

# GALATIANS

## Introduction:

1. General Introduction (1:1-2)
  - a. Author
    - 1) Paul
    - 2) Generally accepted fact that Paul was the author
  - b. Date
    - 1) 49 -58 AD
      - a) Provides time for Christianity to have "grown", doctrines to begin to become formalized, etc.
      - b) Provides time for Paul's timeline that he mentions in reference to two separate trips to Jerusalem and two separate trips to Galatia
    - 2) 1<sup>st</sup> of Paul's Epistles (or I and II Thessalonians)
  - c. Recipients
    - 1) North vs. South Galatia
      - a) North / Popular Designation / Roman Province (cf. Lawrenceville) / see I Peter 1:1
      - b) South / Official Designation / Cities of 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey (cf. Acts 13-14)
    - 2) The "Gauls"
      - a) Historical Evidence (Celtic in origin; Western European influences of France and possibly Britain)
      - b) Their "nature"
        - 1) Impulsive, Fickle (cf. "Cretans are always liars")
        - 2) Seeped in Superstition (Possible Druid Background – J.B. Lightfoot, Epistle of Paul to the Galatians)
        - 3) Commercially successful
        - 4) Acts 14:8-20
      - 3) A "Circular" Letter, i.e., one copy passed along to all Galatian churches
    - d. One of the "Four Pillars Books of Christian Theology" – Romans, I and II Corinthians
    - e. Purpose – Gal. 2:15-16

- f. Major Issues Addressed
  - 1) False Teachers - Judaizers
  - 2) Circumcision and Observance of Religious Days (Jewish and Gentile)
  - 3) The Law of Moses vs. Freedom in Christ
  - 4) Grace and Law being "mutually exclusive as a means of justification"(cf. 5:4; Rom. 11:6)
- g. Key Words
  - 1) Faith
  - 2) Abraham
  - 3) Son / Sons
  - 4) Freedom
  - 5) Circumcised / Circumcision
  - 6) Law
- h. Three Major Stories from the OT
  - 1) The "Promise Meeting" between God and Abraham
  - 2) The Giving of the Law to Moses
  - 3) The Conflict between Hagar and Sarah
- 2. A Warning (1:1-10)
  - a. Three Elements of Greeting
    - 1) Author
    - 2) Addressees
    - 3) Greetings
  - b. Paul's Authority (1-2, 10)
    - 1) A consistent theme throughout the epistle
    - 2) Cf. II Cor.10:8; I Cor. 4:1-4, 9:1, 9:14-27; Rom. 15:15-21
  - c. The Pre-eminence of Jesus (3-5)
  - d. The "Different" Gospel (6-9)<sup>1</sup>
    - 1) Desertion
      - a) *Gr. Word - "Metatithemi"* - "To remove from one place to another; Middle Voice indicates they were personally responsible" (Vine's Expository of NT Words)
      - b) Paul introduces concept that "You can only fall away if you choose to"
    - 2) "No gospel at all" (exclusivity of the gospel)

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<sup>1</sup> Note how Paul wastes no time with thanksgiving for the disciples as he does in all his other letters. He immediately moves to the issue at hand.

- 3) Anathema
  - a) Transliteration of *Gr. Word - "Anathema"*
  - b) Cf. LXX / Heb. Word "herem" – involved the destruction of everyone and everything, e.g., in a "holy war"
  - c) Root word tied to an oath tied to divinity (either positive or negative)
  - d) Accursed (cf. Rom. 9:3; I Cor. 12:3, 16:22)
- 4) Introduction of "angelic" theme (8; cf. 3:19, 4:14)
- e. The approval of men or the approval of God (10) / a theme that Paul will address throughout Galatians

## Discussion:<sup>2</sup>

- I. Personal (1:1-2:14)
  - A. Paul's Autobiography (1:11-2:14)
    1. Conversion (1:11-16)
      - a. Not by something that "man made up"
      - b. Not taught to him "from any man" (cf. impact of Ananias in Acts 9)
      - c. Received by revelation from Jesus Christ (cf. I Cor. 15:5-8)
        - 1) Not something taught to him by the other apostles
        - 2) Jesus was his Teacher
        - 3) Set apart from birth (see Ps. 139)
        - 4) Called by His grace
      - d. Previous "way of life"
        - 1) Acts 7:57-8:3; 9:1-2
        - 2) Philippians 3:4b-6
    2. Early Life as a Christian (1:17-2:10)
      - a. Converted on road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19)
      - b. Went into Arabia ("between Acts 9:22-23")
      - c. Returned to Damascus ("before Acts 9:23")
        - 1) Acts 9:23-25
        - 2) II Cor. 11:30-33
        - 3) "Laundry Basket" Escape
      - d. Went to Jerusalem (after 3 years in Damascus-?) (Acts 9:26ff.)
      - e. Went to Syria and Cilicia (Acts 9:30)

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<sup>2</sup> Outline is provided by [NIV Study Bible](#) by Zondervan

- f. Returned to Jerusalem
  - 1) 14 years after going to Syria and Cilicia
  - 2) Either Acts 11:30 or Acts 15:1ff.
  - 3) 2:4-5 – Why he went
    - a) False teaching
    - b) “So that the truth of the gospel might remain with you”
  - 4) Entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles (2:6-10)
- 3. Conflict with Peter (2:11-14)
  - a. What we do not know:
    - 1) Nothing in Acts that tells us of Peter making this trip to Antioch
    - 2) Nothing to indicate that James had influenced this decision ... just that these men who came had a relationship with James back in Jerusalem
  - b. What we do know:
    - 1) Peter’s desire to please others rather than God had a profound impact on the church in Antioch (2:13)
    - 2) Only a very “public” rebuke could stem the tide of the wrong influence that Peter’s example was providing (see II Peter 3:15)

#### B. Lessons Learned from Paul [**Mike Rowell**]

1. **Read Galatians 1:11-12**
2. Paul did not hear about Jesus from someone else.
  - a. Paul did not even learn about Jesus from the other \*apostles (verses 16-17). Instead, Jesus himself appeared to Paul (**Acts 9:1-20**). So Paul was not merely teaching somebody’s ideas about God.
  - b. When Paul taught the \*good news, he was not merely discussing his own opinions. Paul himself would never have believed in Jesus if Paul had merely listened to people’s opinions.
  - c. But Paul was a Christian because God had showed him these things. So Paul urged the Christians in Galatia also to trust what God had taught them.
  - d. Application: We need to study the bible daily to get our own convictions about God and his Word?
    - 1) **Acts 17:10-12** – Only God can make people understand his truth.
    - 2) I think we have become lazy in studying out God’s word. We would rather seek advice than studying it out for ourselves.
    - 3) Sometime when we study the bible with people, we talk too much.
    - 4) We need to let the people read God’s word to get their own convictions about God.

3. We are Christians not because of other people, but because of God and his grace.
  - a. Where do you get your faith in God from? **Galatians 1:13-17** God set us apart from birth to receive and respond to his word. **Jeremiah 1:4-5.**
  - b. We should not despair when our loved ones chose to live their lives to please the world and not God. Maybe they were once disciples and fell away, or perhaps they have yet to give their lives to God. It does not matter. It is still possible that God "separated" that talent to his service from his very birth, and that God still means to call it all to His service. **(Acts 17:24-27)**
  - c. As a disciple of Jesus, no matter what your past was like God was pleased to reveal his Son to us.
  - d. **Galatians 2:6-9** verses 6 Paul shows us that he is not impressed with men and their position.
  - e. **I Samuel 16:7-9**
4. We have to understand God has assigned us certain roles in the ministry and if every part is doing its work the gospel will be heard around the world.
  - a. **Galatians 2:11-14.** This verse shows that even important leaders may behave in the wrong way.
  - b. Peter did not just make a mistake. He chose to act against the truth on purpose. He tried to protect himself. Instead, he should have protected God's truth.
  - c. But not everything somebody does needs to be a big confrontation. There is a place and time for everything.

## II. Doctrinal (2:15-4:31)

### A. Faith or Observance of the Law (2:15-3:14)

#### 1. Justified by Jesus (2:15-21)

##### a. Faith in Christ (15-17, 20)

- 1) "*Justified*" – *Gr. Dikaios* – "To deem to be right; to show to be righteous" (Cf. "I ask God if I am right or wrong about an issue, and God replies: "You are right'." E.G., two parties fighting and a third party is brought in to decide who is right in the matter)
- 2) We have put our faith in Christ (v.16)
  - a) Ps. 143:2
  - b) A choice ... not an overpowering from God
  - c) We put our faith in Christ for a reason, i.e., to be justified. *God's focus is on making us right with Him ... not on pointing out what we are doing wrong.*

- 3) Christ does not promote sin (v. 17)
  - a) "Promote" – *Gr. Diakonos* – "to be a minister or servant of"
  - b) Judaizers tried to pit "having faith in Christ" against "having faith in Christ and observing the law"
  - c) Christ makes us *aware of our sin* and *how to be justified from it*.
- 4) "I have been crucified with Christ"(v. 20)
  - a) Two Deaths – Paul's (i.e., anyone who believes in Jesus) and Christ's (Note: "*crucified with Christ*" is the same terminology used in Matt. 27:44, Mk. 15:27 & Jn. 19:32 when talking about the thieves "who were crucified with Jesus").
  - b) Two Lives – Paul's and Christ's (the emphasis should be on Christ living in me ... not on what I am doing)
  - c) "*Christ becomes the new 'I' in my life.*"<sup>3</sup>
- b. Observing the Law (2:16, 18, 19, 21b)
  - 1) The "Judaizers" and what they wanted the Gentiles to observe
    - a) "Gentiles must be circumcised and observe the Law of Moses in order to be saved."
    - b) Cf. possible references to Judaizers in II Cor. 11:5, 13-15; 12:11; I Cor. 9:20-23; Acts 15:1-5
    - c) Threat of Judaizers disappeared as threat after Fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD
  - 2) Explanation of v. 18 – "If Paul 'rebuilds the law' by deserting faith and going back to the Law, the he would become a 'lawbreaker to Jesus'."
  - 3) The law was never meant to be an end to itself ... it was always supposed to be a conduit to bring Jews to the Messiah. (cf. Matt. 5:17-18)
- c. Setting Aside Grace (2:21)
  - 1) This is what the Gentiles would do if they chose to obey the Judaizers.
  - 2) Grace and observing the law cannot co-exist ... cannot co-mingle
  - 3) Rom. 11:1-6, 4:1-8
  - 4) If you focus on your personal righteousness, you too will "set aside grace"
  - 5) "*You*" set aside grace ... *God does not withdraw it* (cf. Luke 15:11-32; Matt. 20:1-16)

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<sup>3</sup> F.F. Bruce, Commentary on Galatians, p. 146

2. The Galatians, Abraham and the Curse (3:1-14)
  - a. The Galatians (vv. 1-5)
    - 1) "*Foolish*" – *Gr. Anoetos* – "Not understanding, unwise" (cf. Luke 24:25; Rom. 1:14)
    - 2) "*Bewitched*" – *Gr. Baskaino* – "To bring evil on someone; to put a spell on someone; to hypnotize"
    - 3) Paul asks them three penetrating / revealing questions:
      - a) "Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law or by believing what you heard?" (v. 2) / cf. Rom. 10:17
      - b) "After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" (v. 3)
        - 1)) The longer you live as a disciple, the easier it is to focus on human effort.
        - 2)) Losing the sense of dependency
        - 3)) See Job 36:19; Rom. 9:16; Titus 3:5
      - c) "Does God give you His Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law or because you believe what you heard?" (v. 5) / Do I obey because I believe what God says or do I have a "I must do \_\_\_\_ for God before He will do \_\_\_\_ for me" attitude?
  - b. Abraham (vv. 6-9) – Paul uses the "greatest believer of all time" as an example of what it means to believe
    - 1) Gen. 15:1-6 (see Rom. 4:3, 20-24; James 2:23)
    - 2) "Credited to him as righteousness" – God recognized Abraham's faith as meritorious and entered it into his credit account (cf. Ps. 106:31)
    - 3) "Just taking God at His word (believe what he says) is very difficult since we are by nature skeptical and suspicious." (cf. Gen. 3)
    - 4) Abraham "believed" before God acted
    - 5) The Jews had come to believe that "those who observe the law are the children of Abraham."
    - 6) Abraham's believing "pre-dated" the existence of & observing the law
    - 7) Gen. 12:1-4a
    - 8) Rom. 4:16-25
      - a) Abraham's heritage is one of faith
      - b) "Do we try and manipulate God by thinking 'If I increase my works, then surely God will give me \_\_\_\_.'?"

- 9) Q: "What exactly do we have as a record of what Abraham actually did?" (Built altars, prayed for Lot, hospitable, sacrifice of Isaac)
- 10) Litmus Test of Faith – "When I am not busy, do I still feel that I am a believer?"
- c. The Curse (vv. 10-14)
  - 1) What was the curse? (10-12)
    - a) "Cursed is everyone who does not 'do' what is written"
    - b) See Deut. 27:26; cf. Hab. 2:4
    - c) 2 schools of Jewish thought: Shammai ("99% success rate in obedience is still failure"); Hillel ("51% success rate in obedience is a passing grade")
    - d) "While Abraham brought blessings, the Law promoted curses on the lawbreaker."<sup>4</sup>
  - 2) Exegesis of v. 12 – "This way of faith is very different from the way of law". (NLT) (The Law stated that men were judged by what they did.)
  - 3) How was redemption from the curse obtained? (13-14)
    - a) Christ redeemed men from the curse of the law:
      - 1)) "*Redeemed*" – *Gr. Exagorazo* – "to buy out or purchase a slave for his freedom" (cf. image of the slave who would put away money at the temple of his favorite god. When he had enough to pay for his freedom, he would have the temple priest pay the redemption money to the master. He would be free forever.)
      - 2)) Cf. I Cor. 6:19-20, 7:23; Gal. 5:1, 13
    - b) Christ redeemed man in a way that many considered the 'ultimate epitome of the lawbreaker', i.e., 'hung on a tree' (cf. Dt. 21:22-23)
    - c) We are tied back to the promise of Abraham (which is by faith) rather than being tied to the law (which is by doing).
- B. The Law and the Promise (3:15-25)
  1. "The Permanence of the Promise" (15-18)
    - a. Concept of "Covenant" (v. 15)<sup>5</sup>
      - 1) "Common Definition" – contract agreement between two agreeable parties; bilateral agreement
      - 2) "Divine Definition" –
        - a) Conceived by God
        - b) Unconditional; irrevocable

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<sup>4</sup> F.F. Bruce, Commentary on Galatians, p. 135

<sup>5</sup> See discussion in F.F. Bruce Commentary on Galatians, pp. 170-71



- c) Everlasting, i.e., no person has the authority to set it aside or add to it (cf. Gal. 1:8-9)
- d) Expectation of holiness on the part of man
- e) Redemptive in nature
- f) Examples – Covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses and David
- b. Characteristics of the Covenant with Abraham
  - 1) The "Seed" vs. the "seeds" (16)
    - a) The coming of Jesus (the "Seed") was the main result of the promise ... not just rewards for the "seeds", i.e., being known as the "children of Abraham"
    - b) cf. John 8:31-41
  - 2) The "Law" does not set aside the "Promise" (17)
    - a) "*Set Aside*" – *Gr. Akuroo* – "To render void or deprive of force or authority; to invalidate"
    - b) Our inheritance depends on the Promise ... not on the Law
    - c) Our relationship is with the Promise ... not with the Law
- c. The Covenant of Grace (18)
  - 1) "God, in His grace, gave it"
  - 2) What had Abraham done ... he just took God at His word and believed Him
  - 3) Cf. we have what we have just because "God, in His grace, gave it."
- 2. "The Purpose of the Law" (19-22)
  - a. "Put into effect through angels" (19b)<sup>6</sup>
  - b. "Added because of transgressions" (19a)
  - c. The Mediator
    - 1) I.e., Moses (see Acts 7:38)
    - 2) Explanation of v. 20 – "But God, who is one, did not use a mediator when He gave His promise to Abraham." (NLT)<sup>7</sup>
  - d. "Would exist until the coming of the 'Seed'"
    - 1) See Matt. 5:17-18
    - 2) Cf. Romans 10:4
  - e. "It was not opposed to the promises of God" (21a)
  - f. "It was not given for the purpose of imparting life" (21b) (Note – Paul was not derogating the Law ... he was just stating its purpose)

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<sup>6</sup> See Acts 7:53

<sup>7</sup> F.F. Bruce states there are over 300 interpretations to this verse!

3. "Liberation from the Law" (23-25)
  - a. "*Held in custody*" – Gr. *Phroureō* - "To mount a guard as a sentinel at a gate; to hem in or protect; to keep the inhabitants in a besieged city from fleeing"
  - b. "*Supervision*" – Gr. *Paidagōgos* – "A tutor, i.e. a guardian and guide of boys. Among the Greeks and the Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them before arriving at the age of manhood." (Thayer's Greek Definitions)
  - c. The law was a "warden" or "custodian":
    - 1) It kept the Gentiles away from the privileges of God's people ... it kept the Jews apart from mankind.
    - 2) It brought to light the sinfulness of the human condition. (cf. the warden in Shawshank Redemption)
    - 3) It was there for protection.
  - d. Being "held in custody and under supervision" was to last until:
    - 1) Christ came
    - 2) Faith has come (because this is *how* we will be justified)
    - 3) Faith is the solution to the human condition!
  - e. Romans 3:9
- C. Sons of God and the Son of God (3:26-4:7)
  1. Children of Faith (3:26-29)
    - a. Introduction of a "new theology" about our relationship with God – the "parent – child relationship" ... cf. Familial Terms:
      - 1) Heir
      - 2) Father
      - 3) Born
      - 4) Adoption
      - 5) Sonship
      - 6) "Abba"
      - 7) Child
    - b. "Clothed Yourselves with Christ" (26-27)
      - 1) "*Clothed*" – Gr. *Enduo* – "To invest with clothing; to put on"
      - 2) Cf. Romans 13:12-14; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:11-12
      - 3) Baptism is when the "clothing" begins ... "a spiritual transference"

- c. "One in Christ" (28)
    - 1) Under the Law of Moses, all of these differences existed and were approved.
    - 2) Not a verse used to discuss "social equalities"
    - 3) Equality about belonging to Christ - all the "same" at the foot of the cross
  - d. "Belong to Christ" (29) – "Modus Ponens" form of logic (explain)
    - 1) "IF you belong to Christ ...
    - 2) "THEN ...
      - a) You are Abraham's seed – our "spiritual roots" are tied to Abraham ... not to the Law of Moses (see Rom. 9:8)
      - b) "*Heirs – Gr. – Klēronomos* – "A possessor, a sharer, an inheritor; one who acquired or obtained the portion allotted to him (Thayer)"
2. "Underage" Children (4:1-3)
- a. Characteristics: (1-2)
    - 1) "No different than a slave"
    - 2) "Owns the whole estate"
    - 3) "Subject to guardians and trustees"
    - 4) Subject to "until the time set by his father" (a set legal time)
    - 5) This was a common experience, i.e., something they saw every day in the Roman world.
  - b. Application: (3)
    - 1) "In slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of this world"
    - 2) Col. 2:8, 20-23 (Not sure what the so-called "Colossian heresy" was, but was similar to same goals of Judaizing teachers of Galatians)
3. Adopted Children (4:4-7)
- a. "God sent His Son" (4-5) (cf. John 8:42)
    - 1) At the set time
    - 2) Under the right circumstances (born of a woman, under the Law)
    - 3) For the purpose of redemption leading to adoption
      - a) "*Redeemed*" – *Gr. Exagorazo* – "to buy out or purchase a slave for his freedom; to buy up or rescue from loss (cf. how early Christians would rescue Roman babies that were left out to die and raise them as their own)."
      - b) "*Adopt*" – *Gr. Uiothoesia* – "a son of immediate, figurative or remote kinship; sometimes used of animals" (Thayer, Strong)
      - c) Cf. Roman / Greek views of adoption vs. Jewish view (see F.F. Bruce, Commentary on Galatians, pp. 197-98)

- b. "God sent His Spirit" (6)
  - 1) Into our hearts
    - a) How antithetical to the Law which primarily involves "outside doing" / Cf. Psalms 40:6-8
    - b) The Jews were "living in legal bondage, haunted with incessant forebodings under a sense of unpardoned sin." (JFB Commentary, Rom. 8:15)
    - c) Crying "Abba, Father" (cf. Mark 14:36; Rom. 8:14-17 - NLT)
    - d) If the Spirit is "in our hearts", then we will have no trouble with the "doing" side of being a Christian.
- c. "God made you an heir"
  - 1) Not a slave / employee (cf. Rom. 8:16-17 - NLT)
    - a) Jews were slaves to the Law. (v. 5)
    - b) Gentiles were slaves to the "so-called gods". (v. 8)
  - 2) But a child
    - a) There is a difference between being a humble, believing child and being an obedient and faithful slave. (cf. Luke 15:21 and 29)
    - b) Cf. me working for Wells Fargo as Gary Roberson or Gary Fargo ... which would mean more to me? Would my attitude about work be different? Would I let another company hire me away?
    - c) "God's own child" (NLT)
      - 1)) No matter what your childhood was like, with God it is a new way.
      - 2)) It is completely different from what we may have experienced in our own homes. It is the way you always imagined a parent / childhood relationship should be!

#### D. Personal Appeal (4:8-20)

##### 1. "I Fear for You" (8-11)

###### a. Enslaved Again

- 1) "*Enslaved*" – *Gr. Douleuō* - "To be in bondage; do service" (cf. vv. 3, 7)
- 2) To those who by nature are not gods (cf. I Cor. 8:5-6; 12:2)
- 3) To weak and miserable principles (cf. Acts 14:14-15; Rom. 8:3)
  - a) "*Weak*" – *Gr. Asthenēs* – "Strengthless, impotent, feeble"
  - b) "*Miserable*" – *Gr. Ptōchos* – "Beggary, asking alms, destitute"
- 4) [2) and 3)] should tell us about the exclusive nature of believing in God ... He does not tolerate "diverse thinking" when it comes to believing in Him alone vs. believing in multiple gods.

- b. Wasted Efforts
  - 1) "*Wasted*" – *Gr. Kopiaō* - "To grow tired or exhausted with bodily effort; to feel fatigue or have your strength reduced"
  - 2) If they are going back to observing special days, months, seasons and years, i.e., following a Jewish Calendar
    - a) "*Observe*" – *Gr. Paratēreō* - "to stand alongside, to observe scrupulously, meticulously" (cf. Luke 6:7)
    - b) This [1)] was just as much a part of the Gentile worship of their gods as it was a part of the Law of Moses ,e.g., common practice to follow a Pagan Calendar
    - c) Both Judaism and Heathenism were systems of bondage ... systems of restraint. (Cf. worldly thinking that freedom comes when not in a relationship with Jesus ... actually, it is just the opposite)
  - 3) Cf. Col. 2:16 and Rom. 14:5-8 – see the difference between just observing the days vs. making them ritually binding so that they became a means to salvation (some "wiggle room")
- 2. "I Plead With You" (12-16)
  - a. How Paul became like the Galatians (12a) / Cf. I Cor. 9:19-23
  - b. How Paul felt about the Galatians (12b)
    - 1) "You have done me no wrong" – He held no grudges.
    - 2) "When you understand grace, you become full of grace."
    - 3) His concern was their salvation ... not his own personal glory.
    - 4) Cf. II Cor. 6:11-13
  - c. How Paul was welcomed by the Galatians (13-14)
    - 1) cf. Acts 13-14
    - 2) The nature of the "illness"
      - a) "*Illness*" – *Gr. Astheneia* – "Want of strength or weakness in the body or the soul"
      - b) Unsure as to what this might have been (cf. II Cor. 12:7)
    - 3) Like an angel or like Jesus himself (cf. Acts 14:12)
    - 4) "Torn out your eyes" – possible reference to his vision issues
  - d. Two Penetrating Questions for the Galatians:
    - 1) "What has happened to all your joy?"
      - a) Adding "following the Law" to "being saved by grace" was robbing them of their previous joy.
      - b) As compared to being willing to tearing out their eyes and giving them to him in a spirit of personal sacrifice
      - c) "Joy in living for Jesus cannot exist if there is not a belief in God's grace." ("Worker bees" are not happy for very long.)

- d) Cf. Rom. 4:6-8 (see NLT translation)
- 2) "Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?"
- 3. "I Am Perplexed About You" (17-20)
  - a. The nature of zeal
    - 1) "*Zeal*" – *Gr. Zēloō* - "to have warmth of feeling for or against; a word involving the concept of a man courting a woman; to exert one's self for someone" (cf. II Cor. 11:2)
    - 2) Zeal that is for 'no good' (17)
    - 3) Zeal where 'the purpose is good' (18)
  - b. The "pains of childbirth" (19)
    - 1) "My dear children" – common phrase used by John but only used by Paul on this one occasion (J.B. Lightfoot, Epistle to the Galatians, p. 178)
    - 2) Cf. image of a child being in an embryonic form as it is developing in its mother's womb
    - 3) Cf. I Th. 2:7-8a
  - c. "*Perplexed*" – *Gr. Aporeō* - "To be at a loss, mentally; to be without resources and not know which way to turn"
    - 1) cf. Dr. Warren saying: "You need more help than I can give you!"
    - 2) As compared with his feelings toward the Corinthians (II Cor. 7:13-16)
- E. Hagar and Sarah (4:21-31) [**Mike Rowell**]
  - 1. This passage about Hagar and Sarah is written to persuade and /or warn us (along with the Galatians) not to follow the Judaizers into slavery with Hagar and Ishmael, but to follow Sarah and Isaac into freedom.
  - 2. The Judaizers were the believers that wanted to remain obedient to the Law of Moses.
    - a. A definition of freedom (that Paul is speaking of here)
    - b. How to have freedom
  - 3. Full Freedom - Full freedom is what you have complete opportunity, no lack of ability, and no lack of desire prevents you from doing what will make you happiest forever.
  - 4. There are four kinds of freedom
    - a. *Freedom of opportunity* to do what you can do
    - b. *Freedom of ability* to do what we desire
    - c. *Freedom of desire* to do what will bring
    - d. *Unending happiness.*

5. Example of sky-diving:

*Suppose you are on your way to the airport to go up for your first real jump, but your car hits a pothole on 85 S, you have a blowout, and run into a car. You are no longer free to jump whether you have the ability or not, because the opportunity passes while you wait for the tow truck. You lack the freedom of opportunity. Or suppose you do make it to the airport, but you have no training at all—you have never studied sky-diving and never learned the first thing about how a parachute works. The opportunity is there, but you don't have the freedom of ability—you are in bondage to your own lack of know-how. But suppose that you make it to the airport, you've been to school and been trained. Ben has given you so pointers; you have all the abilities needed; and you take off for your first jump. But as soon as you look down, all your desire vanishes and your desire is now replaced by overwhelming fear. The opportunity is there, the ability and know-how are there, but you have lost the freedom of desire. **The interesting thing about the freedom of desire is that you might be able to go ahead and jump without it, but it won't be a free act.** For example, you might feel so humiliated in front of your instructor but your pride may be stronger than your fear and rather than be totally humiliated you jump any way. Because you don't want to look like a coward no matter how afraid you feel. But you are feeling emotionally everything but free. You feel enslaved by your fear, your pride, and your humiliation. This experience is not what we call freedom. You are acting under very uncomfortable external constraints.*

6. Mathew 14:9-10

- a. You are like Herod when his step-daughter asked for the head of John the Baptist. He didn't want to kill John, but he wanted even less to be shamed before his guests.
- b. He acted, but not with the freedom of desire.
  - 1) You have the freedom of desire when you do what you love to do.
  - 2) There is no freedom when you are pressured or humiliated into a situation.
- c. Many of us try to keep the commandments of Christ by behaving in this way.
  - 1) We are not really delighting ourselves in the Lord.
  - 2) We feel like we are under some uncomfortable constraints like social pressures; or the fear of hell; or the desire to impress someone for the sake of the kids.
  - 3) We do not enjoy the freedom of desire which Christ gives when he is circumcising our hearts through obedience to his word (cf. Romans 2:29).

7. One last requirement for full freedom (return to "Sky Diving" example):
  - a. You get to the airport with no obstacle; you have all the know-how necessary; you look out the door at the tiny clusters of barns and farmhouses and just can't wait to jump. You have freedom of opportunity, freedom of ability, and freedom of desire. So you jump.
  - b. You yank the string, but your parachute malfunctions and will not open. Are you free?
  - c. You are "in bondage" to destruction
  - d. Cf. envy the so-called freedom of those who pitch themselves out the window and fall after greed, sex, drugs or free fall after things of this world.
    - 1) I John 2:17
    - 2) True freedom is not just the opportunity and ability to do what you desire to do. It is the opportunity, ability, and desire to do what will make you happy forever.
8. Galatians 4:21-23
  - a. Those who are turning back to the law of Moses as a job description for how to earn the wages of blessing from God should listen to what the law says.
  - b. Genesis 15:1-6
    - 1) Abraham is downcast because he and Sarah have no children, no heir to fulfill the promises of becoming a great nation (12:2).
    - 2) God's intention was to give Abraham a son and an heir when it looked humanly impossible so that Abraham would have to rely solely on God.
  - c. Genesis 16
    - 1) Abraham and Sarah weaken in their faith for a time and devise a plan by which they will use their own resources to help God fulfill his promise.
    - 2) Sarah gives Hagar, her maidservant, to Abraham so she can bear him a son (16:2). And in Genesis 16:15 it says, "Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son whom Hagar bore to him Ishmael."
    - 3) Galatians 4:23 - Ishmael was born "according to the flesh," means that he was the product of self-reliance. Abraham ceased to rely on God's power to fulfill his word and instead relied on his own power to get a son.



- d. Genesis 17:16-19
  - 1) 14 years later, God says to Abraham that his wife, Sarah, will have a son.
  - 2) God intends to fulfill his promise in a way that removes all grounds for boasting. God rejects what Abraham was able to produce on his own and promises again that in spite of Abraham's age, he will have a son by his own wife.
  - 3) Genesis 21:1 it says, "The Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did to Sarah as he had promised."
    - a) Isaac was not born according to the flesh because his birth was the result of God's promise.
    - b) Abraham had learned his lesson: the only acceptable response to God's merciful promise is *trust* in that promise, *not works* of the flesh that try to bring about God's blessing with our efforts.
- 9. Galatians 4:24-27
  - a. Hagar and Sarah represent two covenants / Q: "How is Hagar and her affair with Abraham and their son Ishmael like the covenant of Mt. Sinai—the giving of the law through Moses?"
  - b. Two similarities
    - 1) Hagar's giving birth to Ishmael is done "according to the flesh" (v. 23); Abraham and Hagar tried to get God's promised blessing by their own strength without relying totally on God.
      - a) That is the same thing that happened when the law was given at Mt. Sinai. Instead of humbling themselves and trusting God for help to obey his commands, Israel says confidently, "All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do" (Exodus 24:3; Deuteronomy 5:27).
      - b) But they did not have hearts to trust in God (Hebrews 4:2) or truly depend on him (Deuteronomy 5:29). And so like Hagar and Abraham they depended on their own resources.
      - c) Just as Ishmael was born according to the flesh, so the law offered was not received because (as Romans 8:3 says) the law was "weakened by the flesh."
      - d) All that Abraham and Hagar produced on their own was a son who would not be the heir. All that Israel produced when they tried to keep the law on their own was a legalism which would inherit nothing.

- 2) The second similarity between Hagar and Mt. Sinai—both of them bear children for slavery.
- a) Verse 24 says that the covenant Hagar represents is from Mt. Sinai "bearing children for slavery." Since Ishmael was not accepted as an heir, he was no better than his mother, a slave. And when the Israelites took the law upon themselves without trusting God, they became slaves because they had no freedom to do the law from the heart.
  - b) Verse 25 Paul says, "She corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children." This is a direct attack on the Judaizers who have come from Jerusalem (**Galatians 2:12**). They are the children of Jerusalem, and they are slaves to the law and to the demonic forces of the world (**Galatians 4:3,8**). So you can see Paul's point: don't follow these false teachers—they may show you how to become sons of Abraham, but beware! ***With them you will be an Ishmael, not an Isaac. A slave, not an heir.***
  - c) Verse 26 Paul turns his attention to the other half of the story—Sarah and her child, Isaac. He contrasts the present Jerusalem in verse 25 with the "Jerusalem above" in verse 26. What he means by the Jerusalem above can be seen in Colossians 3:1–3. "The Jerusalem above represents the dwelling place of God. Our life and our freedom flow down from him, and our lives are already secure on the citizen books of that city. Sarah represents that city because she gave birth to Isaac not by reliance on herself but by an act of God from above in fulfillment of his promise.
  - d) Verse 28, "Now you brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise." Our real life is not, like Ishmael's, simply owing to the work of man. Our real life is owing to the work of God in us fulfilling his promise to make for himself a people (Genesis 12:1–3) and to put his Spirit within them (Ezekiel 36:27) and write his law on their hearts (Jeremiah 31:33).
  - e) Verse 29. It says, "But at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now." Recall how in verse 23 the contrast was between one born according to the flesh and one born through promise. But notice here in verse 29 that the same contrast is between one born according to the flesh and one *born according to the Spirit*. "Born according to the Spirit" is interchangeable with "born through promise." This confirms that "children of promise" in verse 28 refers to people whose inner life is the work of God's Spirit in fulfillment of his promise. The difference between Ishmael-types and Isaac-types is a supernatural work of the Spirit of God.

- f) Verse 30 assures us that not the Ishmael-types—not the Judaizers—but the Isaac-types will inherit the blessing of Abraham, even though they may be persecuted. Finally, Paul concludes in verse 31 that we—that is, we who live by faith in the Son of God and don't rely on what we can achieve on our own—are not in the slave category but in the category of the free.

#### 10. The Freedom of the Children of Promise

- a. Definition of freedom. Freedom is what you have when there is opportunity, ability, and desire to do what will make you the happiest forever. Everyone wants this full freedom. If that's what you want, then this text is crucial for you, because Paul says the Ishmael-types don't have this freedom but the Isaac-types do.
- b. Why aren't the Ishmael-types free? They are not free because they lack the desire to rest in God's promises. It's not that they desire to reject God. They simply want him on their own terms. Abraham and Hagar wanted God's blessing, but on their terms.
- c. The Judaizers want God's blessing, but not on his terms. Ishmael-types in every age rely on human resources and don't desire to feel like children in need of a father, or like a patient in need of a doctor. Ishmael-types think you can outgrow:
  - Jesus loves me, this I know
  - For the Bible tells me so.
  - Little ones to him belong,
  - We are *weak* but he is *strong*.
- d. Therefore, when it comes to saving faith, Ishmael-types do not have the freedom of desire. They do not want it. Therefore, they also lack the freedom of eternal life, because no one who prefers to live in his own strength rather than trusting God will be saved and go to heaven. And what's more, the hardness of heart that rejects childlike dependence on God will also darken the understanding of God's love. Every one of us knows that the most common use of the mind is to justify our desires. Therefore wrong desires will deeply mislead the mind until it is *not able* to understand what is right. So Ishmael-types are not free because: (1) they lack the freedom of desire to rest in God's sovereign grace; (2) they lack the freedom of ability to understand God's will; and (3) they lack the freedom of eternal joy, because the life they have chosen leads to destruction.

- e. But we, brothers and sisters, if we are relying on God like Isaac, are children of promise (Galatians 4:28). We have been born of the Holy Spirit. The hallmark of the Isaac-types is that we have been converted, changed, transformed at the center of our lives, so that we *desire* to rest in God's grace. We desire to trust God and become like little children. We have to die to the remaining tendencies in us to be proud and to trust in ourselves or other people instead of God. Our delight is in the law of the Lord. We have to become reliant on his power. This is what it means to be born according to the Spirit. This is what it means to say I no longer live but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20). His passion becomes our passion.
- f. Therefore, Isaac-types have the freedom of desire. God has caused us to be born again by the Spirit of his Son, and is shaping our desires according to his will.
- g. "For freedom Christ has set us free! Stand fast, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."

### III. Practical (5:1-6:18)

#### A. Freedom in Christ (5:1-15)<sup>8</sup>

1. The "Yoke of Slavery" (1-6a) (Cf. 5:2-3 with wording in 1:6-9)
  - a. Five Results if "You Let Yourselves be Circumcised and Justified by the Law" (1b-4)
    - 1) You will let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery
      - a) "*Burdened*" – *Gr. Enechō* - "To be ensnared, like in a trap; to be held in, e.g., to hold a grudge against someone (cf. Mark 6:19; Gen. 49:23 LXX)"
      - b) "*Yoke*" - *Gr. Zugos* – "Like a yoke put on cattle; from a word signifying a coupling of two things together (see Acts 15:10)"
      - c) "A disagreeable burden" (FF Bruce, Commentary on Galatians, p. 226)
    - 2) Christ will be of no benefit to you
      - a) "*Benefit*" – *Gr. Opheleō* - "Advantage, useful, to assist"
      - b) Righteousness of works and justification by faith cannot co-exist (cf. 2:21)
    - 3) You must obey every regulation in the Law of Moses (cf. 3:10)
      - a) "*Debtor*" – *Gr. Opheiletēs* – "One who owes another; one who has not yet made amends; bound by some duty; to be in debt to; a legal obligation"
      - b) Cf. same wording in Matt. 6:12 (KJV)

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. how discussion of "freedom in Christ" makes me uncomfortable

- c) "Circumcision was the initiation, and following the Law of Moses became the way of life." (FF Bruce, Commentary on Galatians, p. 229)
- d) For us – "we are in debt to a life of gaining our righteousness by working and never believing that we have 'done enough' to please God"
- 4) You have been alienated from Christ
  - a) "*Alienated*" – Gr. *Katargeō* - "useless, abolished, ceased, to be put away; to be unemployed, to be severed"
  - b) Same imagery as Romans 7:2 when describing the legal relationship between a widow and her deceased husband
- 5) You have fallen away from grace
  - a) "*Fallen*" – Gr. *Ekpiptō* - "to fall off of, from a position, to fall to the ground; to be driven out of one's course"
  - b) When you decide to observe the Law of Moses as a result of choosing to leave a life that is based on faith, you leave the grace of God as your means to salvation.
  - c) Rom. 4:4-5, 11:6
  - d) "He is not, of course, speaking of occasional sins, but he has in mind a far more serious matter, that of substituting law for Christ as the agent in salvation." (Robertson's Word Pictures)
  - e) If we decide to "substitute" works for Christ as the agent in our salvation, the result would be the same – we are fallen from grace.
  - f) Cf. how we typically use this when someone stops coming to church – "he fell away".
  - g) Considering what Paul has said so far – this is a conscious and "thought out" choice ... they did not just fall into this by accident.
  - h) Cf. the opposite of Romans 5:2
- b. Two Results if "You are Living Through the Spirit" (5-6a)
  - 1) "We eagerly await by faith ..."
    - a) "*Eagerly Await*" – Gr. *Apekdechomai* – "to expect fully; to patiently wait for"
    - b) cf. just another indicator of the difference between trying to be saved by your works where you are always trying to 'make it happen' and being saved by grace where you are 'patiently waiting for the righteousness for which we hope'.
    - c) "Through the Spirit" – as opposed to fleshly ways of justification whatever they may be
    - d) "For the righteousness for which we hope" (cf. Col. 1:5; I Pet. 1:3; II Tim. 4:8) / "A verdict of 'not guilty'." (FF Bruce, Commentary on Galatians, p. 232)

- 2) "Neither circumcision or uncircumcision has any value"
  - a) We don't have to worry about the value of circumcision since it is worthless and has nothing to do with salvation.
  - b) Cf. I Cor. 7:18-19
2. The "Little Yeast" (7-12, 15)
  - a. "You have been kept from obeying" (7-10b)
    - 1) "Who cut in on you?"
      - a) "*Hinder*" – *Gr. Anakoptō* - "to beat back; to check the course of a ship; runners cutting in on one another during a race"
      - b) Cf. Malaysian Flight 370 – course was checked ... hindered
    - 2) "A little yeast ..."
      - a) A well-known proverb ... not necessarily Biblical in nature
      - b) Cf. I Cor. 5:6 (see Matt. 13:33)
    - 3) "I am confident ..."
      - a) In spite of their decisions so far, Paul was confident they would change their view and agree with him.
      - b) A show of grace on his part
  - b. "You have been thrown into confusion" (10b) (cf. Acts 15:24)
  - c. "The offense of the cross has been abolished" (11b)
    - 1) "*Offense* – *Gr. Skandalon* – "The movable stick or trigger of a trap; a snare; that which is offensive, causes anger or creates disapproval; Eng. Word 'scandal'"
    - 2) In the Jewish culture, you would not be getting into trouble with the Jewish Zealots if you chose circumcision over the cross.
    - 3) See I Cor. 1:18-25
  - d. "You are biting and devouring each other" (15)
    - 1) Cf. an image of cats and dogs fighting one another or a pack of wild animals preying on one another.
    - 2) False doctrine is not a "victimless crime" ... it always has an effect on our relationship with others.
  - e. Paul's 'wish' for the trouble-makers (12)
    - 1) One of the strongest things Paul says about false teachers in all of his writings.
    - 2) His 'wish' for them is they would make themselves 'eunuchs' by their own hand.

3. The "Only Thing that Counts" (6b, 13-14)
  - a. Faith expressing itself through love (6b)
    - 1) Cf. versions:
      - a) "All that matters" (CEV)
      - b) "What is important" (NLT)
    - 2) "Faith is the root ... love is the fruit." (FF Bruce, Commentary on Galatians, p. 232)
    - 3) "Man is not justified by love ... he is justified by faith." (Martin Luther)
    - 4) Cf. how we can get sentimental and think that as long as a person is showing "acts of love" then they must be ok with God. It must spring from faith in God.
  - b. Serving one another in love (13)
    - 1) "Called to live in freedom"
      - a) Cf. 5:1
      - b) I.e., "freedom from obligations to the Law, circumcision, observing certain days, etc.
    - 2) "Don't use your freedom"
      - a) "*Indulge*" – *Gr. Aphormē* - "An occasion or opportunity; a base of operations or place for supplies for a military undertaking"
      - b) This might address a time disciples were coupling a misconception of grace and serving others in love. The result was disciples are lazy and won't serve others because they are "free" not to do so.
      - c) Freedom from service to the Law does not entail freedom from service to others.
      - d) "... the tendency to misuse the freedom of the Spirit as an excuse for enthusiastic license ..." (FF Bruce, Commentary on Galatians, p. 240)
    - 3) "Use your freedom"
      - a) "Serve one another in love"
      - b) "*Serve*" – *Gr. Douleuō* - "To be a slave or do service to; of nations that are in service to others, e.g., 'the 13 Colonies'; to be in bondage; totally under the domination of (Wm. Barclay, N.T. Words, p. 120)"
      - c) "If you want to be a slave to something (whether circumcision or the whole law), why not decide to be a slave to serving one another in love?" (concept from Bruce, Galatians, p. 241)
      - d) Salvation by grace will not allow you to be an "isolationist" ... no need to worry about too much talk about grace.

- e) The more you talk about grace, the greater the pool of those serving one another out of love will become. You don't build a church of servants by focusing on what they should be doing ... you do it by focusing on what God has already done for them.
- c. Loving your neighbor as yourself (14)
  - 1) Cf. Lev. 19:18; Luke 10:27; Mark 12:31; Romans 13:8; James 2:8; Matt. 5:43
  - 2) "If you are intent on obeying the Law of Moses, choose the one that is at the heart of the Law (Lev. 19:18) and fulfills all the Law (Rom. 13:9-10)."
- B. Life by the Spirit (5:16-26)<sup>9</sup>
  - 1. Introduction
    - a. The Context
      - 1) Paul is still placing before the Galatian Christians (who were Gentiles) the choice between living a life that was the "way of the cross" or being circumcised and following the Law of Moses.
      - 2) He has not begun a discourse on sins that are predominant in the lives of non-believers (cf. how we typically think of this section of verses).
      - 3) Q: "Could it be that *anyone* who chooses to follow a life other than one led by the Spirit (trusting God's grace, faith expressing itself through love, being children of the promise) will eventually end up giving in to these desires of the flesh ... the very thing they were trying to avoid?"
    - b. The Contrast
      - 1) Between "Works" of the flesh (the very concept he has been discussing all along, i.e., living by your works) and the "fruit" of the Spirit which is something that comes from within.
      - 2) A contrast in two lifestyles: walking by the Spirit or gratifying the desires of the flesh
      - 3) Romans 8:1-17
  - 2. Recall previous instructions from Paul on "The Use of Your Freedom" (5:13)
    - a. "Do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh"
      - 1) "*Indulge*" – *Gr. Aphormē* - "An occasion or opportunity; a base of operations or place for supplies for a military undertaking"
      - 2) "... the tendency to misuse the freedom of the Spirit as an excuse for enthusiastic license ..." (FF Bruce, Commentary on Galatians, p. 240)

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<sup>9</sup> Another choice between living by faith and living by obeying the Law. In this case, it is being led by the Spirit versus being led by the Law



- b. "Use your freedom to serve one another in love"
  - 1) "*Serve*" – *Gr. Douleuō* - "To be a slave or do service to; of nations that are in service to others, e.g., 'the 13 Colonies'; to be in bondage; totally under the domination of (Wm. Barclay, N.T. Words, p. 120)"
  - 2) We will see that these services of love (fruit of the Spirit) are all relational ... they are not for personal satisfaction (although having them brings personal satisfaction).
  - 3) A 'focus' on serving others out of love is a great deterrent from engaging in the acts of the flesh.
- 3. "The Conflict" (5:16-18)
  - a. "Walk by the Spirit" (16)
    - 1) "*Walk*" – *Gr. Peripateō* - "To make one's way, progress; to be guided by (NLT); to be occupied with"
    - 2) Living a life focusing on the Spirit will not give you time for the works of the flesh (cf. advice from Eph. 4:20-32).
    - 3) Not just "replacement acts" or "another list of things to do" – all are doing the "only thing that counts" (cf. v. 6)
  - b. "Contrary to the Spirit" (17) (Gary – read NLT version of these vvs. to class)
    - 1) "*Contrary*" – *Gr. Antikeimai* – "To be adverse to, to oppose, to be set over against; lined up in conflict, face to face duel (RWP)"
    - 2) The desire of the flesh and the life of the Spirit are not just two choices of lifestyle ... they are in opposition to one another.
    - 3) You are not to do whatever you want (cf. Romans 7:14-20)
    - 4) Q: "How hard do I work to distinguish what is of the flesh and what is from the Spirit?"
  - c. "Led by the Spirit" (18)
    - 1) "*Led*" – *Gr. Agō* - "To lead by being taken hold of, like an animal; to be lead away to court; implication that you are 'giving yourself up to be led' (JFB)"
    - 2) Rom. 6:14
    - 3) "Led by the Spirit" is something that you surrender yourself up to ... works of the flesh are things you perform and practice. Again, there is a difference between directed by God versus dependency on personal works (in this case, the works of the flesh).
    - 4) Note how he keeps "desires of the flesh" and "under the Law" in the same company ... they are tied together

4. "The Acts of the Flesh" (5:19-21, 26)<sup>10</sup>
  - a. The result of a life focused on outward works but is not led by the Spirit.
  - b. We believe that if we are busy and focus on our Christian works, that we will avoid these things.
    - 1) "Idle hands are the Devil's workshop."
    - 2) Typically, what happens is we get so discouraged about "never being good enough" that we simply give in to the temptations out of frustration and disappointment.
  - c. "*Obvious*" – *Gr. Phanera* – "As opposed to hidden; from a word that means 'to shine'; apparent; to be plainly recognized or known"
  - d. Sin Lists:
    - 1) Sensual – sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, drunkenness, orgies
    - 2) Idolatrous – idolatry, witchcraft
    - 3) Relational – hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, conceited, provoking and envying one another
5. "The Fruit of the Spirit" (5:22-23)
  - a. The result of a life based on the heart trusting in God's grace for salvation.
  - b. "*Fruit*" – *Gr. Karpos* – "The fruit of trees; progeny; that which originates or comes from something"
  - c. Fruit Characteristics:
    - 1) Each of them begins 'in the heart'
    - 2) There is 'no law' (either God-made or man-made) against doing any of these.
    - 3) These are what a person 'is' ... not what he or she has become by hard work. There is the 'work' of submitting to God's way (allowing yourself to be 'led by the Spirit'), but these come from a heart that knows it has been saved by God's mercy and grace.
    - 4) Whether you bear the works of the flesh or the fruit of the Spirit depends on what you are focusing on – your outward appearance or your heart.
    - 5) You cannot change your heart by 'working on it' ... only God can change a heart (see Ezek. 11:16-21).
    - 6) Our prayers should move away from "God, help me to do this particular work" to "God, please change my heart".<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> These were the "stock-in-trade of Jewish polemic against paganism ..." (FF Bruce, Commentary on Gal., p. 250)

- d. Matt. 7:15-20; Luke 6:43-46; Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-14; James 3:17-18
6. "The Crucified Life" (5:24-25)
- a. "Crucified the Sinful Nature" (24)
- 1) Remember – to choose circumcision / obeying the Law of Moses would 'protect' them from this (cf. v. 11)
  - 2) Cf. Gal. 2:19; 6:12, 14 – Paul is saying in v. 24 what he is saying in these verses as well.
  - 3) We are in a state of 'perpetual crucifixion' ... where the place of severance from the world is made.
- b. "Led by the Spirit" (25)
- 1) "*Walk*" – *Gr. Stoicheō* - "To march, as in military rank, to keep in step with, to walk orderly"
  - 2) Romans 8:1-11
- C. Doing Good to All (6:1-10) [**Mike Rowell**]
1. Galatians 6:1-2
- a. Exposition
- 1) The first word is "caught" which literally means "to be detected, overtaken, or surprised".
  - 2) True Christians do not deliberately keep on sinning, but they may be surprised by sudden temptation.
  - 3) I believe that those who live by the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) are able to help someone caught in sin.
  - 4) When someone is caught in sin, the goal of those who are spiritual should be to restore him or her not condemn them.
  - 5) Turn to James 5:19-20
  - 6) The reward is great because the task is great.
  - 7) Question: "How many times have you found yourself condemning others (maybe only in your heart) for doing sins that, one day, you were guilty of yourself?"
  - 8) We need to carry each other's burdens. This passage calls us for us to share each other's troubles and problems.
- b. Romans 15:1-3 - We must share the burdens of others because it is what Christ would have us do, and not because we will reap any special reward. We do this because it will help "build up" our brothers and sisters.

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<sup>11</sup> E.g. there is something in my heart that blocks me from sharing my faith. I need to pray for that to be revealed and changed rather than just pray "Lord, help me share my faith".

- c. Matthew 27:32
  - 1) Unfortunately, we often are far more willing to help others to carry their burdens than we are in allowing others to help us shoulder our own. Paul condemns this attitude as human pride – when we refuse to admit that we also have needs and weaknesses.
  - 2) A quote to remember... “It is so much easier to tell a person what to do with his problem than to stand with him in pain.”
- 2. Galatians 6:3-5
  - a. Exposition
    - 1) First, it warns us that we should not be fooled into thinking that we are too good to do the things this passage asks us to do; such as, “*Restore him gently,*” or “*Carry each others burdens.*”
    - 2) Second, it also warns us not to be hypocritical or self-righteous in our actions with others. We should never consider ourselves to be better than others, for this will surely result in self-deception.
    - 3) Verse 4 – When we measure ourselves according to God's word, we will soon find out how much we lack.
    - 4) Verse 5 – For each one should carry his own load. This in no way contradicts verse 2. In verse 2, it refers to hardships. The word denotes something that would be too much for one person to bear, very weighty or serious. A pregnant mother must carry her own child. Verse 5 talks about burdens such as a guilty conscience, suffering, and death. For these, we must rely on God's help alone (Matthew 11:28-30)
  - b. II Corinthians 13:5 - So the lesson from this verse is to “check yourself” as my parents would say to me when I acted up. But more than that, we must test our actions, and examine ourselves to ensure that our faith is as sound as it needs to be.
  - c. Romans 14:10-12 - We can often do more for other people by correcting our own faults than by trying to correct theirs.
- 3. Galatians 6:6-8
  - a. Acts 5:1-5
  - b. James D. G. Dunn writes, “A modern equivalent is that we are free to choose, but we are not free to choose the consequences of our choice.”
  - c. We can reap destruction or we can reap eternal life.

4. Galatians 6:9-10
  - a. Hebrews 12:1-4
  - b. The Christian life is like a long-distance race. We may be tempted to drop out of the contest because we become discouraged and want to give up.
  - c. We cannot escape the temptation to be weary. What we have to do is to refuse to give in to that temptation.
  - d. If we fix our eyes on Jesus, we will finish this race. Further, if we consider what Christ endured for us, we will not grow weary because our suffering is nowhere near what he suffered for us.
  - e. God has given us all the time and the ability to do good to others.
    - 1) Studying the bible with people.
    - 2) Serving others
    - 3) Praying for your brothers and sisters in Christ.
  - a. In closing I have this quote: "Some people are so busy being good, they forget that they should be doing good."
- D. A New Creation (6:11-18)
  1. Introduction (11)
    - a. Possible reference to this section only, implying that the rest of the epistle was transcribed by someone else
    - b. Cf. Rom. 16:22; I Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18; II Thes. 3:17; Phm. 19
    - c. A reference to his authority as an apostle which was being called into question by the Judaizing teachers.
    - d. Some writers would do this at end of documents to prevent against possible forgeries (Lightfoot, The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians, p. 220)
  2. "A Circumcised Life" (12-13, 15a)
    - a. The "motivations" of the Judaizing teachers:
      - 1) They liked to "impress people by means of the flesh" (12a)
        - a) "*Impress*" – *Gr. Euprosōpeō* - "To make a display; to make a fair show, to please"
        - b) Cf. II Cor. 5:12 – possible reference to Judaizers
        - c) The opposite result of those who chose to live the crucified life which was the result of the inward work of the Spirit.
        - d) Focusing on our works really is more of attention being given to outward display rather than a change that would take place in the heart ... more obvious but not of the same value.

- 2) They wanted to "avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ" (12b)
  - a) The influence of the Zealots in society would create this atmosphere ... the Judaizers wanted to avoid that.
  - b) Cf. 5:11
- 3) They wanted to "boast about your circumcision in the flesh" (13b)
  - a) To glory in "in the outward change ... in bringing you over to their own Jewish-Christian party" (JFB)
  - b) A real questioning of their motives – it wasn't even for honoring the Law of Moses as it was for making themselves look good!
  - c) Q: "Which do we care about the most? What we are accomplishing on the outside or how our heart is changing on the inside? Do we brag about what we have accomplished, even under the guise of 'sharing good news'?"
  - d) Cf. Phil. 3:1-3; Rom. 2:28-29
- b. The "lifestyle" of the Judaizing teachers:
  - 1) They are "trying to compel you to be circumcised" (12a)"
    - a) "*Compel*" – *Gr. Anagkazō* - "To necessitate, to constrain, either by force and threat or by permission; 'trying to force you' (NLT)"
    - b) Cf. Acts 15:1
  - 2) "Not even those who are circumcised keep the law" (13a)
    - a) Cf. Romans 2:17-28
    - b) This was beyond anyone's capacity! (see Acts 15:10)
- c. The value of what they are demanding, i.e., circumcision:
  - 1) "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision mean anything" (15a)
  - 2) Cf. I Cor. 7:19; see Col. 3:11; Rom. 2:25-29 (esp. v. 29)
3. "A Crucified Life" (14, 15b, 16-17)
  - a. "May I never boast" (14a)
    - 1) "*Boast*" – *Gr. Kauchaomai* – "To glory in something, whether it makes sense to or not; to make boast about"
    - 2) Cf. same word used in v. 13 when talking about the Judaizing teachers who were "boasting" about claiming the Galatian Christians who were circumcised as their disciples.
    - 3) Everyone "boasts" about something – in this case, either the outward work of circumcision or just glorying in the cross of Jesus.
    - 4) "Boasting" in the cross in the 1<sup>st</sup> century:<sup>12</sup>
      - a) "The word for crucifixion was unmentionable in polite Roman society."
      - b) The correct reference was "someone was hung on the unlucky tree."

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<sup>12</sup> See FF Bruce, Commentary on Galatians, p. 271

- b. "My interest in the world ..." (14b)
  - 1) "My interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died." (NLT)
  - 2) Rom. 6:6-7; Col. 2:20
  - 3) We are "fenced off from" the world.
  - 4) The "way of the cross" and the "way of the world" will always be antagonistic to one another ... "they are denials of one another". (Lightfoot, The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians, p. 222).
  - 5) This is not just a choice in different lifestyles ... it is a choice between lives that are antagonistic to one another.
- c. "What counts is the new creation" (15b)
  - 1) Cf. with 5:6 – "The only thing that counts is ..."
    - a) "*Counts*" – Gr. *Ischuō* - "To be strong, robust; to have power as shown by extraordinary deeds; to have ability"
    - b) Circumcision or uncircumcision have no power ... the power is in being a new creation (our works do not empower us ... our power comes from within).
  - 2) Cf. II Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:9-11
  - 3) A new creation begins in the heart ... not in an outward act.
- d. The "results" of living the crucified life (16)
  - 1) "Peace and mercy"
    - a) This is more than just a benediction.
    - b) This is what we all ultimately want for our lives.
  - 2) "Follow this rule"
    - a) "*Walk*" – Gr. *Stoicheō* - "To march, as in military rank, to keep in step with, to walk orderly"
    - b) "*Rule*" – Gr. *Kanōn* – "A straight reed, rod; a rule or boundary; Eng. Word "canon"; a carpenter's line or measuring tape, e.g., like those used in the Olympic Games; used for surveying or mapping out a district or parcels of ground"
    - c) This dispels the idea that if you are guided by grace rather than works that you will be "all over the place, just doing your own thing".
    - d) You are much more likely to be "walking orderly" since you are so grateful to God for your salvation and only want to please Him (much like a child who is truly loved).
    - e) Again the concept of being "led by the Spirit" (cf. 5:25)

- e. "For I bear on my body ..." (17)
  - 1) "*Marks*" – *Gr. Stigma* – "a mark pricked in or branded upon the body. To ancient oriental usage, slaves and soldiers bore the name or the stamp of their master or commander branded or pricked (cut) into their bodies to indicate what master or general they belonged to" (Thayer); to be branded; from which we get the English word 'stigmatized'
  - 2) These are the "marks" that count ... not the "mark" of circumcision, which is irrelevant.
  - 3) "I am the branded slave of another." (F.F. Bruce, Commentary on Galatians, p. 275)
- 4. Final Greeting (18)
  - a. The book ends as it begins ... with grace.
  - b. Cf. Rom. 16:20; I Cor. 16:23; II Cor. 13:14; Eph. 6:24; Phil. 4:23; Col. 4:18; I Thes. 5:28; II Thes. 3:18; I Tim. 6:21; II Tim. 4:22; Titus 3:15; Phm. 25

## Conclusion:

1. Lessons to be Learned
  - a. We are justified by faith (i.e., believing God and taking Him at His word) ... not by our works (2:15-16).
  - b. God's relationship with us is parent to child ... not employer to employee.
  - c. We are the children of the promise to Abraham (which was permanent) and not the children of the Law of Moses (which was temporary).
  - d. You can only fall away from grace if you choose to.
  - e. You will 'set aside grace' if you focus on your personal righteousness.
  - f. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.
  - g. Your heart matters more than your outward appearance.
  - h. The 'way of the cross' leads home ... not the 'way of circumcision'.
2. Challenges to Face
  - a. Did the Epistle to the Galatians make a difference? – we are not sure
  - b. "The religious mind is too prone to subject itself to regulations; the liberating gospel of sovereign grace is too 'dangerous' to be allowed unrestrained course." (F.F. Bruce, Commentary on Galatians, p. 277)
  - c. It will be a constant battle to trust solely in the grace of God, but it is a battle we must try to be victorious in daily.



### 3. "O Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

"Come, thou Fount of every blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.  
Teach me some melodious sonnet,  
Sung by flaming tongues above.  
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,  
Mount of thy redeeming love.

Here I raise mine Ebenezer;  
Hither by thy help I'm come;  
And I hope, by thy good pleasure,  
Safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed his precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let thy goodness, like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to thee.  
Never let me wander from thee,  
Never leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for thy courts above.

O that day when freed from sinning,  
I shall see Thy lovely face;  
Clothed then in blood washed linen  
How I'll sing Thy sovereign grace;  
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry,  
Take my ransomed soul away;  
Send thine angels now to carry  
Me to realms of endless day."

## **Addendum to Galatians Study Notes:**

### Supplemental Study Notes to Galatians 4:21-31

#### I. Background Material

- A. Concept of "allegory" (reference article in Biblical Archaeological Review, "How the early Christians 'stole' Judaism from the Jews with their allegorical interpretation of Scripture")
- B. Gen. 16:1-16; 21:8-21

#### II. Two Sons

##### A. Ishmael

- 1. "Born of a slave woman" (22)
- 2. "Born in the ordinary way" (23)
- 3. "Persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit" (29)
- 4. "Will never share in the inheritance of the free woman's son" (30)

##### B. Isaac

- 1. "Born by the free woman" (22)
- 2. "Born as the result of a promise" (23)
- 3. "Child of promise" (28)
- 4. "Persecuted by the son born in the ordinary way" (29)

#### III. Two Wives

##### A. Hagar

- 1. "Slave woman" (22)
- 2. "Bore a son in the ordinary way" (23)
- 3. Was told to be "gotten rid of" (30)

##### B. Sarah

- 1. "Free woman" (22)
- 2. Had a son "born as the result of a promise" (23)
- 3. Was to "be glad" (27)

#### IV. Two Covenants

##### A. "Covenant of Slavery"

1. Associated with Hagar
2. "From Mount Sinai" (24, 25a)
3. "Bears children who are to be slaves" (24)
  - a) "Corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem" (25)
  - b) Represents all of Judaism and the whole Jewish race

##### B. "Covenant of Freedom"

1. Associated with Sarah
2. Corresponds to "the Jerusalem that is above (that) is free" (26)
3. Represents all those living by faith in Christ
4. Those who belong to the covenant of freedom are "like Isaac, ... children of promise" (28, 31)