

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

Galatians

Thoughts come from a wide variety of sources. Some from messages I have heard from individuals, some from assembly Bible studies, some from home life, and some from books I have read. The Holy Spirit is the Teacher who makes them real to me.

- "The Epistle to the Galatians." by C.F. Hogg and W.E. Vine. Scripture Book Company
- "Meditations on Galatians." by G.C. Willis. Christian Book Room

Galatians 1:1-5

THIS IS SERIOUS

Paul had been ill on his first missionary journey, and perhaps that was the reason he had stayed in Galatia for quite some time. During that time the Gospel was preached in Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium and souls had been saved. New assemblies of Christians had been gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The theme of the preaching was focused on "Christ and Him crucified." Paul was looked at then as a messenger from heaven. Those who were saved poured out their affection on him. Lois and Eunice had come to faith in Christ then, and after, Timothy, Eunice's son also became a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Her husband apparently was not saved, at least at that time. The Gospel in that area which we call Turkey today, was liberating as salvation by grace alone was preached. But something had happened since the beginning that dropped like a cloud over the whole work.

It may have been the temperament of the people who liked novelty and change and were easily influenced, but for some reason, after Paul and those with him moved on to other places taking the Gospel; the Galatian believers fell for the teaching of legalists who moved in on the work. They taught that law-keeping was necessary as an addition to the work of grace Christ did for us when He gave Himself for our sins on the cross. So, Paul wrote this letter to be circulated among those assemblies. He began with a cool introduction, different from those of other epistles, that immediately goes to the crux of the problem he was going to address. They had been led astray by false teachers who preached another Gospel. His abrupt greeting emphasized the seriousness of the problem and the seriousness with which he took it. To cast a reflection of inadequacy on the sacrifice the Lord Jesus Christ made on the cross is an insult to the grace of God of the worst kind.

Under the great stress of writing to correct a fundamental wrong, Paul does not give the usual thanksgiving for the saints and their faith or their faithfulness to God. He doesn't indicate to them he is praying for them. He immediately begins to define his authority as an apostle. This had been challenged by those Judaizers who came behind him and questioned his apostleship as they inserted themselves into the work in Galatia. Their point seems to have been that Paul was not one of "the twelve." Immediately Paul declares his apostleship to be on par with other apostles in the foundation of the church, by stating the fact that it was Jesus Christ and God the Father who had designated him an apostle, not men. This is the highest possible authority. Men often seek a place among God's people who have personal ambition and perceive themselves to be leaders the people must follow. When such men seek to assert themselves and usurp authority in an assembly, take time to review their past. How has God used them in His work? What credibility do they have in spiritual things? What do they have as proof of their leadership qualifications? Where are their spiritual children or those whose lives have been affected for good by their mentoring? There is an ordination of God today that is obvious. The Holy Spirit raises up "faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Their faithfulness is what precedes their teaching, not the other way around.

A person's character does not come as a result of what they do, but of who they are. If someone comes among us and seems to have a lot of answers to every problem, be careful. Those we know by reputation of living among us or are known by those whose advice we have learned to trust, have a credibility outside of themselves. The skill gained by education is an asset to their knowledge perhaps, but not to their character. The way they use their training is what we watch to see if God has raised them up, or if they are seeking to exalt themselves or have other people follow them. Humility is still an important character trait for those who lead, but are not "lords over God's people."

Paul's authority came from Divine Persons, the highest Source, and those with him were "brethren." They were united with him in fellowship and were working with him in labors in the Gospel. They were not like those who had come into Galatia and taken advantage of the Celtic nature of the Gauls who lived there, who had a curious desire to learn new things rather than a careful concern about things they heard. All Christians are brethren it is true. But there are also false brethren. They have another agenda, another motive behind their actions. Some want to exalt themselves. They want to be leaders for the satisfaction they get from being able to control other people. There are people who want financial support and prey on the generosity of gracious Christians who are willing to support the work of God with their finances. There are also those

who are sincere in their beliefs and teaching but are sincerely wrong. They are attracted to teaching that has "do's and don'ts" as laws. They want laws to go by so they do not have to study the scriptures themselves. They want page and paragraph numbers and brief concise statements on which to base their living. They do not want to take the time nor use the prayerful and intellectual effort required to compare scripture with scripture and get the picture of truth God intends us to see. To them, the Bible is only a book of guidelines, not the living words of the Living God to us. And then there are those who are motivated by Satan to destroy the work of God. Deceit, doubts, division, and undermining of those who brought the Gospel are used to bring down a work of God that has made inroads into Satan's territory.

Paul's address of grace and peace indicates that his message is not so much to the local churches but to the individuals who make up these "called out" groups of believers. The serious issue he is going to deal with is not the maintaining of assemblies in the way God intended, but the more fundamental one: "How is a person saved?" At the beginning of his letter, he identified his authority which came from Jesus Christ and God the Father. Now he identified the source of grace and peace as "God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ." These things do not come from Paul. Certainly, they do not come from those who came among them sowing confusion and preaching "another Gospel." To both the Gentiles (grace - Charis, is a Greek greeting) and to the Jews (peace - Shalom, is a Jewish greeting) who gathered in the assemblies in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is one common gathering center - God Himself, in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are not like other gathered groups when we gather to Him alone. It isn't up to us what we do or preach, or teach. Everything we do is under divine authority. As individual believers, our common interest is in, and our allegiance to, the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what brings us together in local fellowship groups, not the other way around.

The fundamental truth that brings us together, and keeps us together, is the personal experience of the forgiveness of our sins by the death of Christ alone. "He gave Himself for our sins." That, and nothing else is the original common bond of all believers. Paul made the point of the whole epistle in that phrase. It is the Lord Jesus Christ alone who provided the full payment for our sins. All that was required, He supplied when He gave Himself. Any kind of addition to that redeeming work is an insult to divine sovereignty. God forbid that the sin-polluted works of men be added in any way to such a full and complete redemptive price that He paid. Such a thing would contaminate that which is absolute in its perfection.

In that opening statement, there is given one of the reasons why this great gift has been given. It is that individuals might be delivered from "this present evil world," the system of world control under satanic domination. If the enemy of God can get the people of God to blend in with the world, he will effectively stop the work of building the church. It starts with one or two individuals who are away from God in their souls and spirit. The study of the scripture has lost its appeal. Prayer life has taken on a repetitive form, and the gathering of saints together in worship and fellowship has become boring. They come to "get" not "give" and will begin to complain that "there is no love here. I am not comfortable here." That discontent begins to spread to others, and the attraction to be more like the religious world becomes very appealing. "Look at all the people who go there!" Music, movies, drama, and other forms of entertainment take the place of Gospel preaching, scriptural teaching, and holy worship. The Gospel message is watered down until there is no facing the problem of sin and its eternal consequences. Repentance toward God is hardly mentioned and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is reduced to a formula of words as people are told to "give your heart to Jesus."

It is God's will that there be people saved, and so the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins. It is God's will that there be a people for His name gathered out from this present evil world. To bring this about there have been local testimonies raised up to which saved people who want to follow the Lord are gathered. The common attraction is the Person of Christ as the gathering center; the Word of God as the source of instruction; the Holy Spirit as the One who presides over the activities and actions of the group. He is the Divine Instructor, the Teacher. God-given gifts are able to be used by individuals under the control of the Holy Spirit. Individuals become part of a local body of saints and enjoy the fellowship of those who are of like mind.

All of this has one goal in view - the glory of God. This was in jeopardy in the assemblies of Galatia. The same is true in assemblies today. The appeal is being made that we should be like the religious world around us. To keep that from happening the appeal goes to individual believers to go back and review what God has done for us right from the beginning of His work of grace in us. When we see what we have been given by God's grace, and the character and work of brothers and sisters who have gone before us, then we should stop and realize what we have, and what we should do with what we have been given.

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

PAUL, AN APOSTLE.

*Not of men, but by God Himself; no other authority higher than He;
A man set apart; sent from God – no man could make him an apostle be.
He was set apart from the womb when born and trained as a strict Pharisee.
But God by His grace, called him away from the law and set him free.*

*Free now, to be the man that he should. Free to serve God as best he could.
Free to learn from God Himself, free to obey with no thought for self.
Free to live to the Lord alone, free to preach the Gospel of grace alone.
Free to make truth always clear to men, free from the curse of the law instead.*

*A messenger for God, he was not his own; a bondservant for God was he.
The life he lived by God's grace alone; now an apostle to the Gentiles to be.
He had no doubt he served the living Lord; on the Damascus Road he met;
Through persecution, opposition, and strife - for Jesus, his Lord, he was set.*

“O Lord, the heart of a man who is called by God, is never satisfied with less than total occupation with the One who has called him to live for Him, with Him, through Him because Christ is our life. When this is true, every aspect of life fits the way it should. All praise to Thee, Amen.”

Galatians 1:2. *“And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:”*

THE BRETHREN.

Fellowship – others are included – all those with him are involved.
Fellowship – it is a common ground we walk on when we walk in the light.
Fellowship – it is based on the common foundation of the blood of Christ.
Fellowship – we are members one of another.
Fellowship – we are not left to struggle alone in the labor he has called us to.
Fellowship – I may not know all it means, but I know when it is here, and when it's missing.

The brethren are silent; the brethren are not named; the brethren are not called upon to make any statements – but the brethren are there. The brethren are with Paul. The brethren are supportive. The brethren are concerned about the churches too.

“O Father in heaven, never let me take the brethren for granted. These are choice people whom I am called to share my life with. I may not tell them as I should what I think about them. If I have an opportunity, give me the right words to say to those with whom we are striving together for the faith of the Gospel. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

Galatians 1:3. *“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

GRACE AND PEACE.

*Whether grace for the Greeks or peace for the Jews; it should be both for the lot of us now.
“Charis” – the gift, we must never sight of lose; and “shalom” to all men we now owe.
From God the Father, the gift He has given, to minister to His own people His truth.*

*The Lord Jesus Himself has given us those, who live in the Body now move.
As gifts in themselves to minister grace to the hearers and speakers alike.
The role these gifts fill, whether people or skills, our Father and our Savior will make.*

*Grace God now offers, and peace right along, but from grace the people had turned.
But God in His love, offers grace once again; the grace that for law they now spurned.
O foolish Galatians, do you not understand, the law you cannot hope to keep;
To break one of them is to break one and all, too late then for grace you will seek.
The Gospel was clear when it was preached in Galatia, salvation is complete without works.
Do not settle down then, for the frail works of men, to Christ on the cross you must look.*

*Now for the last time, will you take what God offers, Grace is your last only hope.
Grace came down from above, when the Savior with love, the form of a man then He took.
He became poor for our sake, that His grace we might know when His life on the cross He then gave.
So, for us now, as the Galatians back then, it's by grace alone that we are saved.
When God gives us grace, do not ignore it; this day of salvation we're in;
Is when God by His grace, to each one who calls, will receive full salvation from sin.*

"Thank You, O Father, for the grace and peace You give freely. I have tasted them and know the blessedness of this great salvation. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Galatians 1:4. *"Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."*

REASONS WHY CHRIST DIED.

"That He might bring us to God." [1 Peter 3:18]. The barrier caused by sin that separated us from God, has been removed by Christ. We are brought near who were strangers.

"That He might deliver us from this present evil world." [Galatians 1:4]. The cosmos and all its treachery is under the system organized by Satan. We are free from the curse of the law by the death of the Savior.

"That He might redeem us from all iniquity (lawlessness)." [Titus 2:14]. Our own nature deceives us and puts us in bondage. The death of Christ had paid the redemption price.

"To take away our sins." [1John 3:5]. Every act of disobedience to God's laws; every act of sin has a consequence, and He was crucified to remove the curse of the law.

"That He might destroy the works of the devil." [1John 3:8]. The devil wants worship that is reserved for the Lord. Christ restored what He took not away. He died to remove the deception, lies, and murderous designs of the devil.

"That He might be Lord." [Romans 14:9]. He has this right to be Lord of all. He made us; saved us; keeps us. He has the right of the Creator, sustaining power, reconciliation, and redemption.

"That we should live unto Christ." [2Corinthians 5:14-15]. It is not right that we should be the center of our own lives. God Himself is the center of our attraction. Christ has been sacrificed for us. We have been paid for by the blood of Christ.

"I am forever grateful to Thee, O God of my salvation, for sending the Lord Jesus Christ to make redemption possible. When I consider all He did on the cross, I must stop and thank Him for such a complete offering of Himself for a lost soul like me. Amen."

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

GAVE HIMSELF.

Sins have a way of making dark claims
On us, that is impossible to meet.
Over and over, they challenge the soul
Until our firm resolves they defeat.
But our Lord gave himself when he died on the cross
To deliver us from sins' claims that bind;
Now the world and evil have suffered great loss,
And God's grace grants freedom that's mine.

By God's Gospel of truth and unlimited grace,
Every person who is bowed down in sin -
All over the world in every place,
Can know personally deliverance by Him.
Christ on Calvary's tree bore God's wrath there for me;
Now in love that exceeds every measure -
Took sins full demand, that every person may be -
Set free to enjoy such a treasure.

“I know it was Thy will Father, that the Lord Jesus would give Himself for me. The result of being delivered from the evil world and all that means means so much to me that I cannot express my gratitude. But I can certainly thank You, Lord Jesus, for giving Thyself for me. Amen.”

Galatians 1:5. *“To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”*

GLORY FOREVER AND EVER.

The Lord is blessed - forever and ever.
God's throne is - forever and ever.
God's people shall praise Him - forever and ever.
God is our God - forever and ever.
God's mercies are - forever and ever.
God's law is - forever and ever.

God's Word is - forever and ever.
God's prophetic truth is - forever and ever.
God's promises (land of promise) are - forever and ever.
The wise and righteous shall shine as stars - forever and ever.
They walk in the Lord's name - forever and ever.
God's glory is - forever and ever.

God's throne is - forever and ever.
God's kingdom is - forever and ever.
Praise and dominion are God's - forever and ever.
The life of God; is forever and ever.
The reign of Christ will be - forever and ever.
The torments of the lost will be - forever and ever.

"The finality of each of these is so overwhelming Father, that I am lost for words to describe how great the impact of an infinite Person, with infinite character traits, and an infinite kingdom - affects this finite man. Yet in this list that goes on through endless ages, includes me in some of these. I am so very thankful that I am not among those in the last line of the list. "I am the Lord's, O joy beyond expression." Amen."

Galatians 1:6-10

DEFECTION

It is a terrible, unhappy surprise when we learn that those who seemed so glad that God in His grace saved them; turn away from the truth they once held. Even worse is when they reject not only the message but the messenger who first brought the Gospel to them. But even more disturbing is when not only the message and the messenger are rejected, but preachers say the sacrifice of Christ on the cross is not sufficient to pay the price of our sins. That would mean we sinners are able to meet the requirements of divine justice ourselves; Christ was not able. The foolish, senseless Galatians had listened to those who did not know the Gospel and were seeking to add their own "two cents worth" of law-keeping to the infinitely great price the Lord Jesus Christ paid with His life.

Paul was astounded that so soon after the Galatian believers had received him, the message he preached, and the Lord Jesus Christ as their own Savior; they had listened to, and turned to "another gospel." Not everything that is called "the gospel," is good news. "The Gospel of the Glory of the Blessed God," is very different from the false messages that teaching circumcision and law-keeping are needed to be saved. Others have a "gospel" of good works that says being sincere and doing the best you can will take you to heaven. And then there are some who have a counterfeit gospel that teaches baptism, communion, the mass, or other religious acts that make one accepted by God. None of these is good news and none is right.

The Galatians were not addressed as saints, nor faithful or holy. They were called "brethren," but that is all he could say about them. They had deserted the Lord Himself. Judaizers were trying to pervert, to change, the fundamental essence of the Gospel into something else. They were trying to turn light into darkness with another gospel. That does not mean they were taking another approach to the same message. They were preaching a message of another kind - a false message; a false gospel. Those whom the brethren in the assemblies in Galatia were paying heed to were those who were changing the whole character of the Gospel. They were removing the foundation of salvation by the grace of Christ alone. These religious practitioners are still preaching this kind of counterfeit "Christianity" today. These are not true men. They are religious professionals who make their "statements of faith" based on the vote of the majority of the people. Usually, there has been in the past some person of a dogmatic nature, who reads the Bible and puts a private interpretation on a series of verses taken out of context. They then write down their unusual thoughts and teach them to others with the same authority as the scriptures. As far as they are concerned, they are right, and a new "denomination" is formed. The commitment of those who gather under the authority of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ alone to His Person, have the scriptures of truth only as our source of information for our doctrine and conduct. What we believe and practice has the word of God to support it.

The people of Lystra had one time looked at Paul as the god, Mercury, because he was the one who preached there at the first; and Barnabas was looked at as Jupiter, both pagan gods of the Romans. Now Paul uses this as a reference to condemn any, including himself, who preach "another gospel," even angels. If he or the angels didn't preach salvation by grace alone, there was a curse on them instead of a blessing. Those who preach another gospel are really emissaries of the devil. God has saved us from this present evil world by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have been rescued from Satan's domain. Our loyalty should be to Christ and we owe our allegiance to Him. Salvation is a gift from God, not a reward for our works. Any additional requirements would deny the power of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

No wonder Paul was troubled about the effect false brethren were having on real believers. His stern words were to wake them up to the fact of the danger they were in. The truth of God was being undermined, and those assemblies were endangered by the teaching of those who were turning the saints away from sound doctrine. Salvation by the blood of Christ plus the works of men is a cheap ineffective message. Twisting the truth is harder to deal with than deliberate lies. The same biblical words are used but the meanings are different. Similar hymns are sung but the message received is very different from what the hymn-writer years before intended.

Christianity cannot be integrated into man-made religions. Open-mindedness and tolerance for everyone's opinion are deceptive and evil when it comes to adapting to the message of salvation. Religion is not a substitute for saving faith in Christ. The Old Testament has marvelous truths to be applied to us today. One has well said, "In the Old Testament the New Testament is concealed. In the New Testament, the Old Testament is revealed." We do not reject the Old Testament as of no value to us in these New Testament times. We learn through types, shadows, and illustrations what Christ is like. Judaism rejects Jesus as the Christ. Jesus is revealed as the Christ in the New Testament. The Old Testament is an inspired album of truth given to us like real photographs. Those two attitudes toward Jesus cannot be integrated in any way.

Salvation by grace alone is the foundational doctrine of the Christian Gospel. This cannot be added to or taken from the Gospel. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as one's own personal Savior cannot be compromised. We must do what God wants and take the consequences. Deceptive teachers and preachers must be rejected along with what they preach. We cannot please everybody but we must please God. It is a terrible thing to allow those who are trying to pervert the people of God to disturb and destroy the flock of God. No wonder Paul was astounded and disturbed by what was going on in the assemblies in Galatia. The gospel they heard was no Gospel at all. A so-called Christianity with something added to it is cursed.

The backslidden condition of the assemblies in Galatia made the matter of corrections so urgent, that Paul wrote the whole letter himself. He was not going to wait for a scribe to come and take his dictation. The Holy Spirit moved him as a servant of Christ to deal immediately and strongly with this false teaching. He was definitely not a servant of man.

Galatians 1:6. *"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel."*

REMOVED FROM HIM.

*No word of fellowship now appears, no "brethren" or "faithful friends."
Something terrible happened there when others came to teach;
The Galatians had turned and deserted grace;
Revolted from what Paul preached.*

*The marvel is that it happened quickly - so fast they had turned away.
How could they fall under such a bondage sore;
And under false teaching of men to sway,
In so short a space of time?*

*Like soldiers who desert and become turncoats - over to the enemy go;
So away from the good news, they no longer wanted;
To the condemnation of the law, they once bore;
They go back with conscience undaunted.*

*Back to news that is not good news, back to the imitation.
Back to the tyranny, the bonds of a broken law;
Back - under condemnation.
Ignoring the grace that they saw.*

*Another gospel, that is not good news, it is not a word that brings peace.
The true Gospel itself is by grace alone;
It is grace that brings relief.
A counterfeit cannot atone.*

"I greatly fear, O Father God, that there are some who think they are all right when they are really all wrong. Spare them by Thy great mercy to hear again the truth of God's grace and respond to it without the sin-polluted works they are trying. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Galatians 1:7. *"Which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ."*

SOME THAT DISTURB.

*They came to disturb and bring back into bonds, slaves that had been freed.
Didn't they know the Lord Himself said, "Let not your heart be troubled?"
Didn't they know true faith helps us rise above the storms of life?
Didn't they know that if our eyes are on Christ alone, we will not be disturbed?
They were trying to pervert the Gospel of Christ, but as yet had not succeeded.*

*They came to "shake their allegiance" in the Gospel of the grace of God.
Didn't they know it is a serious thing to disturb the sheep of God?
Didn't they know the sheep are to be feeding on the green pastures of God's word?
Didn't they know the law disturbs the flock but it does not feed them?
Those who disturb God's sheep will have to bear God's judgment.*

*They came to change to the opposite, the truly good news sent by God.
Didn't they know it is perverting the Gospel if we must keep the law?
Didn't they know if the law is "a rule of life" it is not good news?
Didn't they know no one can keep the law, and will perish trying?
They were perverting the Good News, by adding to it the law.*

"Righteous Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I am interceding on behalf of the Lord's people who are in danger of being put upon by the agents of the enemy. Preserve them, Father, from those who disturb Thy people and try to pervert the Gospel of Thy grace, Amen."

Galatians 1:8-9. *"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."*

ANY OTHER GOSPEL.

*The message must never change, no matter if an angel came preaching another gospel.
The curse is pronounced twice, on those that go beyond, or contrary to the Gospel.
There is a solemn responsibility on everyone that announces God's good news;*

I must never lose sight that this is God's good news, not my own thoughts or ideas.

Thousands preach the law without the least idea they are putting themselves under a terrible curse. There are those today who hold high positions that are under a curse because they preach another gospel. The wicked work in Galatia must have been done by some man of distinction because he is compared to Paul.

Christianity with anything added to the Gospel is false good news – a person who adds to it is cursed.

The Holy Spirit gives this warning in the strongest possible words – accursed.

Satan himself is changed into an angel of light – and is accursed.

If a person believes the lies of Satan – that person is accursed.

There is no good news besides or beyond the good news that God has given to us.

God's Good News stands alone. The danger had come in among them before.

The Galatians had been warned before – and had not taken warning.

“Holy Father, as I read these words, I am seriously solemnized by the fact that twice this curse was repeated. How far people can go under the wrong influence! May I never lose sight of the importance of obeying the word of God and the teaching I have received from those I trust! In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

Galatians 1:10. *“For do I now persuade me, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”*

PLEASING MEN.

All things to all men – that they will hear the Gospel and be saved:

But not able to be anything less than the servant of Christ.

False teachers' accusations of Paul seeking followers by compromise ...?

Judge for yourselves; you know the man. Is he trying to please you in this letter?

Is he trying to please men or God? You know very well he is Christ's servant.

If we seek to please men, then we are not Christ's slaves.

Paul's message now is not to please men; his eye is only on his Master.

He seeks only to please Him who has called him into liberty.

From the road to Damascus to the cities of Galatia –

He received his apostleship not from Peter, James, or any others,

But from God alone, and in God's name is able to challenge and charge.

He does not seek to please men, because he is the servant of Christ.

“O God, may I never be allowed to stoop to such a low place, as to place the interests of men above the interests and truth of God. May I be preserved from any kind of subtlety that might be perceived as seeking to please men instead of Thee my God, whom I want to serve without rival! In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

Galatians 1:11-24

DEFENSE

Times come in the lives of those who preach the Gospel when criticism is directed at them by those who have doctrinal or personal differences. It is not in the interest of self-promotion or self-pity but because of the necessity of defending the faith we preach, that we make a defense of the teaching and preaching we give. It was necessary that the Galatian believers understand that the Gospel Paul preached was a revelation from God. What they had been listening to from some others was a perverted message that was trying to combine the religion of Judaism with the reality of Christianity. The Old Testament teachings form a framework of truth upon which salvation by grace is built. The righteousness of God and His uncompromising holiness cannot be met by men. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." The law condemns us and we "are not justified by the works of the law."

The message of the Gospel Paul preached and that needs to be preached today, is that when a person is saved by God's grace, they have been made free from the curse of the law to serve our living Lord. We are free from the law and the power of sin. We are free to live a new life in Christ. We are not just a national religion such as Judaism or a national church but are identified with our Lord Jesus Christ - a Living Person. In the doctrine of the Gospel, the contrasts between law and grace are clearly defined and a Christian who lives under grace is "free from the law, O happy condition."

Paul addresses this confusion of mixing law and grace by going back over the basis of his apostleship and the authority he has to stop those troublemakers who were turning aside the people of God from the true Gospel message. To do that, he reiterated his own personal history to show that what he preached to them was a revelation from God. In doing so he told of "the grace of Christ" (v.6): "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ..."; "That He might show the exceeding riches of His grace..."; "...called unto the grace of Christ..."; "By grace, ye are saved..." Any person whom God has saved by His grace will focus the attention of his message on the Person of Christ, not on the works of men. Paul was an example of that fact.

"The Gospel of Christ" is not Christ and Judaism or some other religious form added to the work of Christ. It is "The Gospel of Jesus Christ" at the beginning. Like Paul, those who preach should "not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." Our challenge in ministry is to "fully preach the Gospel of Christ," and never "hinder the Gospel of Christ." Through us today, as with the apostles at the beginning of the church, we should declare "the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ."

Christ had been revealed to Paul on the Damascus Road and the content of the message he received was the Gospel. We are not all the same in ability and the gifts God gives to us are up to Him. He makes them suitable for the place where we live, the people to whom we will minister, and also to suit our personalities. Paul was a very zealous person and the zeal he poured into defending the national religion, now he puts into furthering the Gospel. This was the message Jews and Gentiles alike needed to hear. His complete turnaround was a result of God's grace. Conversion is not just a change of habits or occupation. It is an inward change done by the Holy Spirit at the new birth and comes from a new nature implanted that enables us to fulfill what is needed.

There was a revelation of Jesus Christ to Paul. His apostleship wasn't received by being a disciple of the twelve apostles. He met Peter three years after God saved him. The time he spent in Jerusalem was just long enough for them to get to know and love each other ("our beloved brother Paul"). The revelation of Christ never left him because, by that means, Paul was commissioned as an apostle to take the Gospel to kings, the children of Israel, and the Gentiles. His devotion to Judaism had been known by many. Now his devotion to Christ was known by many, from his extraordinary conversion experience, his being the target of concerted Jewish opposition, to his work in the Gospel. A changed life and changed attitudes toward God and men still have a great influence on people today. People expect Christians to be different from other people. Paul knew the message he had received from God and had the spiritual insight to pass it along to others.

This insight does not come as some skill we develop by taking psychology courses and adapting it with Christian words, to spiritual things. Paul had three years alone with God in Arabia where he had learned from the Master what other apostles learned from following Jesus for three years over the land of Israel. When people are alone with God, they learn what could never be taught in a school or even learned privately from another person. Paul would have learned through the Old Testament there were obvious references to the Lord Jesus Christ and the things He taught. Conversing with other believers about the scriptures and the things of God is the way we learn to know and love each other. So, there is a benefit both in being alone with God and being with other people.

God revealed Christ to others through Paul. They would have learned that Jesus is the Christ, the Living Savior. The Galatians would have learned from Paul that He alone is the one and only way to the Father. They would have heard him preach that because of the sinlessness of Jesus, we can be "made the righteousness of God in Him." Paul made the point to the Galatians who had seen him, spoken to him,

listened to his preaching, and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ because of his message, and now doubted he was an apostle, that other people did not doubt him. His authority and ministry were recognized by people of the assemblies in Judea who had never seen him, and yet they glorified God because of Paul. The proof of his apostleship was there to be seen and he said, "I am not lying." People may have proof of our testimony, but God will be the One to give them the conviction of sin and the light of life that is needed to bring faith.

There was no reason at all for those believers to question Paul's apostolic authority except they were too ready to listen to anything that came along. We need to make our Gospel message plain, but we must also warn against the false teachers. God's people have great reason to glorify God when they see the reality of the Gospel working in the lives of those who receive Christ.

Galatians 1:15,16a. *"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me..."*

PERSONAL HISTORY.

Each day of my life, there is a record kept, of the things I've done by God's grace.

It started for me, when the Gospel I heard, revealed grace is what saves.

When the apostle was called to preach to those without law, the Gospel of the grace of Christ;

It was plain to him then, as it is to us now, grace alone saves those whom will Christ trust.

Right from the beginning, when the Lord Himself, was here and was preaching to men;

The Gospel of Christ was the message to all; the truth of redemption through Him.

Paul was not ashamed of that Gospel and preached, its message fully to all.

The light of the Gospel of Christ has not changed, and those who hinder it fall.

A life lived for God, is a story to tell, servants of Christ have no reason for shame.

We are called from above, by God's infinite love; we honor our Savior's name.

May our story be true, as Paul was in his time; he served his Lord from the heart.

To be a servant of Christ; is to walk in the light, not to serve Him only in part.

The greatest thing ever that could happen to men is for God to make Himself known.

When the revelation of Christ was given to Paul, the Gospel was then fully shown

To be a work of God only; no taint of man's effort to mar this great revelation He gave.

For us today the same as with Paul, it's by grace alone we are saved.

"Father in heaven, the grace of Christ has provided such spiritual riches that I want to commit myself to the work of the Gospel as long as I am able to do it. I am Thy servant and am wanting to be ready for every good work Thou art able to trust me with, In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Galatians. 1:15-16. *"It pleased God who separated me...and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him..."*

IT PLEASED GOD.

Some things are important to God. Even though we don't know why, and may never know why it is so important, it is enough to know that it pleases Him. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him..." – it was in His plan of redemption. "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand" – God's design was perfectly and completely carried out by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why it would please Him to call me is beyond me, but it has happened – and I am so glad it did! I know it is Paul whom the verse is speaking about, but in His own way and for His own reason, He has separated me; called me; revealed His Son in me too, and sent me to preach Christ.

The Sovereignty of God is what separates us from others. His right to do what He wants with what He has created has set me apart from so many billions of people. Sanctification by God through the Gospel of His grace can only be because He chose to set His love upon me. There is nothing particularly lovable about me. It wasn't a capricious love either. He deliberately focused His loving attention on me so that He would have a person, an object that could fulfill a need He had. Our adopted grandchildren have done that in our family. They are loved as completely as those who were naturally born into our family. In each case, we chose to love them above all other children of the world.

The Showing Forth of the Son of God in His called ones is one reason for the whole sequence of divine attention. Others may hear of Him, but visible evidence to reinforce the message is seen in the lives of those who love Him. What a purifying thought! Then the Sounding Forth of the Gospel of God's Son is so essential for the evidence of God to be seen in all who need to know Him.

"O make it known Father, the glorious tones of the Gospel Bells that are ringing across the lands of the earth. O make it known to the children, that their lives may be full for Thee. Make it known to the adults in our family, that their great strength both God-given and personal will be used with a holy purpose. In the name of the Revealed Son of Thy love. Amen."

Galatians 2:1-10

REVELATION AND ACCEPTANCE

One of the most important events in church history took place when Paul, Barnabas, Titus, and some other brethren from Antioch went to Jerusalem to meet with Peter, John, James the Lord's brother, and other brothers from the church there. This was no "spur of the moment" journey. They met to deal with an ongoing difference between Jewish brethren in Jerusalem and Gentile Christians in Antioch. This was a very serious matter to the Lord, and He sent Paul there by a revelation of His divine will. It is not a light matter to God when a division among God's people looms on the horizon. Division among brethren is one of the specific things listed in scripture that God hates. The result of division, and even a divisive spirit effectively stops the work of God by side-tracking the minds of the Lord's people. Often it is something quite insignificant such as a difference of opinion between believers on some obscure matter. However, in this instance, there was a fundamental doctrine as it relates to the Gospel itself that had to be addressed.

The revelation from the Lord to Paul, directing him to go to Jerusalem, teaches us that God is involved in the life of an assembly as well as in everything we do when we seek to further the work of the Lord. There is another side to the matter in that spiritual men know when some matter has the potential to create a long-lasting problem. When that issue arises, there is no reason to wait, hoping the problem will go away. Anything that would potentially cause a split in a church needs to be dealt with so that unity among God's people can be maintained. The doctrine of leadership among assemblies of God's people is important. Not all the people of the Jerusalem and Antioch assemblies came together. There were "certain brethren" who were involved in this meeting and could represent the two sides of the matter and resolve it in a godly, scriptural way.

Jews historically had ceremonies like circumcision they practiced, and feast days they kept that were part of their past religion. When the New Testament (new covenant) came in, many of them just added New Testament teaching to Old Testament practices and the laws given on Mt. Sinai. To them, the work of Christ on the cross did not fulfill the demands of the law. They did not see that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." They did not understand and/or accept the fact that "Christ fulfilled the law and made it honorable." There are some "Christian" denominations that teach believers in Christ today that are part of Israel - sort of an add-on to those old covenant teachings. They don't understand nor accept that "the middle wall of partition" has been broken down and "one new man" is the result of the work of Christ for us. We are accepted by the Righteous God because we are "found in Him," made righteous because of the righteousness of Christ that has been given to us.

Some Pharisees were at the meeting and they insisted that Titus, a Greek, be circumcised in order to be saved. To them, all those who responded to the Gospel from the Gentiles had to become Jews. Paul stood adamantly opposed to that teaching and did not compromise one bit by having Titus circumcised. If he had acquiesced to the demand of the Pharisees, the fundamental doctrine of salvation by grace alone would have been negated. The church would have gone backward to be just another group of Jews and teaching that man's work is what makes us acceptable to God. When we gather in fellowship at the Lord's Supper, we demonstrate unity in Christ. Different nationalities, backgrounds, and cultures do not affect the fellowship we have when we come together in worship and remembrance of Christ. There is mutual acceptance because

of salvation by grace alone and a commitment to follow Christ and His word. The old covenant is no longer applicable to those God has saved.

The position people hold in the world does not give them authority to determine what biblical teaching is correct, nor are they able to dictate assembly practices based on their opinions. We do not want to allow the attempts to intimidate us by powerful men to determine what we believe and practice. Paul is telling the Galatians that this fundamental matter of salvation without works was clarified and accepted by other apostles at the Jerusalem meeting. They did not make the doctrine. They clarified what God had already made clear. The false teachers were exposed and the matter was dealt with at that time. Now those people with that opinion had come to Galatia and no one there was opposing them. James, Peter, and John clearly expressed the truth in the written words at the conclusion of the meeting. The effort to "compel" Titus to be circumcised had failed, and false brethren who were there to "spy out our liberty" in Christ Jesus were exposed for who they were.

Those men who opposed the Gospel in Jerusalem, and Galatia, at that time, were "false" as Paul described them. Such people still are today. Those are not true believers but are like traitors who want to take advantage of new believers and overthrow the freedom we have in Christ. Paul and Barnabas did not yield to those people, "No not for an hour," nor should we. The doctrine of justification by faith and our sanctification as believers by faith not works, has to be stood for and taught. Paul knew what he believed and was taught was from God. This truth did not come from those who seemed to be important, not even Peter, but he had been entrusted with the Gospel to the Gentiles by the Lord Himself.

There did not seem to be any difficulty at the end of that meeting of brethren. Those from Jerusalem gave "the right hand of fellowship" to Barnabas and Paul. Even though Paul went to one part of the great harvest field, and Peter to another, they had full fellowship with each other. Paul and Barnabas had brought assistance to the poor in Jerusalem already and it seemed to be an ongoing need at the time. Paul took aid with him to Jerusalem the last time he was there. In our freedom and liberty in Christ, certain things that to some may be demands, are considered a privilege. It is a privilege to support the poor and needy. It is a privilege to support those who are taking the Gospel to the far parts of the world. It is a privilege to make spiritual sacrifices from grateful hearts. Knowing Christ changes everything we want to do, to be according to His will; to be something of lasting value, is a worshipful act of thanksgiving and appreciation.

*That group of men came together drawn by God with good intent.
Their spirits were moved in fellowship together because it was God who sent
These men to meet and come to a fundamental and spiritual conclusion,
Before the difference of opinion, they had; among God's people created division.*

*Reasonable men who are led by God; lead by divine appointment
They have the scriptures of truth and the Holy Spirit to support their responsible commitment.
The pressure put on them by false teachers who come have behind them the desire to deceive,
But that attempt does not turn aside those whom God's word believes.*

*When potential divisions come because of man's opinion,
Take time to consider what will be the conclusion.
Some decisions will adversely affect a few.
Other's, eternal destination may be sealed by what you do.*

*To quietly talk things over as reasonable men,
Will usually solve most problems in the final end.
Carefully review together what God had first in mind.
And the Spirit-guided conclusion will not be hard to find.*

“Father, please help us in making the right decisions here. There are a lot of speculations being made about a matter that is Thy own prerogative. If I have given wrong impressions to people who are asking questions about the future of the work, I confess this wrong. Thanks for Thy gracious forgiveness. May we be able by Thy grace to wait for unmistakable guidance! In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”

Galatians 2:11-21

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

The matter of Gentile believers being free from the works of the law was faced and dealt with when brethren from Antioch and Jerusalem met and clarified in plain words that salvation is by grace alone without the law being imposed on the Gentiles. Those false teachers, those unbelievers, whom the Galatians were listening to, were going against the doctrine of God that was accepted by the apostles who were the foundation of the church. But there were Jewish people who had professed to be saved. Were they free from the law too, or did they have to keep the law to be saved because they were Jews? It is important that we understand the fact that when a person is saved, that person is a new creation in Christ Jesus. "Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

In Antioch the Jews and Gentiles ate together and had good fellowship together because now they were saved there was no difference between them. There weren't two distinct groups. They were one in Christ. Peter had come to Antioch to strengthen the work and had no problem with the unity of both Jews and Gentiles. He fit in with the work there the way it was started. But when some other men came from Jerusalem apparently sent by James, Peter changed. Rather than offend the Jews, he did not eat with the Gentile believers. To compromise fundamental truth to avoid contentions because of the opinions of some is wrong. Gracious people may choose to remain silent when they should speak. They may compromise that which is right hoping that what is wrong will quietly go away. The powers of darkness do not work that way. "Give an inch and they will take a mile."

Peter was wrong when he stopped eating with the Gentiles. He probably thought he was promoting harmony by not offending the visitors and James who sent them. It is far more important that we "do not offend these little ones." New believers will often follow those who come to visit and are dogmatic in what they say even though it is only a personal opinion. Even if a man is a leader among us and is highly esteemed, that does not mean he is always right. It would be wrong for us to follow a man who is doing what we know is wrong, no matter how highly we regard him. Peter caused a big problem by taking his meal separately from the Gentile saints, because other Jews followed his lead, even Barnabas. There may be from time to time some reason to compromise on various ideas we have or on issues that are not doctrinal. But when it comes to biblical doctrine, it is a great danger, and serious consequences can follow because of one wrong act by one influential man.

Sometimes in life, we will be called upon in one way or another to face a serious problem. We can learn a lesson as to how to handle such a situation by copying Paul in this case. He didn't write letters of complaint to other assemblies about the action Peter took. He didn't go around to various people and started to gossip about Peter behind his back. No, He did what Jesus said. He went to Peter himself. Not only that but what Peter did was done publicly so Paul rebuked him publicly to correct not only Peter but those who had followed his lead. One man with the fear of God about him, and a true commitment to the word of God, can stop a problem soon after it arises. We need a man to "stand in the breach" when matters arise that need to be quickly and scripturally dealt with. By joining with the Judaizers Peter was passing his "okay" on their doctrine. It was not likely he had thought through all the implications of his impulsive act. Really, he was supporting their claim that Christ was not sufficiently able to save sinners without them doing their part.

All of us, no matter what our religious background is, are justified alone by faith in Jesus Christ. When we believe in Him, the works of the law are recognized for what they are. They condemn us because we are not able to meet God's standard of perfect righteousness. It is strange that Peter did not grasp what he was doing for some reason. We need to remind ourselves that we are capable of making the same mistake, and even worse if we listen to men instead of listening to God. If Peter was right by separating himself from the Gentiles in the assembly because of the law, then Christ was promoting sin because He told them of the cleansing power of His death. Peter never forgot that we are "redeemed by the precious blood of Christ." God has cleansed all who as believers have put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Peter was the one who had reached out to the Gentiles at first, and now he was building up a wall to restrict the fellowship of those who have freedom in Christ. He was a transgressor.

The Galatian believers had to be reminded that the law condemned us all to death. The death sentence was passed and all of us are guilty before God. But in Christ, the guilty verdict has been nullified because its

demand has been met and God's justice fully satisfied. The sinless One was crucified for me, and in Christ, I have been crucified. The death sentence has been carried out and the law is satisfied. When Christ died, I died in Him. When He was buried, the "old man" in me was done with. When he rose from the dead, I rose from the dead and now live in this body by "faith in the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me." So now I am dead to the claims of the law and sin has no more dominion over me.

Now we are free from the guilt of our sins and from the power of sin reigning in this mortal body. A new nature has been implanted in this same body I always had. Because of the redemption that has been paid on our behalf, our life is now lived "in Christ." We now live by faith in Him who loved us. It may have seemed to a Jew like a small thing to merely refuse to eat dinner with a Gentile, but what was happening was the grace of God was being set aside for what was expedient to satisfy some men. That led to hypocrisy and a measure of deceit.

This was now happening in assemblies in Galatia and had to be stopped. Not only had they chosen law and set aside grace, but that indicated that there was no value in the death of Christ. We now live in the power of new life from God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That faith has justified us. It frustrated the grace of God when we add anything to the work of Christ. The Galatian assemblies had set aside the grace of God and chosen the law instead. Legally we have died with Christ. Relationally we are in Christ and live in Him daily. Practically we must "reckon ourselves dead with Christ" and alive to God. We now live our daily lives in the power of Christ's resurrection. This is how we are to live today and every day. We rest in this truth and live our lives in the good of this truth.

Galatians 2:16. *"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."*

THE CONFERENCE.

"The law is holy" - why then does it not make us acceptable?

It is important, isn't it? In the life of a Christian -

The law guards us against sin by giving us standards for behavior -

The law convicts us of sin, giving us the opportunity to ask for forgiveness -

The law drives us to trust in Christ because we can never keep the law.

The law cannot save us, but it has condemned us and it can guide us.

"The faith of Jesus Christ" - what does this mean?

God has provided a way of salvation that cannot be earned by law-keeping.

The law has condemned us to death for sin - "crucified with Christ" - how?

Legally: God looks at us as dead and yet living because we have been crucified with Christ.

Relationally: we have become one with Christ, and His experiences are ours. In unity with Him - when

He died, we died - to our old life.

In our daily life: we crucify the sinful desires that keep us from following Christ.

"Justified by the faith of Christ" - what does this mean? How does it work?

The focus of life is not dying but living - we have been crucified with Christ;

Therefore, we have been raised with Christ - and that means to me today -

Legally: I have been reconciled to God and am now free to grow in the likeness of Christ.

In my daily life: I have resurrection power that enables me to fight and overcome sin.

Christ lives in me, and He is my power for living and hope for the future.

As those brethren gathered at Jerusalem, they did a wise thing - they communicated.

They didn't go behind each other's backs with subtle, divisive opinions but prayed and talked and listened.

One group of men accused Paul of watering down the Gospel to fit the Gentiles.

Paul accused them of nullifying the Gospel by adding conditions to it.

The conclusion was clear: Man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ.

Because we have died to the law, it has no claim on us: we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

The conference is over - the decision is clear - the results are spelled out plainly.

Why then return to the bondage it imposed? Why go back again to what we left?

Do not frustrate the grace of God - righteousness does not come by the law.

Christ has died and has not died in vain. His death satisfied every legal claim against us.

We are free to live a new life - a life lived by the faith of the Son of God.

He loved me and gave Himself for me! "Free from the law, O happy condition!"

"O Righteous God and Father: to live in freedom and breathe the air of grace day after day is a wonder to me. I honor Thy holiness in that nothing was compromised, and I honor Thy grace in that provision to meet the need I could never meet, has been provided. I thank Thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Galatians 3:1-15

HE BELIEVED

The failure of the Galatians to remain committed to the authenticity of the Gospel of salvation by grace, stirred the soul of the apostle Paul. They had understood and received the message that we are justified by faith alone. They had stepped out from the world and recognized their union with God and their sanctification was by faith. They had been "crucified with Christ," and knew that Christ had been crucified for them. That had been plainly preached when they heard the Gospel from Paul. But now they had become fascinated by the false teaching they listened to from men they did not know. There is even today a fascination that attracts believers when a teacher comes on a television program or comes into a community where there are religious practitioners, and teaches an unusual message that bewitches people. Some will say, "I never heard anything like that before," and they will follow that person's line of reasoning instead of the scripture. Spiritual hypnotism is still being practiced today like it was in Galatia.

Paul reviews the past relating that we have not only been justified by faith, placed in union with Christ by faith but have also been set apart to God, sanctified by faith. The working of the Spirit of God was how we were convicted of our sins. It was by the Spirit we were awakened and given new life in Christ. The law did not save us - it condemned us. We did not receive the Holy Spirit by keeping the law. We began in the Spirit and now the Spirit of God is within us enabling us to grow. By the Spirit we know that we are in Christ and Christ is in us "the hope of glory." The Spirit did not dwell in Adam even in his innocence. The Spirit did not dwell in Abraham, nor did He dwell in any of those who were under the law. The Spirit came upon them to serve and obey God to accomplish a work for God.

There comes a problem for some of God's people when the excitement we had when God saved us gradually fades away and they begin to feel insecure. Because the euphoria they had when they first trusted Christ settles into a bland sameness in day-to-day living. They want that excitement again and when someone comes along and offers an explanation as to how they can "be excited" about their Christian life, they listen. Faith alone, they say, is too easy. You need extraordinary things happening to you to be a true Christian. So "faith healing," talking with words that have no meaning, and feelings of ecstasy are taught as the real evidence of divine life. They will confess they trust only in the work of Christ to save them and make them righteous before God, but after they are saved, they need the law to keep them walking with God. They believe they need to keep the law to be holy.

Paul answered the Galatians who raised that suggestion, "Are you so foolish (so senseless)?" Having begun in the Spirit are you able to reach your goal by your own efforts? They had suffered for their faith in Christ at the beginning of their Christian life. Now they were going back to where they were trusting in their law-keeping efforts. God has not given the Spirit a little bit at a time. He has poured out His Spirit abundantly and we have all the divine power of the Holy Spirit at our disposal. He is like "rivers of living water." The Holy Spirit is a Person, the One who guides us into all truth and reveals Christ to us. After convicting us of sin, righteousness and judgment to come that brings us to repentance, He gives us new life. The object of that new life is that we will love and worship God.

The principles of the law were to produce love for God and worship but those words cannot give life. They inform us, and to a measure, educate us so that we know what is right and wrong. The law gives us rules to live by with prescribed boundaries for personal, marriage, and family life. It also dictates what is needed for communities and nations to maintain order and avoid chaotic conditions, but laws do not give life. The Judaizers said Gentiles had to become Jews in order to become Christians. To them, Christianity was another Jewish sect of which the Pharisees and Sadducees were a part. Those groups depended on rules to live by.

Abraham didn't have the laws to keep to be accepted by God. He believed in God. His faith and confidence were in God and His promises. That was the basis of his righteousness. Our lifestyle or religious forms are not the basis of salvation. The law does not justify us. We who live by faith are the sons of Abraham. It is not natural birth or outward signs that make one a child of God. The principle of faith was practiced by Abraham and is practiced today when God's people, "the just, shall live by faith."

The law then, condemns us because it reveals clearly our sin and guilt. It actually brings a curse on us because we cannot be justified by it. We are not saved by the law being added to the redemption price paid by our Lord Jesus Christ. He took that curse that was on us because of sinfulness and inability so we could be justified before God. He actually was made a curse for us. The curse that was on everyone who hung on a tree, was on our Savior when He hung on the cross. "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we are healed." That was what the law demanded but could not do. That is what Christ did fully and completely.

Why then would anyone try to do what is impossible to do? What reason is there to do what has already been done? Like Abraham who lived four-hundred-thirty years before the law was given, God's expectation of us is that we live by faith. We have been saved by grace through faith. We have been justified by faith. We have been sanctified by faith. So now we are to live by faith, not the sin-stained works of human endeavor. Not by adding anything at all to a finished work. The blessing that came to Abraham by faith comes to Gentiles and Jews alike by faith. Christ has bought us with His own blood. He has bought us by paying the ransom price so that we can be free men and women who live by faith.

*There really is no explanation when those who should know better
Treat the holy things of God carelessly as if they did not matter.
It is a grievous error to imply that Christ did not do enough,
And teach that added to His work, is work to be done by us.*

*When people who are unknown to us seem to have the latest word,
Stop and take time to listen to what they say about the Lord.
Any kind of negative words that indicate we have to do our part,
And adding our little effort to his work is false right from the start.*

*Refuse to listen to those who say they have a further revelation.
What they are implying is that mankind has a part to play in its own salvation.
That is absolutely a false teaching, salvation is by faith in Christ alone.
No sin-polluted works of man can in any way for sin atone.*

The Lord Jesus went to the cross for us, hanging there He was made a curse.

To think that His suffering was not sufficient is blasphemy or worse.

A person who has been justified by faith, now also lives by faith.

The blessings that accompany those God saves are from the storehouse of His grace.

“Gracious God, my Father: my prayer today is that I will have the discernment to know when there is false teaching among Thy people. If that ever happens, give Thy servant the wisdom on how to correct that wrong, so Thy people are preserved from falling. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

Galatians 3:16-29

ONE SEED

Four hundred and thirty years before the law was given by the Lord to Moses on Mt. Sinai, God spoke to Abraham and gave him the promise that He would make of him a great nation. This wasn't because Abraham was some special, super person, but the Sovereign God knew that Abraham was willing to see and believe, by faith. When he heard God speak, he obeyed what God had said. He believed in God. He didn't have a series of laws that he followed. He didn't even have the Ten Commandments to guide and control the movements of his life. He didn't need that. He had God. What God said, Abraham acted upon. A covenant was thus formed, not to produce faith, but because faith was acted on. That is what God expects from us. The death of Jesus on the cross as the full payment for our sins, is God's provision for our salvation. God has promised to save us when we trust Christ, believing His word is the means by which we hear His voice, and we take Him at His word. This is the basis of the Gospel and the heart of Christianity. It is not faith and some other additions. Salvation has been designed, carried out, and secured by God's grace alone, and nothing changes that. There is no reason for believing we need to add anything to that divine provision.

So why did God give the law? What point is there in having rules laid down by the law if they are impossible to keep? It gives us an understanding of God's standard of behavior. It reveals the will of God as to how He expects us to live and tells us what His will is. Besides that positive side, is the negative which reveals man's sin and how we cannot achieve that standard ourselves. A wall may appear at first glance to be upright and perfectly vertical. But when a plumb line is hung beside it, the truth of the matter is seen. The law is like a plumb line. A person may have some bad habits they have become used to. They are not really able to be charged with them being wrong unless there is some authority that says it is wrong. That is what the law is. The voice of authority, and has been established on unchanging principles of divine holiness. That is the grounds for acceptable conduct.

The "one seed" was the common source of life that was given to Abraham in the form of a covenant. Believe God. The law does not have that authority. It tells us what will happen when we don't believe in God. It awakens us as to the reasons we should believe in God. That law is in the heart of every human being. The moral laws and the ceremonial laws of the Jews were given in written form. The seed of promise was made long before that telling us that faith is how one comes to God. "Without faith, it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." The law needed a mediator, and that mediator was Moses. Faith doesn't need a mediator. The work of a mediator is to bring two opposing parties together. The one seed established the fact that the basis of our covenant with God is faith. That is personal faith on my part in a living, personal, all-knowing God who is my Father.

God's grace justifies us and gives us life. The law condemns us and, by its righteous justice, kills us. It makes us realize how great our transgressions are. The law was a temporary definition of righteousness passed on through the mediation of angels and Moses. The "One Seed," our Lord Jesus Christ, has been made manifest and God's grace freely given, not because of anything we have or could do, but because of the promise of God alone. The law does not oppose the promises of God but defines the failure of men. When sin is thus defined, we are kept captive by it. Every person is under its grasp and there is nothing the law can do to free us. The law was like a guard to keep people from doing what was the common practice of the cultures around the people of God. In that sense, it was good in separating that which was of God from that which was in the world. But in order to have justice, its claims had to be met. And that is what Jesus did for us.

Now faith has a personal, real object that has been revealed to the world - a Living Savior. He is the One whose "day" Abraham saw, and "was glad" because of that promise. By faith, it was as good as already done. The salvation message, the reality of salvation through the substitution of an innocent victim was

personal to Abraham. To us, the law is our teacher, like a child trainer, to teach us that there is a principle of faith by which we live. The law teaches us morals, respect for authority, and manners that are acceptable for living in an orderly society. The "child trainer" has the right to show what is right and to punish the wrongdoer.

When a person becomes a Christian, that person is free from the law (the schoolmaster) to take their place as a free son. No longer are we limited by the constraints of the law, but now are identified by association with Christ. Our identification is not that of being of a particular nationality or religious belief. Our Identity is that of one who has been saved by God's grace through faith. Gender has nothing to do with our acceptance by God. Males and females are both equal in Christ Jesus. Women who were given a lower position in the Jewish tradition, and in most Gentile cultures, are recognized in the new covenant as equals with men, even though the public roles are different. This is not because of what we have to say about the matter but because both are "in Christ."

No longer is there placed bondage on the people of God as on immature children who do not know how to behave and need the threat of the law to keep in line with what is acceptable. A much higher motivation controls the actions of a child of God. That person is identified with Christ, and out of appreciation and love, does what is right. The one seed we got from Abraham, that of faith, guides our daily living and gives us the incentive to want to please God. As heirs of all of God's promises and blessings, our life takes on a new goal as far as the future is concerned, and also a new motivation for day-to-day living.

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

TWO TEACHERS.

The principles were right - to worship and to love;

The law bound them tight to its loveless bands.

Ceremonies even have laws to educate, drill and inform.

The schoolteacher is good - it brings us to Christ.

But it does not justify us - because it cannot.

It is words, but cannot give us life.

Laws dictated daily life - "Live according to the rules."

Life is different now - radically, culturally, and socially.

To keep unity, to keep the peace, to maintain order;

We need the teacher - the law to set and keep the boundaries.

Marriages, families, communities, and nations need the education of laws.

To inculcate into the psyche of everyone - we need the teacher.

A Person is here: alive, involved, interested, and committed - a Teacher.

The objects are the same - to worship and to love - God.

He convicts: sin, righteousness, and judgment to come - awakens us.

How do we receive Him? On the principle of the works of the law or -

On the principle of a message - telling us the truth - a message of faith?

We began by receiving the Spirit - and He brought life.

He the Spirit of truth has come - we have been adopted - have received the Spirit.

The Spirit of God's Son is in our hearts - Abba Father comes naturally to us.

He brought us life - the new birth, regeneration, born of the Spirit is real life.

And love has come - the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit.

*We are heirs of God by the Spirit - He dwells in us, and gives us assurance of life.
He has sealed us with Himself - a true Teacher who goes beyond words - Life itself.*

*We know by faith He is teaching us - we can see and know the difference within.
We know and love this Teacher - the Holy Spirit who lives in us and out of us.
He abundantly supplies as He ministers to us, schools us, and tutors us with -
Wisdom, beyond our experience; knowledge far surpassing our learning;
Faith directed to a Person - healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, interpretation.
Divine Teacher - we have received the Promise of the Spirit.*

"O Father, who sent the Son; O Lord Jesus, who sent the Spirit - I would have a learning mind and a willing heart to receive without hesitation all the teaching Thou would give to me. I am ready to hear, enable me to be willing to learn, Amen."

Galatians 4:1-7

ABBA, FATHER

Childhood for some favored people can be a very sweet time. To have a child of promise was a blessing Abraham had to grasp by the principle of faith because both he and Sarah were well past childbearing years when Isaac was born. But Abraham's promised seed came, and from the One Seed came to us the blessing of eternal life. By way of illustration, Paul sought to explain to the Galatians what they had received from God and what they were going back to when they responded to false teachers. It is always a good exercise of the soul for us to occasionally be reminded of what we were in our sins and who we are now.

In childhood, we have to be told what to do and what not to do; what is right and what is not right. Child training is a good thing for us as it clarifies the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behavior. We have to be told the same as a servant is told who seeks to please his master. The law did that for us and in that way, the purpose for which it was given has been accomplished. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." "The law is our schoolmaster..." If a child remains childlike, even though the physical growth process brings physical maturity, there is something wrong with that person. A child in a man's body is cause for concern and pity. A believer in Christ who remains in the same childish or childlike condition in relation to spiritual growth is a person we pity and wonder what spiritual malady a person is suffering.

One who is still trying to do what Christ has already done is spiritually sick. The religious world has many entrapments that can stop our growth in Christ which is expected of a normal child of God. It can start very young because man's attraction to the physical elements of the world carries over into religious activity as well. Just because a person and/or religion attaches the name of God to some form or action they choose to carry out, does not make it right. Infant baptism with god-parents taking responsibility for a child and all the ceremony that goes with that does not make it right. The confirmation process, elaborate buildings, beautiful music, and religious entertainment are still part of the world principle that attracts people. There are bonds that people choose to put on themselves and others, that appeal to our religious flesh the same as the claims that bind the ungodly who know nothing of God's grace. When we have tasted and experienced the blessings of salvation by grace through faith, how strange, how unnatural it is for a Christian to go back to the "elements of the world." That is what things were like for the Galatian believers before they heard and received the Gospel.

Deliverance from that bondage was why the "Father sent the Son." There was slavery to the law and its demands before Christ came. When a new life begins by putting our faith in Christ, a spiritual relationship is formed with God that "removes all guilt and fear, and love begets." This intimate relationship is that of Father and Son, so we don't have to be afraid of God anymore. This relationship is not formed and maintained by religious trappings that deceive us by basing our "Christian life" on feelings. Our relationship with God has been established on a personal, intimate connection made by two persons. God made His move toward us when He "sent forth His Son."

Just at the most appropriate time, Jesus came into this world. He came to "seek and to save the lost." He came "to fulfill all righteousness." He came to deliver us from this present evil world;" "to defeat the works of

the devil;" and "to bring us to God." There were many reasons behind His coming, but one of the most significant was "that we might receive the adoption of sons." The Jews had been looking for the Messiah to come, and "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." A few faithful people like Simeon and Anna and "those that looked for Him," rejoiced, but most would not accept Him by faith. They wanted a conquering Messiah. They wanted a ruler who would exalt them and free them from the bondage of Rome. The bondage of the law was not considered a bondage but a duty. God knows our limitations and does not demand from us that which is impossible but He does have the right to expect an honest evaluation of our feeble inability to please Him. On that basis, we will turn to Him for mercy and there we will find the grace we need.

The grace that led the Lord Jesus Christ to "be found in fashion as a man," was even more than condescending grace on His part. It was with the purpose of lifting us up into a family relationship with the Father and making us joint heirs with Christ. This does not only have to do with what we have been delivered from, but what we have received - "the adoption of sons." Like a servant who has been publicly identified as a son in times past, we have been delivered from the law and made sons. The Lord Jesus came as an obedient son to His Father to pay the redemption price for us so that we too could be "made sons." Through this act of the Lord Jesus, a family relationship with God has been established.

This is not done exactly in the same way as when a slave-owner would adopt a slave into his family as a son, by saying publicly before the people, "Thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee." But in the same way, a former slave took his place as a son with all the rights and privileges of sonship, so we say in return to our heavenly Father, "Thank you for making me a son. You are my Father." The former relationship is done. A new relationship between the same persons has taken place. What happens when we are saved is God puts a new nature within us. We respond with the voice of faith, "Abba Father," because the Holy Spirit has made us alive in Christ to God. It is a natural response to our gracious God to worship with gratitude and words of faith. This response is true of every believer.

But there came to the Christians in Galatia a very strange response to the teaching of false brethren. They stepped back to the bondage of law-keeping they had left. There was no logical reason for that reversal. However, an explanation may be made that after a person has been saved by grace, they become conscious of the fact they are still the same person. There are attractions that appeal to our fleshly desires. If a new believer does not immediately take steps to feed the new nature with divine things, the bring glow of faith we had when first saved fades and gradually grows dim. To fill the empty space, that lack of spiritual food leaves a void. and people look for exciting emotional experiences to take the place of unmet spiritual hunger. That is why the legalistic teaching of the Judaizers appealed to the immature Galatians. When we neglect the need of our souls, it is easy to fall into the temptation to take what others say to meet our own needs. Then a freed person entangles themselves in bondage again.

Galatians 4:6. *"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father."*

BECAUSE YE ARE SONS.

Adoption in Bible times wasn't out of pity or a desire to be a parent, but to continue an inheritance or family name. A master could say to a slave in a public place with witnesses, "Thou art my son. Today have I begotten thee." Then the slave would say, "You are my father," and the adoption process was completed – the slave was now a son.

Gal.4:5. SONSHIP:

Not a new person, but a new name and place, the position has changed from servant to son.
Family joy and responsibility now are mine; a new family name and honor to the Father I own.
There is a dignity now that is right to bear, a demeanor that is appropriate to this new Father I know.
Wherever I go and whatever I do, respect and honor, integrity and grace: as a son of the Father I show.

Rom.8:14. AN ABIDING SPIRIT:

Not now in bondage with a spirit of fear, but in this new place and the new life I now live;
Is motivated from within, by the Spirit of God who bears witness, when my spirit I yield.
As a child of God, "Abba Father" is the way I approach to God now when I pray.
As an heir of His blessings, I must expect some pain, but the Spirit abides all the way.

Rom.8:23. A SURE INHERITANCE:

This body I live in seems to be losing its power, its strength is gradually fading away.
However, of this I am sure, I am a child of God and as such have all the blessings of grace.
A slave no longer, I can never be sold, I am adopted and as a child of the King;
My hope is secured, my home is above, and my joy is to bring honor to Him.

“As I pray, O heavenly Father, I know I am heard and accepted in Christ. I find great comfort in the assurance that the adoption I have received is not some temporary situation but a permanent position where I receive all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. Amen.”

Galatians 4:7. *“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”*

NO MORE A SERVANT.

It is not an accident; it is a choice.

It is not a “spur of the moment” incident, it is planned.

It is not an act of pity, but a desire to bless and be blessed.

It is not done in haste but after careful consideration.

It is not without a purpose; the objective is able to be defined.

The initiative comes from the giver and meets the need of the receiver.

The act of grace on the part of the giver is not earned by the receiver.

The possessions of the giver, are passed on to the receiver.

The name of the giver is given to the receiver.

The spirit of the giver brings joy to the receiver.

The adopted one gives meaning to the life of the Father.

The adopted one, responds with affection.

The adopted one acts with the dignity of the new name.

The adopted one receives the inheritance as a son.

The adopted one knows who the Father is.

“This new life, O gracious Father, has more meaning than I can ever explain. But I do experience its’ blessing day by day and I know there is more to it than I can imagine. The amount of evidence that crowds around me, bearing witness to the fact that I am Yours, gives me such warmth of acceptance, that I do not fear ever being a stranger to the One who adopted me. Thank You, from the bottom of my heart. Amen.”

Galatians 4:8-31

GOING BACKWARDS

The liberating power of the Gospel had been experienced by the Galatian Christians to whom Paul was writing this letter. They worshiped idols made by men because they didn't know any better. Those idols were not gods and were of no value, but behind them were demons that made them slaves to the power of darkness. But now, they were turning back again to something that was similar. Those weak principles they had once been slaves to, Paul compares to the law. When one comes to know God, they have eternal life. This has nothing to do with the law. Of even more importance is the fact that God knows us. For one to turn their back on the One who saved us by His grace, and to put ourselves back under bondage to another weak and beggarly form of religious dogma, seems incomprehensible. When ceremonies and forms take the place of worshiping the Father in spirit and in truth; that is a major step backward into the darkness of this world. Those who teach law-keeping, sinless perfection, or "second blessing" in order to be saved, may say they have scriptural proof for that teaching. They add the things that were taught in the Old Testament to the Jews and teach they are supposed to be added to the doctrine of Christ.

Paul had labored long and hard to teach the liberty we have been brought into by the sacrifice of Christ. Now the believers were going back into another slavery. The ceremonies and days of law keeping were part of the purpose of the law to give knowledge and awareness of sin. Instead of one day, the Sabbath, being a holy day, to believers every day is a holy day. The reason the first day of the week is marked out by Christians as being different from other days of the week is on the first day of the week Christ rose from the dead. On the first day of the week, the risen Lord appeared to His own disciples. On the first day of the week, the Holy Spirit came to indwell believers in Christ. Disciples then, and now, gather to break bread in remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ and to show His death in a public gathering. We also bring the offerings that we have set aside to give to the Lord on the first day of the week. God's people came together for teaching and preaching on the first day as well. That day is not set aside for us but in scripture, it has been the day these things were carried out. So, the first day is the "lordly day;" the "Lord's Day," in which we honor Him. it is not the "Christian Sabbath" but it is the Lord's Day in which we engage in the Lord's things.

Those who have children in the faith can easily understand Paul's dismay at the defection of the saints of God when they leave what they have been taught to follow false teachers. Paul knew the truths he taught them were true to the word of God and his own personal experience. He had been in bondage to the law and had been set free from that. In great earnestness of heart, he appeals to the Galatians to think of his example when he came preaching the Gospel at first. Despite his illness, they received him and listened to him like they would an angel from heaven or even the Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes we just can't understand why some of our spiritual children leave the place to which God called them. Paul loved them as a father loves his children, and loved him. Still, they turned away to false teachers. We cannot help loving those whom God has saved by His grace, but we do not always love what they do.

When God's people lose the joy of their salvation and then they go into some kind of spiritual bondage, they lose the joy of fellowship with the Lord and His people, as well as the joy of walking in the light. There are feelings of guilt and failure instead of experiencing the humility that grace produces. The performance of law keeping takes the place of spiritual relationships with those of "like precious faith." The shortcoming we are conscious of usurps authority over our gratitude and we become overwhelmed with our failures rather than our spiritual blessings in Christ. To give up the power of the true Gospel for the vain attempts of men to please God seems so backward to what God intends. Paul was perplexed that Christ had been supplanted in the lives of the saints with the demands of the law - and it seemed to have happened quickly. When or if such an attraction come to us from those who seem to have the answers in their new teaching, we need Christ to again be formed in us. We need to get back to the words of the four Gospels and focus on Christ, who He is, and what He has done for us.

There seemed to be a hostile attitude against Paul on the part of those Galatian believers. That was probably introduced by the false teachers, or at least promoted by them. Truth faithfully taught may cause antagonism on the part of those who attack or reject the truth of God's word. Behind that kind of response is usually a motive that is neither honorable nor right. Some will reject biblical teaching because they already have an agenda of their own, which they want others to accept. Religious practitioners have the desire to put people under bondage to their "form of godliness" in order to claim power, fame, or finances - or maybe all three. A spiritual father longs to be with those he has seen saved when they go astray. It is his heart's desire to see them quickly recovered and back again in fellowship with God, and with him.

In order to explain further what was happening to them, Paul used the illustration of Sarah (freedom) and Hagar (bondage). The point he was making was not who was the father, but who was the mother. Both those of the Jewish religion and Christians were joined to the father of faith - Abraham. The character and position of the child came from the mother - the one who was in bondage, or the one who was free. There was a difference in their birth. The new birth by the Spirit of God places the new believer in the position of freedom in Christ. Ishmael was born of the flesh. Isaac's birth was a miracle by the power of God. The Lord Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." A spiritual birth gives freedom from the bondage of sin.

There are also two "Jerusalem's" mentioned in this illustration. One is earthly, the Jews are God's earthly people; one is heavenly. Christians are born of the Spirit and belong to the heavenly Jerusalem. Hagar, Mt. Sinai and Jerusalem belong to the line of the law and leads to the bondage the law produces. Christians are born to freedom and belong to the Jerusalem in heaven that is the center of our attraction. Our citizenship is in heaven so we pray to "our Father which art in heaven." Our hopes are centered on the One who ascended into heaven and will "descend from heaven with a shout."

The earthly Jerusalem of that time was destroyed. The "house" was made desolate as prophesied. The "mother of us all" remains untouched by human sin and the efforts of the flesh. Freedom has come to the people of God. So, what should we do with that which produces bondage? "Cast out" is that which would

return us to what we left and take us back to where grace is ineffective to believers even though they have been saved by grace. Step forward in confidence and live in the blessings of the freedom we have in Christ. Refuse to go backward in any way to the ideas, plans, and teachings of men who would tie you to those things that are unscriptural and designed by men to attract others to that which is false. It may seem attractive by human standards that we adapt to that which is popular, but the fact remains that true liberty is what we have in Christ.

*When the Gospel came first to our town
People thought it was really quite strange.
That someone who to everyone was unknown
Would preach to us it was necessary to change
In order for us to be accepted by God
We needed to have a spiritual rebirth
The basis of the challenge was right in God's Word
That's what gave the message such great worth.*

*So, some in our town on the Lord Jesus believed
And there was no difficulty to see a real difference
They said it was a personal choice when they received
Jesus as their Savior, had taken their sentence
They talked about their faith and God's amazing grace
And said they knew now they had eternal life
It is true, what happened to them made a change in this place
Where there was darkness, now there is some light.*

*How strange it seems that they are turning back
What they left and what they said were wrong
I wonder if what they said they believed was a fact
Or were we being fooled by them all along
Maybe they are just trying to do what pleases us now
We were beginning to believe they were right
I had been thinking about asking them how
I could believe and learn to walk by faith, not sight.*

Galatians 5:1-15

FREEDOM TO SERVE

Paul concluded the practical section of Galatians by reminding the believers in Christ of who they really were, not just who the Judaizers said they were. We need to be reminded that we have been born free to serve our risen Lord with joy and faith. We are not obligated to rules and regulations to be saved or to force us into serving God in order to be saved. The Christian life is lived by the power of the Spirit of God. In this chapter, we are reminded we are waiting by the Spirit for the blessings of the future. During this waiting time, we walk in the Spirit to produce the fruit of the Spirit. When we live in the Spirit, we are able to sow to the Spirit and reap the blessings of the Spirit. Christ has died to set us free to do what is impossible to accomplish by our own efforts. We have been made able to live for God without the legalism the law imposes on those who chose to live under its domination. Freedom to serve God comes as a result of His liberating grace.

The message of the book of Galatians is simply stated in verse one of chapter five. We have been freed from the bondage of slavery to the "schoolmaster," and are free to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. We are free from the law and free for loving service. The special conditions the false teachers were propagating in order for people to be saved included circumcision. If they were circumcised as a religious ordinance to be saved, that would be adding to what Christ has done and takes away Christ Himself as the Savior of sinners. The whole orientation of salvation would be changed by that one act, from being a work of God's grace to a work of one's own doing. If that were the case, one is obligated to do every demand of the law perfectly, and at all times without failure. Any honest person knows they fail because the standard of the law is perfection, God's own perfect righteousness. He has given us this law so we will face our sins and come to Him for forgiveness which is found in "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Those who believe they are justified by the law are severed from Christ. Choosing the law cuts one off from any hope of being saved. Believers in Christ are justified by His grace and need to be clear in their understanding of this truth. Otherwise, even those who are truly saved may begin to wonder if they are secure in Christ. Those who say they are justified by the law are not saved nor have they ever been saved. It isn't any easier for God to save moral law-keepers than any other person because "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." In fact, it is often harder for a morally upright person to see their need of God's grace, than it is for a person who lives with guilt because of a sinful lifestyle. Children of believing parents often find it difficult to trust Christ for salvation because they already live like Christians and believe all they have been taught about Him. They know He died for their sins. Their moral conduct in life has separated them already from many of the ungodly practices of their friends. God's grace reaches the righteous living person in the same way as it does to those who know their need because of a sinful life. Every person has to admit to their own sinful nature before they will cast themselves on to the grace of God for salvation. That "hope of righteousness" is the declaration of the imparted righteousness of Christ that has been given to us and will be forever. The "we" here refers to saved people, not the "you" people in the previous verse. Real faith in Christ expresses itself in love for God and for others when we are free to serve, not just free from sin.

The believers in the assemblies of Galatia had done well in the early part of their Christian life. They obeyed the truth and acted on what was right until someone stopped them with false teaching. It is a sad fact that many believers start out well but under pressure from their peers, particularly if they are young, or the pressures of ambition and materialism when they get older, they slow down and then even stop in their Christian growth. As a Christian, their effectiveness has come to a halt. One has said, "In the Christian life, if one isn't going ahead, they are going backward. There is no neutral place in the Christian life." So, what makes this persuasion so attractive to believers? When we begin our life in Christ, we are fully conscious of our inability in ourselves to please God in our flesh. But it is not too long before we feel we are lacking the enthusiasm and commitment we once had. False teachers take advantage of that and tell people they are missing something. They haven't "got it all." And this doctrinal leaven infects a whole lot of people with its deceptive, subtle, evil teaching. To add to the work of God, the works of men as being necessary to salvation, is as wrong as it is to add anything to the message of the Gospel, we heard in the first place.

The "offense of the cross" proclaims God's unmerited grace and leaves no place for the works of men as a means of salvation. A moral, upright, good man is as lost as the worst of men if he trusts in the law to save him. Even though he may live a righteous life, he has fallen from grace and its benefits. The Galatians had been running the race of Christian testimony well at first, but now they were not running well at all. Some teach today that the baptism of infant children answers to circumcision in the Old Testament times. So, they christen children at eight days old as the Jews did with their boy babies in Israel. This is the leaven that has deceived millions into thinking they are "a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Some sincerely believe they will be in heaven when they die because they have been baptized. There is no connection between the cross and circumcision. One is all of God and the other is of men's desire to add their own righteousness to the cross work of Christ.

The reaction of many who call themselves Christians, to the preaching of the cross and salvation by grace alone, is persecution, rejection, animosity, and opposition. We can expect this as a common response to the preaching of the Gospel because people want to be saved in their own way. Paul was confident that truth will triumph, that the saints would be recovered and that God would deal with the false teachers in the way of His choosing. His responsibility was to expose them for who they were. It is important for us to remind believers of our liberty in Christ. Our freedom isn't freedom to sin if we want to and get away with it as false teachers sometimes suggest. It is rather a freedom to serve the Lord and people, motivated by Christian love. Paul hoped those who were agitating the believers in Galatia, would go away and consider themselves impotent with no power to propagate their teaching.

False teachers will often attack the truth of God by denying the verbal inspiration of the scriptures in their original language. Then they will attack the Person of Christ by denying His eternal Sonship, His

preeminence over all things, His equality with the Father, His human, and divine nature in the one Person, and His authority with "all power in heaven and in earth." The public practice of the priesthood of all believers is offensive to them also because it places all believers equal before God and men. The silence of women in public meetings of the assembly and head coverings as a sign of submission to the headship of Christ is vigorously attacked. The giving and use of spiritual gifts for the reason God gave them is explained away and the clear presentation of the Gospel of man's ruin, God's remedy, and man's responsibility is watered down until the Gospel they preach is no more than a verbal assent to what people want to hear. Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ are seldom mentioned, and replaced with modern terms like "forming a new relationship with God," and other "seeker-friendly terms."

All the law is contained in one statement that defines the grace of God to us and to others through us. We are free to serve God acceptably and are empowered by the Holy Spirit to do what He leads us to fulfill in love. By doing that, we fulfill the purpose of the law. Then we will not turn on each other but will love the Lord's people and want the best for each other. This freedom in Christ has set us free from the imposed bondage of the law, so we can serve with joy, love, and grace.

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

CHRIST HATH MADE US FREE.

*Wishing to go back, the Galatians would turn from blessing to the curse of the law.
Their wishing seemed to be for the Old Testament again; forgetting what Sinai saw.
For God is so holy that one failure alone brought them down in despair and a curse.
So, Paul reminds them again, to turn back from grace, which makes things go from bad to worse.*

*To try to justify yourself by the works of the law, you can never completely fulfill.
You must choose for yourself, grace or law - and broken law will consign you to hell.
Christ, plus the law is not the way, God's righteousness is imparted to us.
It is either you accept what God gives you by grace, or fall under the law and its curse.*

*Only by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, can anyone's salvation obtain.
To invalidate Christ and His death on the cross, as the way of forgiveness to gain;
This means you have no right to claim, though you try very hard; you haven't become a Christian at all.
You are saying in effect, you are saving yourself, you are not one whom Christ came to call.*

*Oh, do not turn away from the Savior who died and gave Himself a ransom for sin.
Do not consider for one moment that grace, can be enhanced by the foul works of men.
For God's grace stands alone, nothing can be added that makes His salvation complete.
Stop here and consider what the Word of God says: take time, open your Bible, and see...*

The Christian is not to

1. Receive the grace of God in vain [2 Cor.6:1], but is to Continue in the grace of God [Acts 13:43].
2. Set aside the grace of God [Gal.2:21], but is to Stand in grace [Rom.5:2; 1Pe.5:12].
3. Fall away from grace [Gal.5:4], but is to Be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus [2Tim.2:1].
4. Do despite unto the Spirit of grace [Heb.10:29], but is to Draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace [Heb.4:16].
5. Fall short of the grace of God [Heb.12:15], but is to Be established in the heart by grace [Heb.13:9].
6. Turn the grace of God into lasciviousness [Jude 4], but is to Grow in the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ [2Pe.3:18].

“Father, I have seen some fine people this morning who are trying so hard to be saints. Their works are great, the help they give others is second to none. The scripture texts they write to themselves and post on their desks are certainly commendable truths to live by. Maybe some of them are saved by grace alone, but because of the teaching they have received, they think they are adding assurance to their salvation by helping their fellow men. Give them some light from the Word of God, that our works are a result of salvation, not a means of salvation, In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

Galatians 5:16-26

WALK IN THE SPIRIT

It seems like those who try to do the works of the law to be righteous before God have a serious problem. They can't get along very well. They are like dogs that yap at each other and if they get a chance, bite each other. To compare my works with those of another is a very common practice. Comparing my garden with another will make me proud if mine is better than his or critical of him if it is not. The same is true about almost every effort we put forth in the energy of the flesh. Law keepers have the same problem. No matter how hard people may try, all come short of fulfilling the requirements of keeping the whole law and not "offending" at one point. The motivation of love rises above that because love wants the best for others and that motivation comes from "the love of Christ that constrains us."

When the Holy Spirit leads a person, we are not just moved by feelings, emotions, and any other subjective things. Those might be the result of being led by the Spirit, but not proof of being led by the Spirit. The leading of the Spirit gives a desire for the Word of God to be read and understood. The leading of the Spirit will prompt us to be the answer to our own prayers at times by acting in the best interests of others. Walking in the Spirit assures us that the list of evil practices will be avoided. There is no possible way to mix the sin-stained works of the flesh with the holy qualities of the Holy Spirit leading us. With the Word of God in our hands, the power of divine Persons in us, and with us, we are challenged to go forward in faith and hope.

The conflict between the flesh and Spirit is not that they are two equals in conflict. The Holy Spirit is omnipotent. The flesh is weak. But we do have a responsibility to walk in the Spirit. That is a choice we make. Obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit is not imposed on us. If left to ourselves though, we would make wrong choices because we still have within us evil desires. Those are within us and we can't ignore them. The law doesn't give us the power to overcome this characteristic of our humanity. Any person who ignores the temptations of the flesh as of little importance, and yields to them is not a Christian. The Holy Spirit on the other hand is passionately opposed to the works of the flesh. There is no way the flesh and the Spirit can cooperate in a believer's life. The word of God through the Spirit of God is our rule of life and He is our Guide. The Holy Spirit does not lead us into law keeping because the law does not give life or strength to live as overcomers.

The fifteen wicked works of the flesh that are listed in this chapter begin with three obvious open sins that begin in the mind and then show themselves openly as works of darkness. Other fleshly sins listed are not really as obvious because they are within us. Evidence of them can be seen in our attitudes, facial expressions, body language, and other outward results. Any rules or laws do not have the power to stop these sins and others like them from happening. Laws expose them and pronounce those who do them - guilty. Rules against drunk driving do not stop people from drinking and driving. Openly condemning and/or passing laws against rioting and reveling does not put a stop to this practice. There has to be a change of nature to bring this about. It is only the Spirit of God within us that gives us the power to conduct ourselves as God intends.

There is no difficulty in discerning the work of the Spirit in contrast to the works of the flesh. Love for God and God's people is obvious in a true believer. The fruit of the Spirit cannot be duplicated in the energy of the flesh. We cannot be trained in some special way to claim the fruit of the Spirit. The spiritual Christian shows the fruit of the Spirit. The Fruit of the Spirit is Love. Love is caring for somebody else as much as I care for myself.

- Joy is love in jubilation: love cannot truly rejoice without other people.
- Peace is love in repose: the spirit of tranquility can be passed on to other people.
- Longsuffering is love on trial: tolerating frustration and refusing to become frustrated.
- Gentleness is love in society: compassion and forgiveness (kindness).
- Goodness is love in action: as gracious and generous as the Lord Jesus.
- Faith is love in endurance: keeping its promises and sticking to its commitments.
- Meekness is love at school: refusing to be harsh and demanding when it has every right to push its own interests.

- Temperance is love in discipline: voluntarily putting the brakes on its own feelings and actions.

When a believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, evidence of this holy fruit will be seen. This happens because the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ has been implanted in the child of God. Like our Lord Jesus "did always those things that pleased the Father," this is also the desire of a child of God. The Spirit grows these characteristics in us when we have been joined to Him by faith and we wish to imitate Him. When the Lord Jesus Christ is in control, we will "love the Lord our God ... and our neighbor..." These two contain the whole law. We do not observe rites and rituals and legal symbolic acts in order to be righteous. But there is a desire to demonstrate the character of our Lord in our lives.

When we accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we were set free from sin's dominion. We are able to turn from sin and its temptations and tendencies because we have power over these things by the Spirit within us. There is a sense in which we crucify daily the desires of the flesh to act in the ways of the world around us. The Spirit makes it possible to bring our values into conformity with the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to daily "draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to [us]." When we are led by the Spirit of God every part of our life is submitted to God's control. Those I live with, work with, study with, and have spiritual fellowship with will be able to see if I am living under the power of the flesh or Spirit. Such a person is not self-centered, a troublemaker or impressed with his own importance. The standards of life that form the foundation of our faith come from God to us through His word. The values we conduct life by are given authority in our life by the Holy Spirit who guides us. Being led by the Spirit and walking in the Spirit won't make me conceited nor will it make me popular. But it will give God's approval, and that is what counts in life.

*The contrasts are unmistakable, there is no common ground.
One is definitely from God, the other from pressures around
To be conformed to the ways that are most acceptable to men.
The other power that comes from God gives power to us within.*

*When led by the flesh there is deceit, guilt, and often serious contention.
Walking in the Spirit makes visible the nature of the new creation.
The energy of the flesh is very weak even when trying to do right.
The fruit of the Spirit is evident in those walking by faith, not sight.*

*The flesh tries and fails to change the wrong things we are prone to do.
The Spirit brings to light God's holy things that are faithful and always true.
Flesh wants to accept sin as a normal life without serious consequences.
The Spirit guards and guides us in life providing us a strong defense.*

*The point of saying all of this is so that in the Spirit we will walk.
When led and guided by the Spirit of God we then can talk the talk.
The fruit of the Spirit will be known as we keep in fellowship with Him.
The power of the Spirit will enable us to resist the power of sin.*

*As we with obedient and thankful hearts yield to God's control
We will have a positive influence to reach some searching souls.
The joy of the Lord will give life meaning as we live from day to day.
Perhaps through the work of the Spirit today, some people will find the Way.*

“Father, may Thy servant be guided and led by the Spirit of God in these three days of conference meetings. May sensible, reasonable, and understandable teaching be given to bless those who attend, and may much glory be brought to Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

Galatians 6:1-6

FAULTS AND BURDENS

In the body of Christ, it is important for us to recall we are the "body of Christ, but members in particular." The saints of God are choice people in spite of our faults and failures. There is a special family bond when we work together in agreement on doctrine and practice. Those who go so far as to impose legalism and the law of Moses as a means of salvation, or as an addition to the work of Christ, are false brethren. They are not Christians in the Bible sense, even though they would say they are Christians by religion. With a very gracious and loving attitude toward the Galatian Christians, Paul addresses them as "brethren" - his brothers. No matter who they are or what they have done, we are still "members one of another." Therefore, when a trespass takes place in a believer's life it affects us as well as them.

"A fault" is not something we overlook as a personality quirk that may offend others who have a different view of the matter. This is a sin that does have an effect on others and needs to be dealt with as a problem deserving appropriate discipline that corrects wrong behavior. Obviously, self-discipline has not changed the behavior of this believer so others need to come near to address the matter of this trespass in a scriptural way. The point of writing about it seems to be that Paul knew some men act in a hard, overbearing way and tend to go too far in their correction of those who have sinned. Being led by the Spirit, those who demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit and live in the Spirit are the ones who are "spiritual" and thus are qualified to bring about the kind of discipline needed to restore this person. The biblical helper is gentle and firm at the same time but is also compassionate. Such a person will be alert to the temptation directed at them even when correcting the behavior of another. The objective to be reached for the one who has been "overtaken in a fault," is to restore, to bring to maturity, or to again "perfect" that which has been damaged.

Some of the people of God live with heavy burdens of personal suffering, family dynamics that don't have a solution, financial difficulties that seem hopeless, and ongoing emotional stress. When one of the Lord's people is being crushed down under these burdens of sorrow, disappointment, and distress. we are called upon by the Spirit of God to move alongside and bear that burden. Burden-bearing involves sharing the load, putting our shoulders under the burden another person is weighted down under, and helping that person to carry it along. When our burdens seem so heavy that we cannot go any further, we need to be humble enough to gratefully accept the assistance others are ready and willing to give. The law of Christ enables us to do what the law of Moses cannot do. The law of Moses put burdens on people that were too hard to bear. The biblical helper is willing to be involved close enough in the lives of others that he or she is able to help bear their burdens even though it may cause pain and inconvenience to me. If I refuse to respond to the need of others or I am too proud to accept the assistance another person offers me, I am "nothing." No one is deceived by the one who thinks himself too high to give a shoulder to carry another person's load or who is unwilling to admit to weakness.

The biblical helper is humble enough to recognize any strength he might have comes from the Source of all strength, our Lord, whose "strength is made perfect in weakness." Such a person does not think he is superior to others nor acts in a "holier-than-thou" attitude. That person is one who is willing to examine himself in a realistic way. As he looks into God's word, he sees the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and seeks to follow in "His steps." Self-appraisal can be a very beneficial act if we avoid comparing ourselves with other people. If God has entrusted us with a work of service for others, that is a great privilege. If the time comes when we are tempted to compare ourselves with others to feel good about who we are or what we do, it is important that we stop and look at our Lord Jesus Christ. All comparisons fade and self-exaltation falls to the dust when we focus our hearts on Him.

There is another side to this whole matter. The crushing burden we are called upon to bear for others is not the same as the backpack we are to carry ourselves. A soldier carries what he needs on his own back. A child goes off to school with a backpack holding all the things he or she needs to carry. Of course, they would be glad if someone else carried that for them but it is theirs and they are responsible for it. It is not right for us to complain about those legitimate things that are our responsibility and look for someone else to pass that job on to. We have the responsibility of "providing for our own," with food, shelter, and the necessities of life. To expect others to meet the needs we are to meet is wrong. Even to expect the government to provide this for us is wrong if we are able to work on our own behalf and for our family. Life by its very nature gives us burdens to bear. God allows and may send, adverse circumstances into our lives so we can be strengthened morally and become the kind of people He intends us to be. A sailing vessel may

look beautiful, but with no wind in its sails, it goes nowhere. Wind from any direction can be controlled by the set of sails to go in any desired direction and accomplish a mission. Flowers that grow where there is no change of temperature may look good but have little or no scent. The tree is strongest that is often moved to and fro by wind blowing against it. The burdens we bear are a blessing to us whether we realize it at the moment or not.

The biblical helper is inclined to assist others in what they are doing or even if they are doing the same things. In that way, they learn from the teacher and support the teacher in his or her endeavor to help us. The principle of giving indicates that the more you give, the more you get. The biblical teaching regarding support for those who teach is that we should not ignore their financial and physical needs, but meet them. A generous and "cheerful giver" is one God loves. To show honor and appreciation for those who have taught us, and those who teach us now is never a wrong thing to do. This is not a salary given for services rendered by those who preach and teach. That practice is not taught in the scriptures although some may say that is the teaching of this verse. The onus is on the one who receives the benefit of the teaching to meet the need of the teacher, not on the teacher to contract with the hearers before (or after) he teaches. Financial and physical support comes when those who are taught are blessed by what they learn, and express that in a practical way from the efforts of their labor in another field of labor as they serve the Lord.

*There are things we do that seem innocent at first
But soon they become habits with chains that bind.
Then we are dismayed when we find we can't burst
Those bands which started innocently in our minds.*

*A habit becomes a practice that continues to grow
And leads us into areas that tempt us to sin.
As time passes by, the results begin to show
That which started small then takes control of him.*

*A spiritual response is needed by spiritual men
Who with firm, but gentle pressure, come along to help.
Their careful guidance and correction by the Spirit in them
Shows how this sin in a biblical way should be dealt.*

*Others of God's people are weighed down by the burdens they bear
And there is no relief nor is their burden removed.
We are responsible to come alongside their heavy load to share
And in this kind of response, they are assured they're loved.*

*When our burden is compared with what others suffer
The little bit of discomfort we have is so small
It is God's intention that we bear the burden of our brother
And be close enough to help when under the weight he falls.*

"I thank Thee, Father, that we have been able to come alongside some of Thy people the last few days and were able to help them in some ways bear their burdens. Please deliver them from these heavyweights if it would be Thy will. If not, give them the needed strength. Thank You, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Galatians 6:7-18

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE

The glad service of a believer to bear the great burden of others and not bother others with his own little backpack is the result of one who has learned who he or she is in Christ. It is a blessing that gives us joy when we can assist our brothers and sisters in Christ in their trials. It is an act of appreciation when we support those who minister the Word of God to us. They are our family. These are the people of God we are helping on their way. But those who do the same things out of obligation to meet the terms of the law, are treating the work of Christ with contempt in that they think they are earning God's favor. To serve with "cheerful" giving from the heart is very different. To mock God is to treat Him and what He has done for us with contempt as far as He is concerned. To add in any way to a finished work is a contemptuous attitude.

There are principles to sowing that we do well to remember. What we sow is what we reap. Coming from the seed that we sow is the same kind of seed but a lot more than we sowed. We reap the same thing only more, whether it be good or bad. Where we sow is important as well. To be indiscriminate in sowing may lead to reaping "a whirlwind." To spend all we have on ourselves and the desires of the flesh only begins a time of deterioration that will end in sadness, guilt, misery, and all the things that are found in one's life when sin has its way. There is a proneness to sin in the flesh that we dare not give way to even though it may seem small and comparatively innocent at first. A thought can lead to a look. A look can lead to an act. An act can lead to serious consequences from which one may never recover. So, the principle of sowing and reaping is, we reap when we sow. We reap what we sow. We reap more than we sow.

This same principle holds true to sowing in the Spirit as it does to sowing to the flesh. The flesh brings corruption, indulgence, and increasing evil. One who walks in the Spirit is led by the Spirit, lives in the Spirit, and sows to the Spirit will reap spiritual benefits that are part of our new life that never ends. The fruit of the Spirit is an obvious result of one who has sown to the Spirit. Remember who you are when you are sowing.

There is something more to be considered in this regard. There is labor involved in sowing and reaping. It takes a lot more time to prepare the ground for sowing than it does for reaping. Caring for the plants that produce fruit takes longer than harvesting what has been sown. We should not relax because we are tired of being "peculiar people, zealous of good works." Doing good for others on behalf of others will bring recompense. Usually, there is satisfaction and blessing now as a result of sowing to the Spirit, but the real value will be seen in the future when we see our Lord and "give an account of the things done in the body." If we sow righteousness in order to bring blessing to others, there will definitely be a reaping time. This encourages us to do what we do "as to the Lord," even if there is no recognition or thanks now. This is the sowing season, the "opportunity" to do good which has to do with the results more than the labor and service we might expend.

The Lord's people have a special place in our hearts and lives. These people, "the household of faith," are family. Everyone needs our "work of faith and labor of love." But the family of God is our special responsibility. They need us and we need them as we travel through a hostile world. We may not be aware of a specific need but one who is led by the Spirit is often constrained to do something out of the ordinary without knowing the outcome. The Holy Spirit is in each believer and keeps the body functioning in a way that is most appropriate. Remember who you are - a member of the body. This was of such importance to Paul that he makes reference to his own handwriting as adding to the weight of his teaching.

Avoid those who insist on circumcision but avoid persecution for Christ's sake. Avoid those who demean or casually speak of the cross of Christ. Any who place the works of the law of equal importance to the cross-work of Christ are false brethren. Those who place works above faith are false brethren. Those who emphasize the outward external life of a person above the inward movement of a redeemed soul toward his or her Savior, are false brethren. When people glory in how many "souls they have seen saved," but are careless about the things they have done, or should have done - that is hypocrisy.

Paul gloried in the "cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," because he had experienced deliverance from the bondage and course of a broken law. He said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." The only way we can effectively deal with the cultural interests that take our time, or the social life of the world system that attracts us, is to crucify ourselves to it, and reckon that I am "dead to the world, but alive unto God." There is a barrier between a true believer and the world system. By faith, we take our stand with God, draw a line between ourselves and the world, and be courageous enough to stay on our own side with God.

We do not need to be concerned about the external things that some people say we should do, nor should we be too concerned about what they say we should not do. Those things are the opinions of men. Some say to do whatever you want to because you are saved and cannot be lost. Those are the words of one who

does not know or love the Lord. By God's grace, we do what we do, or do not do, because we have been made a new creation in Christ. That new life with its new nature is something fresh to us that we did not have before we were saved. "All things become new" when we are a child of God. This rule of grace in our life enables us, empowers us, and compels us to live by faith.

Paul ends this epistle by saying in essence, "Don't bother me anymore with this false teaching. I have had enough pain in my life without you adding to it this soul-grieving pain of putting down the cross-work of Christ by adding law-keeping to it." He began the letter with apostolic authority and ended it with the compassionate term, "brethren." He began with grace and closed with "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." He reemphasized grace as a way of reaching their spirit rather than keeping the law. When God's people are influenced by false brethren to go from freedom to bondage, that is a cause for sadness. Freedom in Christ allows us to live for Him, serve Him and bring glory to Him with a glad and free heart. We should never forget, should always remember what a blessing it is to be one of God's people living in the freedom of new life in Christ.

Galatians 6: 9-10. *"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."*

WELL DOING.

"Well doing": it is not often done.

"Well doing": is needed by someone.

"Well doing": it's not good enough to know.

"Well doing": someone has to go.

"Well doing": why should it have to be me?

"Well doing": why can't some other person see?

"Well doing": the need is near my hand.

"Well doing": the gift to give is mine to command.

"Well doing": the time to work is now.

"Well doing": the season's here to sow.

"Well doing": we have the opportunity.

"Well doing": act now with importunity.

"Well doing": the older saints are waiting.

"Well doing": be done now without hesitating.

"Well doing": the mother's babe is sick.

"Well doing": if you're going to help, be quick.

"Well doing": the young are under pressure.

"Well doing": give them your grace, fully without measure.

"Well doing": the elder needs our prayers.

"Well doing": let him know you care.

"Well doing": don't faint, keep on.

"Well doing": don't quit, till the day is done.

"Well doing": the lost, around us needy.

“Well doing”: for us, “the Call” now heeding.

“Well doing”: the reaping time is coming.

“Well doing”: the summer soon is ending.

“Well doing”: look; the setting of the sun.

“Well doing”: from Him, the Lord, “Well done.”

*“O God, who sees every act done or undone: for strength and courage I now ask. Strength to do the tasks You have for me today. Courage to rise above each obstacle and excuse I might see or make. In the name of the great Master and Evaluator,
Amen.”*

What a wonderful blessing for those who were in bondage of sin and conformity to rules and regulations, to be set free forever by God's grace. Our freedom in Christ enables us to live life as He intended - for Him and by Him. It is very strange for those who were set free from prison, to go back into prison again. **“Free from the law, O happy condition!”**