To Freedom in Christ

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free”

B. Our Commitment – Stand Fast

“therefore keep standing firm”

C. Our Caution – Avoid Legalistic Bondage

“and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery”

Why do we have to constantly be vigilant and on guard against this danger?

Piper: "If you want God's favor, there are two ways to relate to him. You can relate to him as an heir, or you can relate to him as a slave. The difference is that a slave tries to become acceptable to his master by presenting him valuable service; but the heir trusts that the inheritance of his father is his by virtue of a will that was drawn up without his earning it at all. A slave is never quite sure he has done enough to please his master and win an honorable standing in the house. A son rests in the standing he has by virtue of his birth and the covenant his father made in his will to bless his children."

I. (:2-6) FAITH IN THE LAW CANNOT BE HARMONIZED WITH FAITH IN CHRIST

A. (:2) Faith in Christ and Faith in the Law are Mutually Exclusive

“Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you.”

B. (:3) Obedience to the Law is an All or Nothing Proposition

“And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.”

- C. (:4) Faith in the Law Nullifies Faith in Christ
 - 1. The Profile
 - “you who are seeking to be justified by law”*
 - 2. The Problem
 - a. It Cuts our Union with Christ
 - “You have been severed from Christ”*
 - b. It Casts us down from our Standing in Grace
 - “you have fallen from grace”*
- D. (:5) Faith in Christ Has its Focus on the Future Realization of Righteousness
 - 1. The Power of this life in Christ
 - “For we through the Spirit”*
 - 2. The Profile of this life in Christ
 - “by faith”*
 - 3. The Prize of this life in Christ
 - “are waiting for the hope of righteousness”*

Piper: " Righteousness is a hope and not a full present reality."
Good argument against those who would teach some form of perfectionism.

- E. (:6) The Only Thing That Matters is Faith in Christ Working Through Love
 - “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.”*

II. (:7-12) STANDING FIRM REQUIRES REJECTING THE DESTRUCTIVE TEACHINGS OF THOSE OPPOSED TO THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST

- A. (:7) Remember How You Started Off So Well in the Christian Race
 - “You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?”*
- B. (:8) Contrast the Source of Your Calling with the Source of This New Teaching
 - “This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you.”*
- C. (:9) Fear the Cancerous Nature of Heresy
 - “A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.”*
- D. (:10) Validate the Confidence of the Apostle Paul
 - 1. Confident the Galatians will Stand Fast in Faith and Liberty
 - “I have confidence in you in the Lord, that you will adopt no other view”*

2. Confident in the Ultimate Demise of the False Teacher(s)

“but the one who is disturbing you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is”

E. (:11) Consider the Credentials of the Apostle Paul = His Ongoing Persecutions

“But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.”

MacArthur: "Among their other deceptions and lies, the Judaizers apparently claimed that Paul preached circumcision just as they did. Because Timothy was half Jewish, Paul had him circumcised in order to minimize criticism from Jews among whom they would minister together (Acts 16:1-3). But Paul never advocated circumcision as having any part in becoming or living as a Christian."

F. (:12) Indulge in Some Graphic Sarcasm to Drive the Point Home

“Would that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.”

Barclay: “Paul ends with a very blunt saying. Galatia was near Phrygia and the great worship of that part of the world was of Cybele. It was the practice that priests and really devout worshippers of Cybele mutilated themselves by castration. Paul says, ‘If you go on in this way, of which circumcision is the beginning, you might as well end up by castrating yourselves like these heathen priests.’ It is a grim illustration at which a polite society raises its eyebrows, but it would be intensely real to the Galatians who knew all about the priests of Cybele.”

(:13a) TRANSITION

“For you were called to freedom”

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Does this passage teach that a believer can lose his salvation as he falls back into some form of legalistic bondage? How do you deal with passages like verse 4?
- 2) The Judaizers were boasting in their adherence to the OT law as represented by their obedience to the rite of circumcision. Are we boasting in anything but the cross of Christ?
- 3) What are some of the ways that walking in the flesh instead of in the Spirit evidence themselves in your life? What type of legalistic practices have some appeal to you?
- 4) Do a study of the topic of "freedom" in Paul's epistles. In what different senses does he use this term and how does he develop this important topic? How tolerant are we of the freedom that other Christians express in their walk with the Lord? Why do we sometimes prefer a specific code of rules to live by rather than exulting in our freedom?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Campbell: "It is important that we grasp Paul's contrast between the letter of the Law, that brought death to the offenders, and the working of the Spirit in this age of Grace, who gives life to believers (2 Cor. 3:3-6). Only ignorance, implanted in the mind by Satan, could cause the Galatians to forsake the life-giving ministry of the Spirit for the death-dealing ministry of the Law!"

Wiersbe: Outline of Chaps. 5-6 --

"1. I have been set free by Christ. I am no longer under bondage to the law (Gal. 5:1-12).

2. But I need something--Someone--to control my life from within. That Someone is the Holy Spirit (5:13-26).

3. Through the Spirit's love, I have a desire to live for others, not for self (6:1-10).

4. This life of liberty is so wonderful, I want to live it to the glory of God; for He is the One making it possible (6:11-18).

Now contrast this with the experience of the person who chooses to live under law, under the discipline of some religious leader.

1. If I obey these rules, I will become a more spiritual person. I am a great admirer of this religious leader, so I now submit myself to his system.

2. I believe I have the strength to obey and improve myself. I do what I am told, and measure up to the standards set for me.

3. I'm making progress. I don't do some of the things I used to do. Other people compliment me on my obedience and discipline. I can see that I am better than others in my fellowship. How wonderful to be so spiritual.

4. If only others were like me! God is certainly fortunate that I am His. I have a desire to share this with others so they can be as I am. Our group is growing and we have a fine reputation. Too bad other groups are not as spiritual as we are.

No matter how you look at it, legalism is an insidious, dangerous enemy. When you abandon grace for law, you always lose."

MacArthur: "Paul's primary point in this passage, as throughout the letter, is that law and grace cannot be mixed. They are totally incompatible and mutually exclusive. To mix law with grace is to obliterate grace. For a believer to start living again under the law to merit salvation is, in fact, to reject salvation by grace. Contrary to the teaching of the Judaizers, to add circumcision and other works of the law to what Christ accomplished by grace is not to raise one's spiritual level but to severely lower it. Legalism does not please God but offends Him. It does not bring a person closer to God but rather drives him away.

Applied to one who was really an unbeliever, the principle of falling from grace has to do with being exposed to the gracious truth of the gospel and then turning one's back on Christ. Such a person is an apostate. During the time of the early church many

people, both Jews and Gentiles, not only heard the gospel message but witnessed the miraculous confirming signs performed by the apostles. They became attracted to Christ and often made professions of faith in Him. Some became involved in a local church and vicariously experienced the blessings of Christian love and fellowship. They were exposed first hand to every truth and blessing of the gospel of grace but then turned away. They had '*been enlightened*,' had '*tasted of the heavenly gift*,' and had even '*been made partakers of the Holy Spirit*' by witnessing His divine ministry in the lives of believers. But they refused to stand fully with Christ by placing their trust in Him, and they fell away, losing all prospect of repentance and therefore of salvation (Heb. 6:4-5). They came to the very doorway of grace and then fell away back into their works religion.

Applied to a believer, the principle of falling from grace has to do with a person who genuinely trusts in Christ for salvation but then outwardly reverts to a life of legalism, of living under external rituals, ceremonies, and traditions that he carries out in his own strength, instead of living with a spirit of obedience to Christ."

Piper: "The cross means the end of all boasting in anything we can do. But these people were making circumcision a ground for boasting. They were treating it not as a gift of grace from God but as a debt or price paid to God. And so the way they treated circumcision it called attention to their religious ability and not to God's free grace. And nothing made Paul angrier than the religious nullification of the freedom of God's grace.

Girdlestone: "The marked feature of this life is love. Love begets love. The love of God penetrates our nature, breaks down our prejudice, melts our hard heart, awakens in us a spirit of devotion to God, and an earnest desire to be Christlike, and this leads to a spirit of tenderness towards others. Thus love is the fruit and consequently the test of life. So says St. John again and again in his First Epistle."

TEXT: GALATIANS 5:13-26

TITLE: WALK IN LOVE BY WALKING BY THE SPIRIT

BIG IDEA:

**USE FREEDOM AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO WALK IN LOVE BY WALKING IN THE SPIRIT --
(NOT AN OPPORTUNITY TO FULFILL THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH)**

(:13) THESIS

"For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."

MacArthur: "In Galatians 5:13b-15, Paul gives four purposes of God's call to the freedom of loving Him: to oppose the flesh, to serve others, to fulfill His moral law, and to avoid harming others."

I. (:14-15) WALK IN LOVE

A. (:14) The Golden Rule Fulfills God's Moral Law

"For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Piper: " 'Love your neighbor as yourself' is not a command to love yourself. It is a command to take your natural, already existing love of self and make it the measuring rod of your love for others."

B. (:15) The End Result of Hatred Will Be Mutual Destruction

"But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another."

Guthrie: "The apostle thinks of a pack of wild animals flying at each other's throats. It is a vivid representation not only of utter disorder, but also of mutual destruction. The policy enjoined by the Judaizers could lead only to dissension of the bitterest kind, for it must arouse passions which are unrestrained by the influence of love."

Hendriksen: "Bitter (=biting) words harm the biter as well as the one bitten. They tend to destroy the fellowship."

II. (:16-26) WALK BY THE SPIRIT

A. (:16-18) Walking by the Spirit is the Only Way to Experience Freedom

- Freedom from carrying out the desire of the flesh
- Freedom from the Law

1. The Simple Formula for Defeating the Flesh

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."

2. The Intense Battle Between the Flesh and the Spirit

"For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."

3. The Power for Victory and Freedom = Submitting to the Spirit

"But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law."

Piper: "The Spirit is not a leader like the pace car in the "Daytona 500." He is a leader like a locomotive on a train. We do not follow in our strength. We are led by his power. So 'walk by the Spirit' means stay hooked up to the divine source of power and go wherever he leads."

B. (:19-23) Contrast Between the Deeds of the Flesh and the Fruit of the Spirit

Wiersbe: "The contrast between works and fruit is important. A machine in a factory works, and turns out a product, but it could never manufacture fruit. Fruit must grow out of life, and in the case of the believer, it is the life of the Spirit (Gal. 5:25)."

1. Deeds of the Flesh

"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are:"

- a. *"immorality"*
- b. *"impurity"*
- c. *"sensuality"*
- d. *"idolatry"*
- e. *"sorcery"*
- f. *"enmities"*
- g. *"strife"*
- h. *"jealousy"*
- i. *"outbursts of anger"*
- j. *"disputes"*
- k. *"dissensions"*

- l. *"factions"*
- m. *"envying"*
- n. *"drunkenness"*
- o. *"carousing"*
- p. *"and things like these"*

"of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

2. Fruit of the Spirit

"But the fruit of the Spirit is:"

- a. *"love"*
- b. *"joy"*
- c. *"peace"*
- d. *"patience"*
- e. *"kindness"*
- f. *"goodness"*
- g. *"faithfulness"*
- h. *"gentleness"*
- i. *"self-control"*

"against such things there is no law."

Hogg: *"Fruit' is thus the outward expression of power working inwardly, and so in itself beyond observation, the character of the fruit giving evidence of the character of the power that produces it, Matt. 7. 16. As lust manifests itself in works, the restless and disorderly activities of the flesh, or principle of evil, in man, so the Spirit manifests His presence in His 'peaceable', Heb. 12. 11, and orderly fruit."*

C. (:24) The Reality of the Crucifixion of the Flesh

"Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

D. (:25-26) The Summary Exhortation

1. Positively -- Let's Do It!

"If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."

Piper: "How do you allow the Spirit to control you? I want to try to show you that the answer is, you allow the Spirit to control you by keeping your heart happy in God. Or to put it another way, you walk by the Spirit when your heart is resting in the promises of God. The Spirit reigns over the flesh in your life when you live by faith in the Son of God who loved you and gave himself for you and now is working everything together for your good."

2. Negatively -- Watch out for Pride

"Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another."

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How many references to the Holy Spirit can you find in the Book of Galatians? Why do you think there is such an emphasis on the Holy Spirit in this epistle? What ministries of the Holy Spirit are presented in this section?
- 2) What type of struggle do you see in your heart between your old sinful nature and the Spirit of God? How does the teaching of Romans 6-7 help you to understand the reality of this struggle?
- 3) How does Jesus Christ model for us each of the fruit of the Holy Spirit listed here? Give specific examples from the gospel accounts.
- 4) How can we keep on renewing our commitment to walk by the Spirit? What specific steps can we take to make this a reality in our life? What role does our will and activity play in all of this process?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Ridderbos: Re vs 16 -- "He must *walk* by the Spirit, that is, he must in fellowship with Christ let himself be ruled by the Spirit. The principle of the Spirit does not make human effort unnecessary, but arouses it and equips it to put all its forces into the service of the Spirit. The tense of *walk* points to a continuing condition. The life through the Spirit does not consist of a separable series of deeds, but assumes an inner conversion which is sustained by God."

Wuest: Re love vs the law -- "Thus, the individual is released from one law consisting of a set of ethical principles to which was attached blessing for obedience and punishment in the case of disobedience, a law that gave him neither the desire nor the power to obey its commands, and is brought under another law, the law of love, which is not a set of written commandments but an ethical and spiritual dynamic, produced in the heart of the yielded believer by the Holy Spirit, who gives him both the desire and the power to live a life in which the dominating principle is love, God's love, which exercises a stronger and stricter control over the heart and is far more efficient at putting out sin in the life than the legalizers think the thunders of Sinai ever were."

Wiersbe: "The Fifth Freedom -- At the close of an important speech to Congress on January 6, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt shared his vision of the kind of world he wanted to see after the war was over. He envisioned four basic freedoms enjoyed by all people: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. To some degree, these freedoms have been achieved on a wider scale than in 1941, but our world still needs another freedom, a fifth freedom. Man needs to be free from himself and the tyranny of his sinful nature.

The legalists thought they had the answer to the problem in laws and threats, but Paul has explained that no amount of legislation can change man's basic sinful nature. It is not law on the outside, but love on the inside that makes the difference. We need another power within, and that power comes from the Holy Spirit of God."

(cf. my visit to see Norman Rockwell paintings of the Four Freedoms)

McKnight: "The Galatian converts were insecure about their moral guidance and in particular about how to fight off the flesh. The Judaizers, having been taught that the law of Moses is God's moral guide, contended that it would enable the Galatian converts to fight off the flesh. Paul contends that the flesh has actually been put to death already and that the means of moral guidance has already been given: God's Spirit. For Paul, just as Jesus was the fulfillment of the law, so the Spirit is the replacement (and fulfillment) of the law as God's instrument for moral guidance. In other words, the Spirit takes the place of the law for the Christian. This is the historical context of Paul's application of the idea of freedom to the battle with the flesh."

Swindoll: "Paul holds up a warning sign when he tells us *'that those who practice such [fleshly] things shall not inherit the kingdom of God'* (v. 21b). This verse sounds as if believers can lose their salvation, but it means nothing of the sort. The interpretive key lies in the tense of the Greek term translated *practice*. The tense is present, indicating a habitual continuation in fleshly sins rather than an isolated lapse. Paul's point is that continual trafficking in sin is evidence of a lack of spiritual life, whereas occasional lapses into sin are a sign of carnality in the saved."

MacArthur: "Among other things, walking implies progress, going from where one is to where he ought to be. As a believer submits to the Spirit's control, he moves forward in his spiritual life. Step by step the Spirit moves him from where he is toward where God wants him to be. So while it is the Spirit who is the source of all holy living, it is the believer who is commanded to walk. This is the apparent paradox of the divine and

human that is seen in salvation (John 6:35-40), in Scripture inspiration (cf. 1 John 1:1-3 with 2 Pet. 1:19-21), in eternal security (cf. Rom. 8:31-39 with Col. 1:21-23), and even in ministry (Col. 1:28-29).

In emphasizing the central work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life, some Christians have lost the tension between the human and the divine and have taught the idea suggested in such popular expressions as 'Let go and let God' and 'the surrendered life.' Rightly used, such expressions can be helpful. If they are understood to mean letting go of one's own resources and self-will and surrendering to God's truth and power, the idea is scriptural. But if, as is often the case, they are used to teach the idea that Christian living is little more than passive submission and yieldedness to God, they are contrary to all the militant terms and commands for great effort and commitment that pervade the New Testament (see, e.g., 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Heb. 12:1-3)."

Hendriksen: "What then does the *leading of the Spirit* -- to change from the passive to the active voice, for the sake of the definition -- actually mean? It means sanctification. It is that constant, effective, and beneficent influence which the Holy Spirit exercises within the hearts of God's children whereby they are being directed and enabled more and more to crush the power of indwelling sin and to walk in the way of God's commandments, freely and cheerfully."

Piper: "Because love is motivated by the joy of sharing our fullness, but the works of the flesh are motivated by the desire to fill our emptiness. The meaning of 'flesh' in the book of Galatians is not the physical part of man, but man's ego which feels a deep emptiness and uses the means within its own power to fill that emptiness. If it is religious it may use law; if it is irreligious it may use booze. But one thing is sure: the flesh is not free. It is enslaved to one futile desire after another in its effort to fill an emptiness which only Christ can fill. So when Paul says in verse 13, '*Don't use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh,*' he means, don't surrender the freedom that you have in the all-satisfying Christ to return to the unsatisfying desires for mere physical pleasures or self-exaltation."

So works of the flesh are motivated by a desire to fill our emptiness. But love is very different -- it is motivated by the joy of sharing our fullness. '*Love does not seek its own*' (1 Cor. 13:5). When we love we are not enslaved to use things or people to fill our emptiness. Love is the overflow of our fullness. Therefore, love is the only behavior that we can do in freedom. When God frees us from guilt and fear and greed and fills us with his all-satisfying presence, the only motive left is the joy of sharing our fullness. When God fills the emptiness of our heart with forgiveness and help and guidance and hope, he frees us from the bondage to accumulate things and manipulate people. People who devote large hunks of their life to surrounding themselves with the comforts of this world testify that God has not filled the void of their heart to overflowing. When God is our portion and we are truly free then we will serve one another through love. Freedom flows forth in love just as surely as a bubbling spring flows forth in a mountain stream."

Morgan: Sermon Notes on vv. 16-26 --
" INTRODUCTION:

The Christian is totally dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit to live a Christian life.

I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WALK IN THE SPIRIT?

Illustration of a girl who had to depend on her mother to enable her to walk because of physical problems:

- 1) she needed her mother's presence
- 2) her mother's help
- 3) she yielded to her mother's control (rather than fighting it or rejecting it)
- 4) she trusted in her mother's keeping

Application

- 1) We need to count on the presence of the Holy Spirit in us -- 4:6; 1 Cor. 6:19-20
- 2) We need to depend on the Spirit's help (as the Comforter, the Strengthener, the Helper) Why do you think the Lord sent the Holy Spirit to us?
- 3) We need to yield to the Spirit's control -- the Spirit will control that which we turn over to Him. Responding to the truth as the Spirit reveals it to us.
- 4) Trust in His working in us.

II. WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED RESULTS?

A. Victory over the flesh (5:16) -- over the old sinful nature, and its expression
the flesh constantly lusts -- has desires it wants fulfilled;
creates a constant conflict in the Christian life (:17)

2 possible interpretations of this verse:

- 1) Rom. 7:17-24 -- the principle (force) of sin in our nature
- 2) the work of the Spirit of God keeps you from the things you would naturally desire to do

How is this victory over the flesh applied?

- 1) Spirit of God applies the truth of our identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (5:24)
- 2) By the very nature that I cannot do 2 things at once

B. Christian Character is Produced

the fruit of the Holy Spirit; the production of the Christ-like life;
these are both inner characteristics and outer conduct -- 3 groups of 3

Quote from **Andrew Murray**:

Paul wants to teach the Galatians (and us) how the Spirit, and the Spirit alone, is the power of the Christian life, and how this cannot be except as the flesh is utterly and entirely set aside. So in the midst of his teaching about the walk in the Spirit he writes (5:24), *'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts.'* Here is the only way in which deliverance from the flesh is to be found."

TEXT: GALATIANS 6:1-10

TITLE: DO GOOD – CLOSING PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS

BIG IDEA:

2 PRACTICAL WAYS TO WALK IN LOVE BY THE SPIRIT

I. (:1-5) HUMBLY HELP YOUR BROTHER IN NEED

A. (:1) Gently Restore a Brother Whom You Find Sinning

1. The Responsibility = Applies to all believers -- not just the leaders
"Brethren" -- Don't try to pass this responsibility off to someone else.
This is a family responsibility that requires the loving network of family relationships.

2. The Occasion = Sin that is evident to you
"even if a man is caught in any trespass"
Not saying that we are out spying on people trying to catch them.

3. The Qualification to Help
"you who are spiritual"
Those who are walking in the Spirit, led by the Spirit, controlled by the Spirit, evidencing the fruit of the Spirit -- all of which will be needed for this interaction to be successful.

If you find yourself in some other less desirable state, the answer is not to forget about your responsibility to your brother, but rather to first address your own relationship issues and then in a renewed spirit to come alongside and help your brother.

4. The Mission
"restore such a one"
Not out to rebuke them and judge them critically; the mission is restorative.

straighten things out, set a broken bone, mend the nets
skill, firmness, gentleness needed for this work

5. The Attitude
"in a spirit of gentleness"
Not only important what we say and do, but how we say and do it. What is our tone and attitude, etc.

6. The Humility
"each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted"

- B. (:2) Lovingly Help Bear the Burden of a Brother Who is Weighed Down
"Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ."

Look at both:

- the command of Christ
- the example of Christ

Wiersbe: "There is no contradiction between verses 2 and 5, because two different Greek words for burden are used. In verse 2 it is a word meaning 'a heavy burden,' while in verse 5 it describes 'a soldier's pack.' We should help each other bear the heavy burdens of life, but there are personal responsibilities that each man must bear for himself."

Piper: "We should probably define a burden then as anything that threatens to crush the joy of our faith --whether a tragedy that threatens to make us doubt God's goodness or a sin that threatens to drag us into guilt and judgment."

- C. (:3-5) Balancing Perspective: Humbly Take Responsibility for Your Own Load

1. (:3) Watch out for Pride

"For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself."

2. (:4) No Place for Competition -- Don't compare Yourself to Others

"But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another."

Barclay: "He goes on to rebuke conceit and gives a recipe whereby it may well be avoided. We are to compare our achievement not with the work of our neighbours but with what our best would have been. When we do that, there can never be any cause for conceit."

3. (:5) Bear Your Own Load

"For each one shall bear his own load."

II. (:6-10) CONSISTENTLY KEEP ON GIVING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OTHERS

- A. (:6) Priority of Mutual Sharing with Your Spiritual Teacher

"And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches."

Question of whether or not this passage is talking about material and financial support for those who are ministering the Word of God to you. It is definitely talking about making sure that you are not just a "taker" but also a "giver" as you have opportunity.

Wiersbe: "But we must realize the spiritual principle that lies behind this precept. God does not command believers to give simply that pastors and teachers (and missionaries, Phil. 4:10-19) might have their material needs met, but that the givers might get a greater blessing (Gal. 6:7-8)."

MacArthur: "Good things could include material goods, but that does not seem to be the sense here... Paul is talking about mutuality, not of one party serving or providing for the other but of both parties sharing together. The one who is taught the word and the one who teaches have a common fellowship and should share all good things together."

B. (:7-9) Inescapable, Fundamental Principle of Sowing and Reaping

1. Validity of the Principle

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked."

2. Statement of the Principle

"for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."

3. 2 Contrasting Applications of the Principle

a. Negative Example

"For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption"

b. Positive Example

"but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life"

4. Need for Perseverance

"And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary."

C. (:10) Urgency of Doing Good Whenever We Can and To Whomever We can

"So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) To whom are most of the cautions addressed in this situation?? To the erring brother or to the one coming alongside to help?? Why do you think this is? Why do we

see so little in depth involvement of believers in each other's life? Does this passage say anything about the advisability of using non-Christian psychiatrists to try to solve moral and spiritual problems?

2) Why do we try to build ourselves up by pulling others down and comparing ourselves with others? What type of spiritual satisfaction and fulfillment should we find in examining our own work before the Lord? Are we satisfied when we have done the best for the Lord that we can?

3) What other passages have bearing on our need to adequately support those who labor full-time in the gospel ministry -- especially those who have spiritually benefited us?

4) How does Paul present the proper balance in this passage between mutual accountability and personal responsibility?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Wiersbe: "The legalist is not interested in bearing burdens. Instead, he adds to the burdens of others (Acts 15:10). This was one of the sins of the Pharisees in Jesus' day ... (Matt. 23:4). The legalist is always harder on other people than he is on himself, but the Spirit-led Christian demands more of himself than he does of others that he might be able to help others...

Instead of trying to restore the erring brother, the legalist will condemn him and then use the brother to make himself look good. This is what the Pharisee did in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:9-14)... The legalist rejoices when a brother falls, and often gives the matter wide publicity, because then he can boast about his own goodness and how much better his group is than the group to which the fallen brother belongs."

Piper: "The main point of Gal. 6:1-5 is given in a general way in verse 2 and a specific way in verse 1. Verse 2: '*Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.*' If a Christian brother or sister is weighed down or menaced by some burden or threat, be alert to that and quickly do something to help. Don't let them be crushed. Don't let them be destroyed. Don't be like the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus said, 'They bind heavy burdens hard to bear and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger' (Mt. 23:4). Don't increase burdens. Make them lighter for people. Some of you wonder what you are supposed to do with your life. Here is a vocation that will bring you more satisfaction than if you became a millionaire ten times over: Develop the extraordinary skill for detecting the burdens of others and devote yourself daily to making them lighter.

In this way you fulfill the law of Christ (6:2). That's an odd phrase in a book that says (5:18): '*If you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.*' And (3:13): '*Christ*

redeemed us from the curse of the law.' Have we been freed from the curse and burden of the Mosaic law just to be burdened down with a more radical law of Christ? No. The difference is that Moses gave us a law but could not change our hearts so that we would freely obey. Our pride and rebellion was not conquered by Moses. But when Christ summons us to obey his law of love he offers us himself to slay the dragon of our pride, change our hearts, empower us by his Spirit and fulfill his law. That is why, even though Christ's law is more radical than the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, he can say, *'Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light'* (Mt. 11:28-30). The law of Christ is not easy because it's greasy, or permissive. It is easy because when we are weak he is strong. It's easy because he produces the fruit of love: *'I am crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me...'*

Gromacki: Re sowing and reaping -- "This basic principle has three obvious aspects. *First*, like begets like. Righteousness is not produced by the sowing of sin. *Second*, the more one sows, the more one reaps. The apostle explained: *'He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully'* (II Cor. 9:6). *Third*, one reaps more than what he sows. One seed can produce many fruits. Hosea charged that the who have sown the wind will reap the whirlwind (Hosea 8:7). The effects of sin are greater than the sin itself."

Swindoll: "None of us are totally self-reliant. At times, life depresses us and temptation threatens to crush us. Our knees begin to buckle under the oppressive weight of our loads. During these struggles we need other believers to come alongside to help share our burden. Conversely, when we see fellow Christians wavering under the strain of their loads, we need to come to their aid and help shoulder the weight."

McKnight: "The judgment of God, then, is a motivational force for the Christian. Someday we shall stand, each of us, before God. That realization makes us different and changes our lives, or it ought to... we must each give an account and *'the one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life'* (v. 8). Let us not garble this demand of God on our lives by minimizing the judgment; behind the judgment stands a holy and loving God who will always act in accordance with his love and his holiness. Judgment is inevitable for such a God."

Hendriksen: "Well-doing requires continued effort, constant toil; but human nature, being fond of ease, lacks staying-power, is easily discouraged. This is especially true when results are not always apparent at once, when those who should help refuse to cooperate, and when no reward seems ever to be coming our way. It is entirely possible that it was especially this last thought--namely, the apparent delay with respect to the fulfilment of the promise regarding Christ's return to reward his servants--that troubled the Galatians."

TEXT: GALATIANS 6:11-18

TITLE: CLOSING SUMMARY -- THE BRANDMARKS OF FREEDOM

BIG IDEA:

BOAST ONLY IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST AND THE CORRESPONDING SCARS OF IDENTIFICATION WITH THE CROSS

(:11) **Aside: Authenticity and Importance of the Epistle**

“See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.”

Guthrie: "At this point the apostle may have taken the pen from the amanuensis and have added the concluding remarks in his own handwriting. If so, he felt it to be necessary to draw special attention to this, no doubt because the change of script would have been noticed only by the reader when the epistle was read aloud, and even he might well have overlooked the significance of the change."

I. (:12-13) LEGALISTS SHUN THE PERSECUTION ASSOCIATED WITH THE CROSS OF CHRIST

A. Concerned with Their Worldly/Religious Reputation = Man-pleasers

“Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh”

B. Conformed to the Accepted Legalistic Rites of the Culture = Compromisers

“try to compel you to be circumcised”

C. Concealed from Persecution for the Cross of Christ = Cowards

“simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ”

Gromacki: "If the Judaizers had disavowed the necessity of circumcision, they would have been ostracized by the Jewish communities. They would have been excommunicated from the synagogues, exploited financially, and probably harmed physically. The Judaizers knew that, thus they were afraid to take a stand for justification by faith alone. They were more closely identified with the Pharisees and the priests than they were with the apostles."

D. Confused about Their Own Obedience to the Law = Hypocrites

“For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves”

E. Conceited because They Have Been Successful in Attracting a Following = Selfishly Ambitious

“but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh”

Gromacki: "The Judaizers were a bossy bunch. They attempted to impose legalism on the Galatians. They wanted to make converts."

II. (:14-16) TRUE ISRAEL BOASTS ONLY IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST AND FOCUSES ONLY ON THE NEW CREATION =THE ONLY 2 THINGS THAT REALLY MATTER

A. (:14) The Cross of Christ Means Everything = Objective Focal Point

1. It is the only source for boasting

"But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"

2. It has served as the Instrument of Death to the World in my life

"through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world"

B. (:15) New Life -- Not Dead Flesh – Should be the Subjective Focal Point

"For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation."

C. (:16) The Blessing of God Falls Upon All Who Boast Only in the Cross

"And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God."

(:17) Validation of the Apostle's Spirituality = The Scars of Persecution (from Identification with the Cross of Christ)

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

(:18) CLOSING BENEDICTION

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

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) In what practical ways do we truly *make our boast in the cross*, despite any hostility or opposition or persecution. Do we stay focused on the simplicity of the gospel or does our Christian testimony get diluted into too many side issues?

2) What do we do just to gain the praise of men... just to *"make a good showing in the flesh"*? How concerned are we with how others evaluate us? How secure are we in living simply to be well-pleasing to our Lord and Savior?

3) What is there in the world system -- with its wealth and material possessions and variety of entertainment -- that still holds enough of an attraction for us to distract us from living for Christ? Have we experienced this same *crucifixion to the world* that the Apostle Paul talks about?

4) Do we bear any *brandmarks of persecution* for our identification with the Cross of Christ? Why do we feel that others should consider our testimony to be authentic?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Piper: "When all is said and done and the pen is in his own hand the two things he wants to warn us against most are these: the fear of human opposition and the love of human praise.

Why are these so dangerous? Because if your mindset is governed by the fear of being rejected and the love of being praised you cannot embrace Christ crucified. Legalists have to substitute morality for the cross of Christ because the cross puts an end to all pride and lays you open to persecution. But according to these two verses they want to avoid persecution and they are proud of their religious zeal. And so they reject the cross. The cross of Christ is a great stumbling block for people who do not have the grace to humble themselves before God and man."

Holwick: "First Century had even greater problems with cross than us.

1) Polite Roman society would never mention the word '*cross*.'

a) Instrument not just of death, but torture.

b) Citizens could not be crucified - reason Paul beheaded.

2) Jews had further stumbling block that a crucified person is cursed by God, according to OT."

Barclay: "Often a master branded his slaves with a mark that showed them to be his. Most likely what Paul means is that the scars of the things he had suffered for Christ are the brands which show him to be Christ's slave. In the end it is not his apostolic authority that he uses as a basis of appeal; it is the wounds he sustained for Christ's sake."

McKnight: "Paul's conclusion to his letter to the Galatians does not contain the greetings, request for prayer, or doxology section that are often found in his other letters. Furthermore, his emphasis here is the 'Concluding Summary.' In no other Pauline letter do we find such an emphasis... one final time he evaluates the issue of the Judaizers (vv. 12-17). This conclusion brings everything to a head. What confronts us here is Paul's adamant opposition to the nationalism of the Judaizers and their cultural imperialism. He is set against any presentation of the gospel that does not let surrender to Christ and life in the Spirit have their full sway. All that matter now, after Christ and the Spirit, is the '*new creation*.'..

Paul finds four problems with the Judaizers: (1) Their method is force (v.12a); (2) their motive is fear (v. 12b); (3) their consistency is flawed (v. 13a); and (4) their goal is to flaunt (v. 13b). He then evaluates himself by (1) revealing his goal (v. 14), (2) reiterating his perspective on nationalism (vv. 15-16), (3) and declaring his justification

for being right: he has been persecuted (v. 17)."

Ridderbos: Re the Benediction -- "The grace represents the summary and the presupposition of all that Christ gives. The notion of the unearned, the undeserved, is contained in it. And also the fulness of this good, this salvation, now and in eternity. Once more he mentions all the names of the Lord. They emphasize His glory, His saving significance, and His divien commission, respectively."

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