

## NEVER THROW FREEDOM AWAY

Sitting on top of the United States capitol building is a 20-foot statue called the "Freedom Lady". She was sculpted by Italian artists in the city of Rome, and shipped across the Atlantic Ocean to her perch in Washington, DC.

During the delivery, the ship carrying the statue encountered a fierce storm. Howling winds and huge waves made the skipper fear they might capsize, so he ordered the cargo thrown overboard. But when the men went to toss over the Freedom Lady, the captain shouted, "No, never! We'll flounder before we throw "Freedom" away!" This is the message of the book of Galatians... *Never throw away your freedom.* Yet sadly, many Christians do...

They doubt if God's grace is really sufficient,

## THE EVIL JUDAIZERS

Two things are amazing in this book- the grace of God and the stupidity of the Galatians. Paul writes, 1:6, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ."

The Galatians were Christians who were suffering a case of covenant confusion. The terms of their relationship with God had become muddled. Jewish legalists, known as "Judaizers", had infiltrated the church. They taught it was okay to believe in Jesus; but you also had to keep Jewish rules and rituals. Salvation was *obtained* through Christ, but *maintained* by your own good works.

Paul warns this kind of thinking is not a gospel at all. It's *bad news*, not *good news*. Any gospel that depends on my performance is a dead end! The Galatians were victims of bogus brethren preaching a counterfeit Christianity.

False teachers twist the truth, subtract from the truth, and add to the truth... which is what the Judaizers did. They said, "*Faith is fine - Jesus is good - the cross works - the blood helps - but it's not enough to cover sin. To be dressed for heaven you've got to add to the wardrobe a few religious accessories - like Sabbath worship, or circumcision, or baptism, or fasting, or giving, or daily devotions - this discipline, that sacrifice.*"

But Paul confronts the Judaizers. Our standing with God is in no way affected by our performance - it's completely dependent on the work of Jesus. It's faith and grace, not flesh and works that obtains and maintains God's blessing and favor. Paul writes to help us get a grip on grace.

so they toss in a few good works to be on the safe side. They're always *getting down* because they're never *living up... as if it were up to them in the first place!* Rather than walk by faith they measure their righteousness by adhering to a set of religious standards.

They get bullied by the legalist - or enslaved to an overworked conscience - or pay homage to traditions that have outlasted their purpose. In a million little ways their approach to life leans toward legalism, and insults the grace of God.

But what people don't realize is trying to be on the *safe side* can put you on the *wrong side...* That's the danger Paul addresses in the book of Galatians...

## Devotion Box - Cloning Christians ?

The grace Paul preached came through revelation - not *education* or *imagination*. He says of the Gospel in 1:12, "I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Paul defends the true Gospel by recounting its power in his own personal life. Paul was climbing the rabbinical ladder of success when he was intercepted by Christ. Verse 16 tells us God not only revealed *the Gospel to Paul*, but revealed *His Son in Paul*. Never forget, Christianity is not just a truth to be learned, but a person to be experienced. It took more than legalism to turn Christianity's *chief persecutor* into its most *enthusiastic preacher*. It took God's grace.

After God intercepted Paul, he says in verse 16, "I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood..." He didn't run off to join a church or a study group - rather he went to Arabia - *he sought inspiration, not indoctrination*. Paul opened His heart to God personally before he consulted with any man. It was three years before he went to Jerusalem to talk to the other apostles.

Paul's relationship with God wasn't cloned or copied. It was real and authentic. All too often Christians today opt for *duplication* rather than *inspiration*. We take our cues from what other believers are doing, or worse we mimic what the world is doing.

Years ago Steve Taylor wrote the song, "*I Want to be a Clone*"... "I'd gone through so much other stuff that walking down the aisle was tough, but now I know it's not enough. *I want to be a clone*. I asked the Lord into my heart. They said that was the way to start, but now you've got to play the part. *I want to be a clone*. They told me that I'd fall away unless I followed what they say. Who needs the Bible anyway? *I want to be a clone*. So now I see the whole design. The church is an assembly line. The parts are there. I'm feeling fine. *I want to be a clone*. I've learned enough to stay afloat, but not so much I rock the boat. I'm glad they shoved it down my throat. *I want to be a clone*." Then the bridge that pulls it all together, "Cause if you want to be one of His, you've got to act like one of us." Paul was nobody's clone - and we shouldn't be, either. We need to open our hearts to God, and allow Him to shape us uniquely and individually.

# Bible Scan - Galatians 1-6

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## TOE TO TOE WITH LEGALISM

In Galatians 2 Paul goes toe to toe with false doctrine. He fights for the grace! Fourteen years later on a trip to Jerusalem Paul ran into Jews who had made circumcision a must. They wanted Paul's buddy, Titus, to go under the knife. Paul says, "Not on your life!" To make a Jewish ritual mandatory was to say Christ was not enough - grace was not sufficient - faith was not effective.

To teach "Christ plus... anything" is to create another Gospel. I like this advice, "Preach a full Gospel - Christ and nothing less. A plain Gospel - Christ and nothing more. And a pure Gospel - Christ and nothing else."

In verse 4 Paul calls the compromisers "false brethren" - literally "pseudo Christians", or "bogus brothers". The New English Bible puts it as "sham Christians".

Often we think the enemy of Christianity is the ardent atheist or the blatant blasphemer - but not so, it's the legalist who advocates a mixture of grace and *grunt*. It's the guy or gal who teaches, "You get God's favor through Christ, but you keep it through..." (then they fill in the blank with their own version of spirituality!)

Turn this person loose in the church and you'll end up with a divided church. Their values become the dividing line between the spiritual haves and have-nots. And if tolerated they'll kill the life and growth of a church. Often we

few the legalist as an ally... we're tough on immorality, but soft on legalism. Both are enemies.

It's grace that creates a mood of acceptance. It's grace that gives believers the freedom to grow at their own pace. It's grace that keeps us open to God instead of stifled by our own failures. Grace causes growth... This is the mountain Paul is willing to die on. He refuses to budge an inch when it comes to God's grace.

Even in Antioch Paul takes a stand.

At first Peter - the apostle to the Jews - had no problem eating with Gentiles. At Cornelius' house Peter learned the Gospel was grace for every race! No longer was being a Jew, or being circumcised, or keeping the law an advantage.

But when the James Gang arrived in Antioch, to impress these Jewish dignitaries, Peter turned up his nose at his newfound Gentile friends. His prejudice implied the Gentiles were second class Christians. It betrayed the truth of the Gospel - that we're all on equal ground at the cross.

Remember, though - this was Pentecost Pete... the biggest of big wheels. Peter had the keys to the kingdom... but Paul didn't care who he was. "A famous name can never justify an infamous act." Peter was wrong and needed to be confronted. Paul pounces on Peter's prejudice, and stands up for those Christ died to save.

### Devotion Box - Who Does The Living In Your Life ?

In 2:16 Paul begins to explain the doctrine behind his actions... "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ..." To be *justified* is to be treated by God *just-as-if-I'd* never sinned. God knows I've sinned. He's grieved over every grimy thing I've done, but He's willing to treat me as sinless because of my faith in what Jesus did for me.

Paul asks in verses 17-18, "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." Not only is the Law incapable of justifying a person, it necessitates judgment. God's Law poses a standard I can't meet. It demands perfection and I'm not perfect. When I live under the law I expose my faults, and ask to be judged. And note the irony. On the one hand, I want God to treat me as if I'd never sinned - while on the other hand, I keep reminding Him that I'm a sinner. This is why law and grace are like oil and water, honey and vinegar,

drinking and driving - they just don't mix. You can't rely on *your grit* and *God's grace* at the same time.

When I came to Jesus I was spiritually joined to all He did. When He died, I died with Him. When He rose, I rose. And when I died I not only died to sin, I died to the Law. *I'm no longer connected to a legal standard, but to a living Savior.* Verse 20 says that "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God..." Here's how you and I overcome sin - by realizing that victory is not up to me. It's no longer my responsibility! It's up to Christ who lives in me. The Christian lives the exchanged life. I stop relying on my own energies. I see myself crucified with Christ, and I trust Jesus to live His life through me.

It's no longer works, but grace - it's not flesh, but faith. The responsibility has shifted from me to the Christ who lives in me. We believe in the miracle of the resurrection, but the real miracle is the Spirit of Jesus now living in me. *Let me ask you, who's doing the living in your life?*

### Devotion Box - Shifting Gears

Here's the problem in Galatia... the believers had embraced grace, but they'd yet to learn to live accordingly. They failed to shift gears, and were retreating from the glories of grace into the deadly clutches of legalism.

Paul takes them back to their spiritual beginnings... In verse 2 he asks them if they received the Spirit by law or faith. It was by faith. In verse 3 he asks, "Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?" When you were saved, the Spirit did a work in your heart. Why then, are you now trusting in *your own work*? Why not rely on the Spirit to continue *His work*? Guys, it's the Holy Spirit that enables us to live a holy life!

The Galatians weren't adapting to grace because they'd been drilled and trained by non-grace. Think a moment about every other sphere of life - *business, sports, school*. The emphasis is on performance. It's grit and grades... and very little grace. The prize goes to the *achiever*, not the *believer*.

The Galatians understood grace, but they had been conditioned by works. And this can be our problem. I can voice the importance of faith - then live as if it's up to me. I can stay on the treadmill of performance always measuring myself by rules and rituals - or I can shift gears - and swing in the hammock of grace. We're not just saved by grace - God wants us to live by grace!

## LEARNING FROM ABRAHAM

Did you hear about Abraham? He wanted to upgrade his PC to Windows XP. But his son Isaac told him, "Sorry daddy-o, you can't run Windows XP on your old, slow Pentium II processor. You need at least a Pentium IV with a minimum of 256 megabytes of memory!" But Abraham was a man of faith. He gazed calmly at Isaac, and answered him, "Don't worry son, God will provide the RAM."

You might ask, "*In the computer age what in the world can we learn from Abraham - a man who lived 4000 years ago?*" The answer is "*plenty!*" Though the world has changed, God's means of dealing with people have not. His terms are the same for us as they were for Abraham.

Paul brings up Abraham in 3:6, by quoting Genesis 15:6, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." It wasn't circumcision, or His sacrifice, or good works that made Abraham right with God. It was his faith! And to receive the same blessing and favor we have to follow in Abraham's faith-steps.

The latter part of chapter 3 is a commentary on God's covenant with Abraham. I'm sure you've heard the expression, "*cut a deal*", but I'll bet you don't know its origin? In ancient times when covenants were sealed animals were sacrificed, and cut in cross-sections. The pieces were aligned to form a corridor. Both parties then walked together through the animal parts - committing to their end of the deal. After God promised to bless him - Abraham

made the sacrifices and waited on God to ratify the deal. He waited all day and almost dozed off when God appeared in the form of fire and smoke and walked through the animal parts by Himself.

This wasn't a tag-team effort, or a joint-venture. This wasn't God's part and Abraham's part. God walked the corridor by Himself. The work was God's, and His alone. All Abraham did was look on and believe. And this is the way God relates to people today. Jesus has done all the work for us. Our part is to simply have faith!

In verse 16 Paul says grace was promised to Abraham and his "Seed" (*singular*), not "Seeds", (*plural*). The covenant was inherited by one man, Jesus, not a nation.

Verse 17 points out God's covenant with Abraham preceded the Law of Moses by 430 years. *Faith was in force before and after the Law. It supercedes the Law.*

In verse 14 the question arises, "What purpose then does the Law serve?" The answer "it was added...till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made". The Law showed us our sin and pointed out the Savior, but it was temporary.

Finally, the Law's transmission was another way grace superceded it. The Jewish Law was mediated by a third party. Verse 19 says Moses got it from angels - while verse 20 tells us grace dialed direct. God ratified the covenant with Abraham *by Himself*.

## LEGALISM IS FOR BABIES

Chapter 4:1-7 continues the analogy of the Law as a nanny, or a tutor. In the Roman world, before a son came of age, he was under the care of a nanny - a *male Mary Poppins*. He was treated like a slave though he was heir to the family fortune. Until he developed adult concerns the father couldn't trust him.

You could put it this way - he had to *learn the ropes* before he *got the reins*. He was graded and guarded - treated more like a hired hand than a future partner.

Likewise, before Jesus came, man was under the tutelage of legalism. We were graded and guarded because we couldn't be trusted to do the Father's will. But once we come to Jesus, the Spirit plants God's concerns in our spirit. We're made sons, not just servants. Family loyalty takes over... and the tutor gets let go.

It's said, "Religion is like a wooden leg. There's neither life nor warmth in it. And although it helps a person hobble along, it never becomes a part of them. It has to be strapped on every morning." The Law was the equivalent of a wooden leg.

In essence, Paul says legalism is for babies. It's for those who lack the faith to walk by spiritual instincts - and prefer the safety of preset standards. Paul worries about the Galatians. They need to grow up and relate to God as sons - not slaves!

## CASTING OUT LEGALISM

At the end of chapter 4 Paul recounts a case of sibling rivalry with a spiritual lesson. He uses an Old Testament story to teach a New Testament principle.

Remember Abraham's two sons... Isaac was the promised child - a miracle of God's grace. Ishmael was a result of man's work, or the flesh. Sarah and Isaac represent the grace that comes from heaven. Hagar and Ishmael symbolize the Law that was given on Mount Sinai.

In verse 27 Paul even quotes a prophecy from Isaiah 54:1. It predicts that at the end of time the barren Sarah will end up with more spiritual children than the fertile Hagar. Idiomatically, Paul is illustrating that grace and faith are more able to save than law and works.

But remember Abraham's ordeal. Hagar and Ishmael became jealous of Sarah and Isaac, and refused to let Abe live in peace. The only solution was to "cast out the bondwoman and her son". And this is a lesson to the Galatians. The legalist will always be a thorn in the side of the person who believes in grace and walks by faith. Law and works are opposed to grace and faith. They're mutually exclusive ways of relating to God - and can never be reconciled.

The church should no more tolerate a legalist than a heretic. There's no relief for the family of God until legalism and the legalist get booted from the body.

# Bible Scan - Galatians 1-6

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - [sandyadams@calvarychapel.org](mailto:sandyadams@calvarychapel.org)  
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: [www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm](http://www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm)

Calvary Chapel Announcements - Sunday, August 18th—*Sunday School Promotion Day*....Tuesday, August 27th @ 6:30 PM—*Ladies Night Out Italian Potluck*....Sunday, September 1st— *Special music by "Before You Breathe" @ AM & PM services*.... Tuesday, September 10th 9:45 AM & 7:00 PM *Ladies Bible Study, "Face to Face with Women of the Bible" begins*....*Friday Nights @ 7:30 PM College Age Singles Bible Study*

**"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." - Galatians 5:1**

**Bible Scan  
Memory Verse**

## STRONG WORDS

Galatians 5:1 sums up Paul's message in the first four chapters, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." After you put your faith in Jesus don't go back to the Law. God's favor is not only *obtained*, but *maintained* by grace through faith.

As I said before, trusting in a few good works here and there - just trying to be on the *safe side*... can put you on the *wrong side*. Paul uses strong language in verse 2. If the Galatians think circumcision will make them more acceptable to God, Paul says, "Christ will profit you nothing." That's also true of baptism, Sabbath-keeping, fasting, tithing, praying, serving, Bible reading... spiritual activities play a role, but in no way do they make us more deserving of God's favor. And if I trust them to do so, I forfeit the merits of Christ. It's one or the other. Either trust in the work of Jesus, or in your own works.

In 5:4 Paul says to the person lingering in legalism. "You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace." That's a severe sentence. To me, it means they've lost their salvation.

I disagree with the notion that you can commit certain sinful acts and as a result lose your salvation. God's favor isn't based on what we do or don't do - it's a result of grace through faith. But there is a real way to lose your salvation. God's one requirement is faith. Thus, if I don't continue in my faith I can fall from grace.

We've gotten it backwards. We worry about not doing enough for God. The real worry is about doing so much we think we've earned God's favor. If you try to add to the all-sufficiency of Jesus you forfeit the grace of God completely.

## WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

Legalism is not the only danger that concerns Paul. Liberty is not legalism, but neither is it license. We're free from the Law- *not to sin, but to walk in love*. Paul tells us in verse 13, "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."

Paul adds in 5:16, "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." Too often we try to overcome our lusts through fleshly means. The 12 steps - or 7 principles - or the latest self-help plan... or program... or guru. The answer isn't self-help - it's the help of the Holy Spirit-help!

It's the power of the Holy Spirit that supercedes and overwhelms our physical passions. Victory isn't the result of me fighting lust, but me walking in the Spirit.

In the last few verses of chapter 5 Paul predicts our future. He knows a life will follow a predictable path based on whether it walks in the flesh or in the Spirit.

Here's what you can expect if you live apart from Christ. Verse 19, "Now the works of the flesh are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like..." Whereas, if you walk in the Spirit you can look forward to... "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

Notice our choice - "works of the flesh" or "fruit of the Spirit". Work is what man can accomplish. Fruit is miracle growth from God. Trust in the Spirit and a spiritual photosynthesis occurs. Virtues begin to blossom. Without even trying, the life of a believer begins to resemble the life Jesus lived. *Only the Spirit produces fruit!*

## Devotion Box - Sowing And Reaping

Galatians 6:7-9 teach us that whatever a man sows he reaps. Sow apple seeds and you'll get apples. Sow tomato seeds and you'll get tomato plants. One thing is for sure, you'll never get tomatoes by sowing apple seeds. You reap what you sow.

Likewise, feed the sinful desires of your flesh, and you'll reap destruction. Don't feed the flesh with raunchy TV or movies, and expect to grow spiritually. It is *garbage in, garbage out*. To grow spiritually you have to sow spiritual seed - read the Word, pray,

fellowship, listen to Christian music, come to church.

But remember: you never reap in the season you sow. Sow good seed or bad seed, and there's always a waiting period before the harvest. Sow bad seed and the delay can deceive. You think there are no consequences. Sow good seed and you can get discouraged. You think you'll never be rewarded. Either way, verse 7 is true: "God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."