

10th MINNESOTA BIBLE LECTURES

April 27, 2013, Owatonna, Minnesota

Theme this year...

**"Justification in Christ:
Lessons from Galatians"**

Registration - 8 A.M. with start at 9 A.M.

Chapter 1 - Collen Ngaleka, Edmond, OK - 9:10 A.M.

Chapter 2 - Daniel Lange, Wausau, WI - 10:10 A.M.

Chapter 3 - Jeremy Folding, Des Moines, IA - 11:10 A.M.

Lunch break - Noon to 1:30 P.M.

Chapter 4 - James Sampson, Marshfield, WI - 1:30 P.M.

Chapter 5 - Fred Rhodes, Newton, IA - 2:30 P.M.

Chapter 6 - Scott Nedland, Rice Lake, WI - 3:30 P.M.

Master of Cermonies: Christopher Graber; Song Leader: Ty McClurg



*This lectureship is
sponsored by the South
Twin Cities Church of
Christ and the Owatonna
Church of Christ.*



Welcome

We appreciate your attendance today at the 10th Annual Minnesota Bible Lectures, an event conceived and started in 2004 under the guidance of the Elders and congregational members of the South Twin Cities church of Christ in Rosemount, MN and the Owatonna church of Christ in Owatonna, MN.

From the beginning, the objectives of annual event have been to:

1. Provide an opportunity for faithful saints and guests from the upper Midwest states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois and the Dakotas to gather for a day of sound Bible teaching, singing and fellowship for the purpose of edifying each other in our Christian faith while giving glory to God.
2. Increase the visibility and understanding of New Testament Christianity to all who attend.
3. Provide preachers from the upper Midwest a forum to preach the Word to a large and diverse audience.

Thanks to the many of you who have consistently supported the Lectures over the years. We have been blessed in our efforts and, God willing, will be able to continue to provide this day for many years to come.

We pray that this year's topic, the Book of Galatians, will be especially meaningful to you and that at the end of the day, you will be glad you came.

May God bless our gathering today and especially your being here.



Table of Contents

GALATIANS CHAPTER 1, “Confronting Religious Error” by Nduduzo Collen Ngaleka	1
GALATIANS CHAPTER 2, “When False Doctrine Creeps Into the Church” by Daniel Lange	5
GALATIANS CHAPTER 3, “The Curse or Cure” by Jeremy Folding	11
GALATIANS CHAPTER 4, “Justification by Faith Apart From the Law....and its Implications” by James Sampson	16
GALATIANS CHAPTER 5, “Living the Dream” by Fred Rhodes	19
GALATIANS CHAPTER 6, “The Christian and Eleven Bears” by Scott Nedland	23



GALATIANS CHAPTER 1

“Confronting Religious Error”

by Nduduzo Collen Ngaleka

Brief Introduction¹

1. This epistle to the Galatian churches was undoubtedly written by the apostle Paul in defense of the gospel against false teachers.
2. It is believed by many to have been written somewhere around 49-57 AD. along with Corinthians and Romans. There are four possible venues of writing that have been suggested, namely: Ephesus, or Troas, or Macedonia, or Corinth.²
3. The main theme of the epistle is “Justification in Christ” which was made possible by Christ’s sacrifice apart from the Mosaic Law.

I. Greetings (vv. 1-5)

1. In this section Paul just lays out exactly what seems to be the main themes of the entire epistle.
2. From the word go Paul establishes the fact that he is an apostle sent by Jesus Christ from God the Father, in other words, he is not a false apostle.
3. He lets his readers know of the redemptive work of Christ in setting us free from evil.
4. Two key things to note here are: firstly, that our salvation was made possible by the fact that Christ gave himself for our sins (v. 4) and secondly, that God raised him from the dead (v. 1).
5. One cannot possibly appreciate redemption and justification, which is in Christ, without rejoicing over the fact that there is an empty tomb.
6. In fact, Paul tells the Corinthians that if Christ had not been raised from the dead then “our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain” (I Corinthians 15:14)³
7. The good news is that there is enough testimony in the scriptures to prove that Christ got up from the grave.

II. Confronting Apostasy (vv. 6-10)

1. Unlike in many of his other letters, Paul does not include the section of thanksgiving and benediction following his greetings in this epistle.
2. In Paul’s letters the “Thanksgiving” section usually follows right after the greetings. Usually, Paul uses this section to commend the recipients and highlight the nature of his prayers for them (cf. Col. 1:3ff; 2Tim. 1:3ff; I Cor. 1:3ff; I Thess. 1:2ff; 2Thess. 1:3ff; Rom. 1:8ff; Phil. 1:3ff; etc.)

¹ For an Excellent discussion on the introduction of Galatians, see David A. DeSilva. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation*, (England: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 493-501.

² See J.W. McGarvey and P.Y. Pendleton. *Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians and Romans*, (Arkansas: Gospel Light Publishing Company), 246-7.

³ All scripture quotations are taken from the NRSV (2003).

3. In this epistle Paul skips this section and jumps straight into his disappointment and amazement in these Christians.
4. He could not think of anything to commend them for. But this omission also shows the seriousness and how much worse the situation was in Galatia.
5. It also shows the severity of tone and urgency of purpose that is carried throughout the letter, as Richard Longenecker rightly pointed out⁴
6. In these verses the apostle deals with what I believe we need to deal with in the church today, i.e., false doctrine and false teachers.

A. THERE IS BUT ONE GOSPEL

1. In verse 6 Paul begins by saying “I am astonished.” This verse begins the rebuking that runs throughout the letter.
2. Paul rebukes them for “quickly deserting” God for a different gospel.
3. When I see and hear what is happening in many churches of Christ today I see this rebuke being relevant to us today as it was back then.
4. Many among us have become too scholarly and tolerant to expose and oppose any false teaching.
5. I’m reminded of Paul’s words to Timothy “proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable, convince, REBUKE, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching” (2Tim. 4:2).
6. So Paul is practicing what he told young Timothy. The Galatians were entertaining false teaching and in so doing deserted God himself.
7. When the church entertains false teaching it deserts God, and I believe it ceases to be the church of Christ according to the Bible.
8. Paul affirms that these false teachers were perverting the very same gospel of Christ (v.7), not that they were preaching another religion.
9. Today in the church we have brethren who still call themselves “churches of Christ” but they have embraced all the religious errors that we have been preaching against all these years.
10. Baptism is no longer essential to salvation to some of our brethren, though the scriptures still teach its essentiality.
11. If we change anything in the gospel message, we have changed the entire gospel. The false teachers in Galatia may have believed and taught the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, but because they had added some Jewish practices as requirements, their gospel was false.
12. It is possible to preach death, burial and resurrection but still be a false teacher and spread a false gospel.

B. A CURSE UPON FALSE TEACHERS

1. Paul pronounces a curse upon anyone who preaches something contrary to what they preached (8-9)
2. If a false teacher is cursed, then his message is also cursed. My conclusion is that those who accept the false message accept unto themselves a curse as well.
3. Maybe that is why Paul told Timothy to watch his life and his doctrine so that he may save himself and his hearers (ITim.4: 16).
4. Lately, some say we do not have to preach doctrine from the pulpit. But where then are we supposed to preach it?
5. According to Paul, both life and doctrine are necessary in the salvation of the preacher and his hearers.
6. So to the Galatians Paul pronounces a curse upon anyone, even among the Apostles or an angel that preaches a false gospel.

⁴ Richard Longenecker, “Galatians” in *Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 4 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 13.

C. SPEAK THE TRUTH EVEN WHEN IT IS SOCIALLY AWKWARD

1. In verse 10 Paul makes it clear that he is not seeking human approval nor is he trying to please people.
2. In our societies today people have become more concerned about what people think of them instead of what God thinks of them
3. Unfortunately the preachers have fallen into that trap too. If other people think it is to be small-minded to believe what the scriptures teach in a given subject, then we won't preach it.
4. Like the false prophets of Israel, we want to preach what people want to hear, even if it is contrary to the truth.
5. Truth is necessary when it is socially acceptable and even when it is socially unacceptable.
6. We need not to please people but God himself
7. Indeed there are things we cannot be too dogmatic about in scripture, things that are not clear or maybe difficult to understand. Such things we leave in the hands of God.
8. However, speaking the truth in love remains a necessary ingredient in our preaching.
9. Paul says it is impossible to be a 'people pleaser' and a servant of Christ at the same time.

III. The Authority of A Gospel Preacher (vv. 11-23)

1. I have entitled this last section of the chapter in this way because here Paul defends his authority (Apostleship) as a messenger.
2. The false teachers in Galatia, like in many places, had a problem with Paul's teaching and therefore questioned his authority.
3. The priests and scribes did the same with Christ; they questioned his authority because they knew that if they could challenge his authority then they could easily discredit his message. But they failed, as we all know the story (Matt. 21:23-27).
4. Whenever people want to discredit what you are saying (the message), they question your authority. There is nothing wrong with questioning somebody's authority per se. But questioning with an intention to discredit the truth is wrong.

A. PAUL'S GOSPEL CAME FROM GOD (11-12)

1. Paul begins this section with 'For' Gr. γὰρ in verse 11, which introduces the explanation or the reason for what has already been said.
2. That reason is the fact that Paul is an apostle of Christ and so his gospel originated from Christ and not human beings.
3. Like the rest of the Apostles, Paul received his gospel directly from Christ by way of revelation
4. That was Paul's authority, which the false teachers didn't have.
5. I do believe that a gospel preacher ought to have some authority, but he gets his authority from the Word. As long as the preacher preaches the Word, he is using his authority and he should do so with all authority.
6. But the minute he departs from the Word, then he loses his authority and we are not obligated to honor what he is saying.
7. Paul told Titus "Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one look down on you (Tit. 2:15).
8. A preacher must realize that he has the authority as long as he sticks to the Word. That is why in that same chapter; Paul starts by telling Titus to "teach what is consistent with sound doctrine" (Tit. 2:1).
9. Without sound doctrine, a preacher has no authority whatsoever!

B. PAUL'S FORMER LIFE, CONVERSION AND HIS COMMISSION (13-23)

1. What Paul does in these remaining verses is just to support his thesis that he was an apostle sent by God and that his gospel came by way of revelation from Christ himself.
2. In responding to those who might have challenged his authority, Paul uses these three things to show his authenticity;
 - His former life before he became a Christian, his conversion and then his commission to go to preach the gospel to among the Gentiles.
3. Paul shows his zeal in Judaism and how he persecuted the church of God and how he was zealous for his ancestors' traditions.
4. This should warn us that being zealous doesn't always mean that what we are doing is right.
5. It is possible to be zealous and sincerely wrong. Paul was like this, we can easily become like this, our friends and family members can too. Paul says his fellow Jews were also zealous but not in accordance with knowledge (Rom. 10:1-3).
6. It is our job to use the authority that we have from God to lovingly show the truth to everyone we meet.

IV. CONCLUSION

1. In this chapter Paul helps us realize that salvation is found in Christ Jesus whom God raised from the dead
2. Paul is an apostle of Jesus by God's will and not humans and therefore his gospel came from Christ himself
3. To the Ephesians he says he received it by revelation and then wrote it down so that when we read we may understand his insight (Eph. 3:3-4).
4. We don't have to wait for new revelations, but just believe the revelation found in scripture.
5. Changing the gospel message is to invite a curse upon oneself.
6. Time can change, technology may improve, societal standards may also change, but the truth of the gospel has not changed and it will never change.
7. May God bless us as we strive to live right and share the same old gospel in this modern world, remembering that justification can only be found in Jesus the Christ.

My full name is Nduduzo Collen Ngaleka, from Durban, South Africa. Born in October 2, 1982. Converted and baptized into Christ in 1998, I began preaching in 1999. I graduated with BA in Bible at Southern Africa Bible College in Benoni, South Africa (2006). Became involved with prison ministry from 2007 till present. I have conducted gospel meetings and planted congregations in the region of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. Married my wife Gugu in 2009 and we have one son who is two years old, his name is Nduduzo Collen Jnr. but we call him Junior. Currently doing M.Div. at Oklahoma Christian University, Oklahoma City. Working with the churches in the region of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa to start a ministry and trade school that will provide ministry training for ministers and equip them with a trade to help support their families while they spread the gospel all over Africa. Contact Collen by email: collen.ngaleka@gmail.com





GALATIANS CHAPTER 2

“When False Doctrine Creeps Into the Church”

by Daniel Lange

I. Introduction

As the Apostle Paul and Barnabas undoubtedly rejoiced and reported of all the great things God had done with them among the Gentiles, it was not surprising to find that amongst them stood “false brethren.” They were of the “...*sect of the Pharisees who believed...*” according to Luke in Acts 15:5. They rose up at this time and sought to incorporate the traditions and commandments of Moses, especially circumcision, as part of the gospel of Christ. However, it was a “different gospel” as Paul described it (Galatians 1:6, NKJV), and not “another” (Gal. 1:7). Paul explained the origin of *this* gospel to come from those who sought to “pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal. 1:7). Their gospel was “false doctrine.” It was “heretical.” It was that which would *carry away* the soul into the abyss of hell. “Why,” you might ask? The answer is because it was not the straightway gospel of Christ! As was the case when Peter sought to build three tabernacles for Moses, Elijah, and Jesus on a high mountain, setting them side by side, but the Lord said to Peter, “*This is my Beloved Son... Hear Him,*” so too must we hear Jesus voice *alone* in matters of spiritual instruction and authority. To set Moses and Elijah side by side with Jesus in spiritual authority is to make crooked the way to heaven! Thus, when Paul came face to face with this crooked way being stirred into the kettle of the true gospel, he withstood them. Paul was a bold man, and a man who continues to be a pattern for us today (Philippians 3:17).

What are we to do when false doctrine is found creeping into the church today? This is a serious question I would like to investigate as we turn our attention to Galatians chapter two. A letter that teaches us that a soul can only find his justification from sin in the most blessed Christ and His doctrine. Paul said, “*But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed,*” (Gal. 1:8). Can we speak the truth of this saying with any more plainness than what the Holy Spirit has already said by inspiration?! Justification from sin is *only* found in the blessed Christ and the doctrine spoken by His Apostles! Therefore, we need to be equipped to handle the false way! Perhaps far too often we stand lost when that which contradicts barrels its way into the church. Our eyes become big like a puppy, completely in shock as to what we've just heard spoken from the pulpit, the pew, the small group gathering at the home devotional. Members of the church today need to be educated on this point. Servants in the church, preachers, and deacons need to be educated on this point. Leaders in the church especially need to be educated on this point. And we can learn so much from the one, Paul, who had to deal with this problem on many occasions during his ministry of the truth of the gospel.

II. Act with Wisdom (Gal. 2:2)

The first thing that needs to be applied in handling false doctrine is wisdom. Wisdom for one thing involves knowing *where* to pick your battles. In Galatians 2:2, Paul says “...*I went up by revelation and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.*” Paul’s meeting with those of reputation is recorded for us by Luke in Acts 15:6-21, where there is a coming together of the leadership in the Jerusalem church. This occurred because as we read in Acts 15:1-5, Paul and Barnabas were reporting to the churches about

the conversion of the Gentiles, but some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up and said, *"It is necessary to circumcise them (i.e. the Gentile Christians), and to command them to keep the law of Moses."* In the very next passage Luke says that, *"...the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter."* In other words, Paul's public meeting was adjourned! Why Paul? Why did the public meeting end, and begin with a private meeting among the leaders of the Jerusalem church? *"...Lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain,"* he says (Gal. 2:2). Paul knew that his ministry could become vain if he challenged these false brethren in the midst of the assembly. Just consider all the confusion and disruption this debate could have had upon the souls of the weak and fainthearted. Even the leaders during this time of infancy in the church were still in question about this subject! The Apostle Paul knew *where* to pick his battles when it came to false teaching.

This kind of wisdom needs to be taught in our sermons, bible classes, devotionals, and day to day Christian communication. It has occurred far too often even within my own limited years of experience in the church where members and evangelists have been hasty to strap on their warrior attire and duke it out in the very midst of the public! These things should not be so in the public meeting of the church! In such instances, I can faintly hear again the echoes of the Apostle's words as they were spoken to the church at Corinth, *"...you come together not for the better but for the worse"* (1 Corinthians 11:17). Perhaps we need a reminder again of Aquila and Priscilla who heard Apollos' preaching about the baptism of John in the New Testament era, and yet were still wise enough to approach the matter *privately* and instruct him in the way of truth (Cf. Acts 18:24-26). Is there a time for dispute? Absolutely! In fact there was *"...much dispute..."* as Paul and Barnabas were gathered with those of reputation in Acts 15:7! Yet, this was preceded by an act of wisdom to adjourn the public meeting and have this dispute privately. Wisdom instructs to know where to pick our battles when confronting false doctrine. Wisdom instructs to be discerning of the faint and weak hearted and recognizing the most beneficial time and place to approach such a matter.

Do take note that there will be times when false doctrine is creeping in the church, and a public exposure is very appropriate. Paul told young Timothy, *"Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear"* (1 Timothy 5:20). Keep in mind that this command was preceded by Paul's instruction to, *"...not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses"* (1 Tim. 5:19). These passages aren't the only Scriptures that speak on this subject, but these alone indicate a couple things (1) Public exposure was permissible in the church (2) as long as they had weighty evidence against them. There were times when Paul exposed individual members in the congregation (Cf. 1 Cor. 5), but we might especially emphasize the public exposure of the leadership to which these passages specifically apply. We must rebuke publically the corruption among those who are shepherding the sheep! If the shepherds are walking in darkness they're not going to tell the sheep, "We're lost, keep following us!" Jesus said, *"...if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch"* (Matthew 15:14). Therefore, if blindness is guiding the church, then there is no alternative then to rebuke publically and open the eyes of the sheep that they may not follow the blind leaders into the ditch! Paul himself demonstrates public rebuke with Peter, a pillar in the church, who is found playing the hypocrite (Gal. 2:14). The need for this public rebuke is seen, because the blind shepherd himself is carrying the sheep away into hypocrisy! We will speak more on that encounter later in our study, but using wisdom is the first emphasis here as we consider Paul's encounter with false doctrine in the church. *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom..."* (Colossians 3:16)

III. Do Not Submit (2:5)

When false doctrine creeps into the church, wisdom must be applied with fortitude. Paul said that he, *"...did not yield submission even for an hour..."* (Gal. 2:5). While there had been much dispute in this meeting, Paul did not yield submission even one hour. Paul was like a

wrestler brought down to the mat, but unwilling to tap! Some think of Paul as just a stubborn kind of fellow! Perhaps he was stiff-necked about putting his Gentile converts and companions like Titus through circumcision and other Mosaic laws because he wanted to make some arbitrary point that he didn't have to if he didn't want to! Some think the Lord's church today to be stubborn, because they are unwilling to let go of what they see to be "tradition," and instead embrace a new "progressive" way! I tell you no friends! Paul's unwillingness to submit had nothing to do with bull-headedness. Faithful churches of Christ today that are unwilling to conform to the cultural evolution of religion have nothing to do with bigoted traditions. Disciples of Christ today cling to the simple and pure law of Christ for one reason, and one reason only.

Paul states that reason in Galatians 2:5, "...*that the truth of the gospel might continue with you...*" Why must members of Christ's church today refuse to open the door to the so-called "progressive transformation" of the churches of Christ? Why must members of Christ's church today refuse to open the door to a little "denominational fellowship" now and again? Why, like Paul, must members of Christ's church today refuse to submit to that "little old itty bitty" practice of circumcision, figuratively speaking? After all, isn't it just a slight variation of the gospel of Christ? No friends! The true Christian today does not depart even the slightest, so that the *truth* of the gospel might continue! Indeed, truth in matters of religion is something unreachable to the world! It's like pie in the sky! But to the people of God, we recognize its reality. Jesus said, "...*you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free...*" (John 8:32), but Paul asked the Galatians, "*who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth...?*" (Gal. 3:1). Has someone bewitched you friend? Has someone caused you to think that the Bible can simply teach whatever you want it to teach and there is no certainty in it at all? Surely not! Solomon said, "*Buy the **truth**, and do not sell it...*" (Proverbs 23:23). Paul said, "...*love rejoices in **truth***" (1 Corinthians 13:6). John said, "*I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in **truth***" (3 John 4). Surely you believe that there is objective and certain truth in the gospel that is unbending to the imaginations and philosophies of men!

If, therefore, you believe and know the certainty of that which is established in the blessed gospel of Christ, then remember in times like this the necessity of your immovability, and unwillingness to compromise that *truth* of the gospel of Christ. Make a stand and do not submit! There is a story you may have heard about the man who started his fishing business. He hung out a sign with a message that said, "Fresh Fish for Sale Today," and invited all his friends to the opening. They all congratulated him on his enterprise, but one of them suggested that his sign could be improved. His friend said to him, "Why the 'Today'? Of course it's today, not yesterday, or tomorrow." So the man removed the word from the sign, and it read, "Fresh Fish for Sale." Another friend then said to him, "Why the 'For Sale'? Everybody knows that, else why the store?" So the man removed the word from the sign, and it read, "Fresh Fish." Then another friend complained and said, "Why the word, 'Fresh'? Your integrity guarantees every fish to be fresh!" So the man removed the word from the sign, and it read, "Fish." Then the last objector came to him and said, "Why the sign? I smelled your fish two blocks away!"

Friends, if we try to please and compromise with everyone, we'll end up pleasing no one! If we tolerate everything, we will stand for nothing! Do not submit to the pressures of men. The truth of the gospel must stand! "*God our Savior... desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth*" (1 Timothy 2:3-4). Will you not stand for God's great desire for all men to come to knowledge of truth? Paul said that, "...*Jewish fables and commandments of men...turn from the truth*" (Titus 1:14). Will you not stand against fables and commandments of men that turn from truth? Paul said, "*Stand fast therefore, in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage*" (Gal. 5:1). Will you not make that stand Christian?! Let us see to it this day and every day as Christ's

disciples that we resist submitting to the rules and regulations of men, and stand firm in the liberty of Christ!

IV. Show No Favoritism (Galatians 2:6)

Paul was not a man who was moved by the intimidation or reputation of the flesh. As Paul gives account of his meeting with James, Cephas, and John, those “pillars of the church” as he calls them, Paul says, “*But from those who seemed to be something -- whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows no personal favoritism to no man -- for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me*” (Gal. 2:6). In other words, even when Paul met with those three men who were so closely knit with Jesus, who on occasions walked with the Master Himself as just the four of them, here comes the outsider Apostle from left field! What does he know?! Surely Paul will fall flat on his face in their presence! Yet Paul says, “*...it makes no difference to me*”! What Paul?! Makes no difference to you?! These are the big dog Apostles! The giants of the faith! Paul had met with other giants on various occasions. When Paul’s team had gone to the island of Paphos, they had a run in with a famous sorcerer and the proconsul Sergius Paulus, the governor of that island. Moreover, he had run-ins with the rulers of Jewish Synagogues, great philosophers of his time, kings, and other rulers of the lands. Yet, none of these made a difference to Paul’s ministry! They added nothing to him. As Paul reminds us, “*God shows no personal favoritism,*” so why should he?

There are going to be times in the Christian walk when you encounter those who appear to be something, but you must let them add nothing to you if you stand for the truth of the gospel. Be an “*imitator of God*” (Ephesians 5:1), and imitator of Paul (1 Cor. 11:1), and let no personal favoritism become of you. Why should you walk any different than Paul, and other great models of the faith? I’ll be the first to admit that there are men as well as women in this life that from all outward appearances would seem very hard to contradict. If Bill Gates with his billions of dollars and genius-like intelligence were to come in and bring false teaching, I will admit, that could be intimidating. If Sarah Palin, with all her political reputation and fame were to come in and bring false teaching, I will admit, that could be intimidating. If Billy Graham, with all his religious prowess and scholarship were to come in and bring false teaching, I will admit, that could be intimidating. But brethren and friends I ask you, who are any of these people when they stand before the King of kings and the Lord of lords?! How does the *word* spoken from these stand in comparison to the *Word* spoken from the Most High?! Even the foolishness of God is wiser than these, and the weakness of God stronger than these (1 Cor. 1:25)! Remember the sharp words of the Lord’s brother, James, when the flesh becomes intimidating to you. James said, “*My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, “You sit here in a good place,” and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or, “Sit here at my footstool,” have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?*” (James 2:1-4). And the warning is straightforward, “*...if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors*” (James 2:9).

In times like this it would help for us to realize that there may be many more that have our backs than we think. When Paul says that those pillars of the Jerusalem church added nothing to him, he says, “*But on the contrary... they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised was committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter...*” (Gal. 2:7). He then goes on to explain that they came forward and gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship (Gal. 2:9)! You mean they didn’t side with those false brethren who stood up with such intimidation?! Absolutely not! My brethren, when you play the favorites, you fail to realize how many more might have your back! Indeed, those false brethren were the ones squawking the loudest in the assembly, but little did you know that God still had reserved, “*...seven*

thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal" (Romans 11:4). There will always be those who side with the truth. There will always be a remnant (Rom. 11:5). Most importantly, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* (Rom. 8:31).

V. Rebuke Is In Order (Gal. 2:11-21)

Brethren, there is no getting around the most basic answer to handling false teaching in the church. We have spoken thus far about handling false doctrine with wisdom, a strong-will, and impartiality, things that must be present inwardly at all times. Yet, we have saved the most fundamental and basic action when encountering false doctrine for last. This is that time when the heart, mind, and soul come together uniformly and proceed to utter forth words that are going to make or break, unite or divide, restore or ruin. A time when the mouth must open and the tongue must unravel. This is a time that could be referred to as "rebuking," with of course a word of exhortation. Paul himself related of a time when that pillar of the church, Peter, had come down to Antioch and he had to withstand Peter to the face! According to Paul, that great pillar stood condemned!

Paul recounts in more detail of this event in Galatians 2:11-21. It is of great benefit to us in more ways than one, but for our purposes it shows a pattern for approaching those in the church who bring in the false way. At one time, Peter would sit and eat with the Gentiles, but then when certain men came from James he would withdraw and separate himself to the Jews (Gal. 2:12). Such an example of Peter's walk in the faith was blatant hypocrisy. It had to be rebuked, especially for one like Peter who had knowledge! Now do take notice of this qualifier, "knowledge." This leads us into a rabbit trail for a moment, but a rabbit trail that must be followed. Paul uses the Greek word, "kataginosko," in Galatians 2:11 to describe Peter's condition. It is a compound word, kata "cut against," and ginosko "knowledge." Together it means to "cut against knowledge." It is important to understand that in Peter's case, he was one who had been exposed to Divine truth, which he himself believed! Yet, he was *willingly* and *knowingly* cutting against that knowledge. The King James Version actually translates Paul's words in Galatians 2:11 to say, "...*he was to be blamed.*" Yes! Peter was to have that mighty index finger pointed at him because he knew that he was walking against the knowledge of truth. And this we will not diminish in the least. Spineless elders and evangelists, who will not take a stand against the false way, are unworthy to even describe themselves as servants in the church. However, I want us to also keep in mind that it is wholly possible for some brethren in our midst to be like our ignorant and yet beloved Apollos in Acts 18! To point that mighty index finger towards a brother in ignorance and speak callous words, shame him, and embarrass him, is simply inexcusable and heartless indeed! What a lack of wisdom, a lack of compassion, and a lack of love! My brethren, understand that we have all taught falsely at some point in time! We have all been subject to misinterpretation in God's Word. However, that doesn't make all false teachers! Do you want to see a "false teacher"? Read the Holy Spirit's words in 2 Peter 2:1ff. Am I denying that the Apollos' today need correction? Absolutely not! False doctrine is unacceptable whether it be by ignorance or knowledge. I am, however, attempting to emphasize the need for mature spiritual discernment before one puffs himself up with pride and demonizes a sound brother in the faith who simply needs more teaching.

I speak primarily to our leaders and evangelists in the church today, as it will be you who bear much of this responsibility. By way of practical advice, I would have you take note of Paul's method in rebuking his erring brother. First, he made it clear unto Peter what it was that Peter was doing. Paul introduced Peter's problem by taking a look at his life and seeing what he himself had done in the past. Lo, and behold, Peter lived in the manner of Gentiles and believed in Christ to be justified of sin (Gal. 2:14, 16). Make it known to those bringing the false way what exactly it is that *they* are doing. Secondly, Paul made it clear to Peter what Christ was doing. If indeed one live as a minister, i.e. a servant of Christ, but they themselves

are found sinners, will Christ then simply continue to minister sin through them? God forbid! Paul points this out to Peter (Gal. 2:17). Make it known to those bringing the false way what exactly *Christ* is doing. Third, Paul made it clear to Peter what it was that Paul himself was doing as a Christian. Paul said that he had been crucified with Christ, and that he now lived by the faith that is in the Son of God. Make it known to those bringing the false way what exactly it is that *you* are doing. Perhaps their footsteps will follow.

VI. Conclusion

So what do we do when false doctrine creeps into the church? What do we do when that which threatens our justification in Christ emboldens itself against us? We act with wisdom, we straighten our backs with fortitude, we show no favoritism, and we speak those things that will bring the erring back home. One thing is for certain, we need to be mindful of the dangers when additions are made to the doctrine of Christ! Not only did souls like the Apostle Peter stand in danger of hellfire, but as Paul tells in his story, the *"...rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy"* (Gal. 2:13). Don't ever underestimate the power of the wicked one to influence even the seemingly strong willed of the church. Paul had asked the church at Corinth, *"Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?"* (1 Cor. 5:6), and Paul reiterated those words again in Galatians 5:9. Jesus recognized the devil's influence to sway when he rebuked his enemies and said, *"...woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in"* (Matt. 23:13). Take heed unto the Word of the Lord you who have eyes that are watchful, *"...bear one another's burdens"* (Gal. 6:2), *"...uphold the weak..."* (1 Thess. 5:14), and *"...shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness, and their message will spread like cancer... and... overthrow the faith of some"* (2 Tim. 2:16-18).

Daniel Lange was raised by his Great-Grandmother and Aunt in Central Wisconsin. He came to know the Lord, or rather was known by the Lord, at the age of 18, when he was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and added to the Lord's church. The spiritual awakening the local evangelist had on Daniel's life led him to do the same kind of full-time work in the body of Christ. Daniel attended the Southwest School of Bible Studies in Austin, TX in 2008, and graduated 2010. He then began to serve as the local evangelist for the Mission Valley church of Christ in Tucson, AZ in 2011, until he returned to his home state in 2012 and began to serve as the local evangelist for the Mountain View church of Christ in Wausau, WI, where he continues to minister this day. Daniel is married to Sara Lange, and enjoys playing games, watching movies, blogging, fishing, traveling, playing disc golf, and his favorite past time of all, spending time with his wife! Contact Daniel by email: danlange87@icloud.com





GALATIANS CHAPTER 3

“The Curse or Cure”

by Jeremy Folding

I. Introduction – Galatians 3:10-18

Larry’s boyhood dream was to fly; so, when he graduated from high school, he joined the Air Force in hopes of becoming a pilot. Unfortunately, poor eyesight disqualified him. When he was finally discharged, he had to satisfy himself by watching jets fly over his back yard. One day, Larry had a bright idea so He went to the local Army/Navy Surplus Store and purchased forty-five weather balloons and several tanks of helium. At home, Larry securely strapped the weather balloons to his “sturdy” lawn chair. He anchored the chair to the bumper of his jeep and inflated the balloons with the helium. He climbed on for a test, while it was still only a few feet above the ground. Satisfied it would work, Larry packed several sandwiches and a six-pack of Miller Lite, loaded his pellet gun, figuring he could pop a few balloons when it was time to descend, and went to his lawn chair.

Larry’s plan was to lazily float up to a height of about thirty feet above his back yard, after severing the anchor, and in a few hours, come back down. Things did not quite work out that way. When he cut the cord anchoring the lawn chair to his jeep, he did not float lazily up to thirty or so feet, but instead, he streaked into the LA skies as if shot from a canon. He did not level off at thirty feet, but instead, leveled off at 11,000 feet. At this height, he could not risk shooting any of the balloons, lest he unbalance the lawn chair. He stayed there drifting for more than fourteen hours.

Then, Larry found himself drifting into the primary approach quarter of the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). A United Airlines pilot first spotted Larry. He radioed the tower and described passing a guy in a lawn chair with a gun. LAX emergency procedures swung into full alert and a helicopter was dispatched to investigate. The helicopter ascended to a position several hundred feet above Larry and lowered a rescue line. As soon as Larry was brought back to earth, he was arrested for violating air space.

Just as Larry was foolish to expect that his little excursion would work out, the Galatian saints were foolish to expect the Law to achieve what it was never intended to do. They had fallen for the false teaching of the Judaizers, which promised to produce righteousness and God’s blessings if they would submit to circumcision and the keeping of the Mosaic Law. In the first nine verses of Galatians 3, Paul sought to correct this error by reminding the “*foolish Galatians*” of their Christian experience, as well as that of Abraham, the “father of the faith.”

II. The Law Cannot Commend Men, But Can Only Condemn Them (3:10-12)

Paul has shown in verses 1-9 that the faith of the Galatians resulted in the reception and ministry of the Spirit, just as faith resulted in the righteous standing of Abraham before God. Paul will show in the following verses that while faith is the basis of God’s blessings, the Law cannot accomplish anything except to pronounce a curse upon those who strive to earn righteousness by keeping it. Blessings come by faith as has always been the experience of the

righteous beginning with Abraham, while condemnation (a curse) comes from the works of the Law.

Those who are “of the works of the Law” follow the teachings of the Judaizers, putting themselves under obligation to keep the Law of Moses. Paul says that in so doing, such men do not in any way bring about the blessing of God, but instead call a curse upon themselves, the curse of the Law. One cannot be a little bit under the Law just as a woman cannot be a little pregnant. Once you are under the Law, you are wholly obligated to meet its demands without failure.

No doubt the Judaizers sought to minimize the full implications of circumcision. After all, the Gentiles might have reasoned, what would be so bad about undergoing the rite of circumcision, especially if it would win the favor of the Jews and reduce the persecution which they often precipitated (cf. Acts 14:19). Being circumcised however, was much like signing induction papers into the military. Both of these seemingly insignificant acts make one subject to many other demands. When you join the military, you get up when the sergeant calls you, dress as you are told, and eat what you are given. Joining the military costs many of your personal freedoms.

There are two broad and inclusive expressions in this verse: “everyone” and “all things.” Paul wanted the Galatians to realize that when they subject themselves to the Law, they subject themselves to it in its entirety. The Law demands that its subjects keep the whole Law, without exception. Paul fortifies this point by citing Deuteronomy 27:26 where we see that the consequence of failing to keep the whole Law is to be under the curse of God. While the Judaizers may have sought to reinstate the Law in order to produce genuine piety, their course of action went too far, to the point of producing a curse, rather than blessing.

The Old Testament verifies Paul’s interpretation of Deuteronomy 27:26: the Law, because it cannot be wholly kept, can only condemn men. It was by faith that men, like Abraham, were justified before God, not by law-keeping. As proof of the point, Paul refers to Habakkuk 2:4 in verse 11: “*Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, ‘the righteous man shall live by faith.’*”

The next Old Testament quotation, a citation from Leviticus 18:5, is found in verse 12: “*However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, ‘he who practices them shall live by them.’*” (Gal. 3:12). Paul cites Leviticus 18:5 to stress the emphasis on works which is present in the Law. Again, the Law is similar to the military; it does not matter if you have faith in your sergeant, but only that you obey him. Ideally, obedience to the Law was based upon trust, but the aspect most emphasized was compliance.

If the Law can only bring a curse upon men, is the Law then not able to condemn all men because of our failure to meet its demands? No matter how good the promises of God to Abraham might have been, doesn’t the curse of the Law override them? If this is the case, we can understand why striving to keep the Law was a temptation to the Galatian Christians. If not, we can see why the Judaizers were wrong. Thankfully, Paul’s answer is that we are no longer under the curse of the Law.

III. The Curse and the Cross (3:13-14)

Paul views the curse of the Law as universal, including both Jews and Gentiles. As a standard of holiness, the Law condemns all men, showing them to be worthy of the wrath of God. The

good news is that God is free to fulfill His promise to Abraham to bless all nations in him because Christ has borne the curse Himself on the cross. The substitutionary work of Christ on the cross is the heart of the gospel. That is why Paul could begin this section in verse 1 by speaking of his gospel as publicly portraying Christ as crucified. He became a curse for us (3:13). This, too, can be seen from the Old Testament Scriptures. In the Book of Deuteronomy it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” (Deut. 21:23).

Specifically, the Deuteronomy text does not refer to death as a result of hanging nor of crucifixion. Rather, it refers to the public proclamation of the cursedness of a man’s sins represented by hanging the dead body up for public display (regardless of how he was killed). It is in this sense that our Lord’s crucifixion providentially fulfilled the requirements of the Law; He became a curse for those who had been legitimately cursed by the Law which they had broken.

There was no reason for the Galatians to place themselves under the Law, for it could not make them righteous. All it could do was curse them. The curse of the Law, which falls upon all men, has been removed by the Christ of Calvary, who bore the curse and the penalty of the Law. The Law and its curse are thus no longer to be feared, nor can the Law in any way serve as a hindrance to the fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham and his “sons” by faith.

IV. The Principle of Priority (3:15-18)

There are yet other reasons why the Law cannot hinder the fulfillment of the blessings God promised to Abraham. The first of the reasons given in this argument is found in the fact that the Abrahamic Covenant precedes the Mosaic Covenant, and thus has precedence over it. Paul’s point is that a covenant, once ratified, cannot be modified or set aside by a later covenant.

Paul gives a second reason why the Mosaic Covenant cannot modify or qualify the Abrahamic Covenant: “*Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say ‘and to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘and to your seed,’ that is Christ*” (Gal. 3:16). This strikes hard at the very core of the mindset of the Judaizers, who saw themselves as the seed (plural) of Abraham, the means through which the blessing to the nations would be accomplished. No wonder they saw themselves as smugly superior, as reflected in the motto of Galatians 2:15. The only trouble is that they are wrong—dead wrong.

Thankfully, the fulfillment of the blessings God promised through Abraham and his seed (singular) are dependent upon one person, not the entire nation of Israel. Paul tells us that the one person is none other than Christ, Israel’s Messiah, and Abraham’s seed. The Mosaic Covenant can only curse men because it must be kept perfectly, and no mere man has ever been able to accomplish perfect obedience. The blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant are dependent upon God’s promise, achieved through God’s perfect Son, Jesus Christ. Because He not only perfectly obeyed God’s Law but bore its curse, we can be assured of receiving the blessings promised through Abraham by means of promise, not by our performance.

What a blow this simple singular definition of “seed” was to the theology of the Judaizers. They seemed to believe that the blessings promised to Abraham would become theirs by virtue of their being Abraham’s seed, as well as by their keeping of the Mosaic Covenant. As Abraham’s descendants, they felt that they had a secure and even privileged position under the Law, and that they could thus regulate the Gentiles who sought the same blessings. Paul

has completely turned their thinking upside-down. The blessing of salvation and, as Paul describes it, the gift of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 3:14) which God promised to Abraham, He also promised to all nations. This blessing was not brought about through Abraham's descendants (the Jews), but through one descendant, the Lord Jesus Christ.

V. Conclusion

In these verses Paul has shown the Galatians what the Law could not do, in spite of the promises and preaching of the Judaizers. The Law could not bring about God's blessing but only a curse (vv. 10-12). The Law could not nullify the promise of God to Abraham for several reasons. (a) Christ has borne the curse of the Law (vv. 13-14); (b) the Mosaic Covenant cannot change the conditions of the Abrahamic Covenant (faith not works) since it was ratified before the Mosaic Covenant was given; and (c) the fulfillment of this promise was always viewed as accomplished through a singular "seed," the Lord Jesus Christ.

This argument should strike us not only as convincing but also as convicting. Paul was not merely debating the meaning of certain words and the fine points of theology; he was waging war against another gospel, a gospel which could only lead men astray. The same kinds of error which plagued the Galatian churches are still raising havoc in churches today.

First, a Judaizer's view of the Christian walk does not honor the Law of Moses; it dishonors it in addition to setting aside the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. If Paul is right in insisting that the Law can only condemn men, then those who elevate the Law as the means of obtaining God's blessings are guilty of perverting the Law and setting aside its original purposes. According to Paul's teaching, those who would seek to live under the Law will only find frustration and guilt, for the Law (if rightly understood) cannot and will not pronounce a blessing on us, but only a curse. Only through Christ can the curse of the Law be overcome, and yet, by turning from Christ to the Law, we turn back to the curse of the Law, like a dog returns to its vomit (cf. 2 Pet. 2:22).

There is a very deceptive way in which the Judaizers solve this problem of the curse of the Law: they redefine the Law, making it possible to live up to its standards. They do this by lowering its standards or by providing clever loopholes. This is the point of the Sermon on the Mount. "You have heard it said" refers to what the Judaizers (the Pharisees and scribes) taught about the Law. "But I say to you" is the way God intended for the Law to be understood and practiced. We do not honor God's Law by altering it, any more than we honor a man's portrait by penciling in a mustache or modifying it in some other way. Law keeping to gain righteousness practices and produces the very things it says it is seeking to prevent—disregard for God's law and unlawful conduct.

Second, we need to understand that law keeping, as it pertains to gaining righteousness, is rooted in man's rebellion and unbelief. Paul has very clearly told us that the Law operates on the principle of works, while the promise of God operates on the basis of faith. Whenever we turn from grace to law we have turned from the principle of faith to that of works. I would submit to you that this is the rock-bottom reason when and why law keeping/works is so appealing—when we choose not to believe God in faith.

Why did Abraham strive by his own efforts to produce a son through whom he would be blessed, rather than to trust God? Was it because he did not find God trustworthy? Why do we take matters into our own hands, even when we have God's promise to the contrary and a prohibition to boot? Is it because we would rather trust in ourselves than in God?

This is why law keeping is so lethal: *At its very core this type of law keeping is based upon a distrust of God's promises; they are exchanged for confidence in our own performance.* If we seek to gain God's favor by our works, we place ourselves under the Law—all of it. In so doing we find ourselves under its curse. The cure for the curse of the Law is the cross of Christ.

We have come to the bottom line. In all of life there are really only two choices: God's promises or our performance; the cure of the cross or the curse of the Law. This is a decision initially made pertaining to our salvation, but it is also one which is persistently made regarding our sanctification. May God give us the grace to choose the cross over the curse.

Jeremy Folding grew up mostly in southern Louisiana, where he made Jesus Lord of his life at a fairly young age; he was baptized in Lake Charles. After high school in Bozeman, Montana he joined the Marine Corps. Jeremy and his wife, Sunny, were wed in 1997 at the end of Jeremy's first tour of duty. Oceanside, CA, was their home during Jeremy's second 4-year tour. When Jeremy got out of the military he worked for himself doing construction, and then for a dairy plant, before deciding to go into the ministry full-time. His first position as a pulpit minister was in Tucson, AZ, where the Foldings resided until Jeremy was hired by Grandview Church of Christ, in Des Moines, in April 2008. Jeremy and Sunny homeschool their children, Natasha (13) and Justus (10). The family's favorite activities include reading, games, cooking, and shooting. Contact Jeremy by email: jeremyfolding@gmail.com





GALATIANS CHAPTER 4

“Justification by Faith Apart From the Law....and its Implications”

by James Sampson

I. Brief overview of the Chapter: Paul's Continued Defense of Justification By Faith

- A. Redeemed from the law and adopted as sons, they were no longer slaves, but heirs (4:1-7)
- B. He makes a personal argument (4:8-20)
- C. He fears they may be returning to bondage under the Old Law (4:8-11)
- D. Their past and present relationship with him (4:12-20)
- E. He makes an argument from O. T. Scripture (4:21-31)
 - 1. Do you not hear the law? (4:21)
 - 2. Abraham's two sons (4:22-27)
 - a. One born by a bondwoman (through the flesh, symbolic of Mount Sinai, Jerusalem of that time, born of bondage),
 - b. One born by a freewoman (through the promise, symbolic of heavenly Jerusalem, born free)
 - 3. Christians are children of promise, as Isaac was (4:28, 30-31)
 - 4. Those born of the flesh persecute those born of the Spirit (4:29)

II. Detailed Overview of the Chapter

- A. Gal 4:1-2 Jews boasted of being “children of God”
 - 1. They contended that Gentiles were “slaves” to sin.
 - 2. Children enjoy a great advantage over slaves.
 - 3. Paul contends that there is no advantage until children are mature. Until that time, they must be guided and disciplined by guardians and stewards. He may be future heir by title or future owner, but for now, he is no different than a slave since he is underage. Under the Law, they had not reached the time appointed of God.
- B. Gal 4:3 Childhood is a time of learning - a time of making mistakes and changing direction.
 - 1. The Jews were like minor children and the Gentiles like slaves. Both were enslaved by the “elements of the world” (“enslaved to the elementary principles of the world”; “the elemental things of the world.”)
- C. Gal 4:4-11 Both Jews and Gentiles were in bondage.
 - 1. At the right time (“fullness of the time came”), God sent His Son - born of a woman; born under the Old Law.
 - 2. God had a plan and a timetable. When the exact religious, political, and cultural conditions were in place, the Father would send His Son, Jesus. Jesus was not His Son by adoption as we are, but Jesus was the Father's only begotten Son who was in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18).
 - 3. His Son would live a sinless life (1Pet. 2:21-22).
 - 4. This special Son would be born of a woman. This emphasizes Jesus' humanity. His body would be a sacrifice for mankind.
 - 5. This Son would be born subject to the Law of Moses - “born under the Law” (4:4).
 - 6. Unlike anyone else, Jesus kept the Old Law perfectly. By keeping the Law perfectly (2 Cor.5:21), He would be able to redeem those under the Law.
 - 7. Alien sinners are the children of the devil. The only way they could become God's children was by spiritual adoption.

8. "Because you are sons" (4:6) - They had been adopted as sons into the family, the kingdom of God. They now could say "Abba Father." Notice that His Spirit is not sent to "make you sons" but is sent "because you are sons" (Acts 5:32) The Old Law had kept the Jews as children under age, but faith had brought them into the status of full-grown sons.
9. But all is not well - these Christians had swapped their freedom in Christ for the "weak and beggarly elements" (4:9). They were observing days, months, and years (4:10). Considering their regression, Paul was now afraid he had labored in vain for them (4:11) The false teachers in Galatia were making circumcision and observing of the Old Law necessary for salvation. (Acts 15:5)
- D. Gal 4:12-16 Changing his approach, Paul makes a personal appeal based on his care for the brethren. "Brethren, become like me" or "be as I am" (4:12).
 1. He reminds them how they once cared for him – how they had received him as an angel, and would have plucked out their eyes for him (4:15). Paul speaks of "physical infirmity" (v.13) as he preached to them. Was it poor eyesight or some other infirmity?
 2. He asked if he had become their "enemy" because he told them the truth. (4:16) Paul had not changed. The gospel he preached had not changed. Why then was he considered an "enemy"?
 3. Preachers well understand this concept. Preaching truth will sometimes produce enemies. Unfortunately, many of these "enemies" will be those in the same "fold".
- E. Gal 4:17-20 Paul turns his attention to the false teachers. He shows how these false teachers were zealously courting them to win them over. Zeal is a good thing provided it is toward the right thing.
 1. Paul admits he has doubts about their stability, yet, he affectionately calls them "My little children" (4:19), and admits that he would like to be present with them and have his doubt removed (4:20). The pain and anguish Paul experienced in bringing the Galatians to Christ he was now experiencing again because of their present attitude and behavior.
- F. Gal 4:21-31 Paul presents an allegory of the Two Covenants to help the brethren see that they are of the Freewoman (Sarah) and not the Bondwoman (Hagar).
 1. Do you not hear the law? (4:21)
 2. Abraham had two sons (4:22-27)
 - a. One (Ishmael) born by a bondwoman (through the flesh, symbolic of Mount Sinai, Jerusalem of that time, born of bondage).
 - b. One (Isaac) born by a freewoman (through the promise of God, symbolic of heavenly Jerusalem, born free.).
 - c. Christians are children of promise, as Isaac was (4:28, 30-31).
 - d. Those born of the flesh persecute those born of the Spirit. (4:29) Just as Ishmael persecuted Isaac (Gen 21:9), the Jews persecuted Christians in Paul's day (Acts 9:29)

(See chart on next page displaying details of the "allegory")
Note: This chart is not original with me...and contains some revisions)

ALLEGORY OF TWO COVENANTS

Bondwoman Old Covenant	Mothers	Freewoman New Covenant
Hagar – Mt Sinai in Arabia Jerusalem which now is	Places	Sarah – mother of all the free The Jerusalem above
Ishmael Jews under Old Law	Sons	Isaac Christians under New Testament
Born by natural birth – Ishmael Gives birth to bondage Jews born under Old Law	Births	Born through promise – Isaac Gives birth to freedom Spiritual birth under New Testament
Ishmael the persecutor Jewish persecution	Treatment	Isaac persecuted Christians persecuted
Hagar in bondage with her children Bondage under the Law	Status	The mother of us all is free Christians are free
Bondwoman cast out with her son Shall not be heirs Fulfillment of Old Law. Rejection of Jews	Results	We are the children of the freewoman Shall be heirs Establishment of New Testament Acceptance of Christians

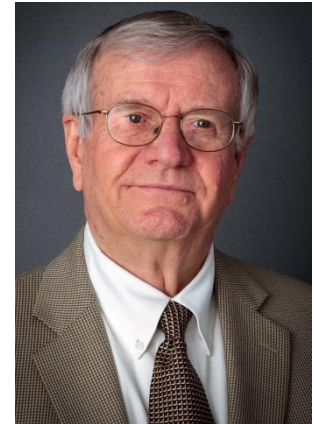
G. Gal 4:31 Paul says emphatically, *“So then brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free”*

1. Those brethren (like us) are free in Christ.
2. They (and we) are Sons and Heirs

III. Sermonic Themes:

- A. “Because you are sons” - *“Abba, Father”* (4:6)
- B. *“Am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?”* (4:16)

James Sampson grew up near Nashville, TN. Upon graduation from high school, he completed a 30-month course in accounting at a local business college. He then took a job in accounting where he remained for six years. He began preaching part-time on his 25th birthday and about a year later enrolled in the Nashville School of Preaching. Desiring more training, he then enrolled in Freed-Hardeman University majoring in Bible. He also graduated from Harding University and Harding Graduate School. He has preached full-time in Tennessee, Missouri, Nebraska and Wisconsin. He is presently preaching in Marshfield, Wisconsin. James is married to Liz (Daily) and they have two sons, Joshua and Caleb. Contact James by email: jameslzsampson@yahoo.com





GALATIANS CHAPTER 5

“Living the Dream”

by Fred Rhodes

Liberty is a great joy that we love in this country. It is a joy that we can easily take for granted, but one that comes with great responsibility. The Christians that Paul was writing to had gained a great liberty in Christ, but with liberty comes complacency and the excitement of something new, even if it is old.

Galatians 5:1

In Christ we are born into the family (John 3:5,6). It is not a birth out of our control, but one that we make a conscious choice to be born into. Under the old law they were physically born into the family and had no choice as to whether they were to live under that law or not. As we make this choice of being born into the family of God we need to understand that the liberty we have from the burdensome ordinances of the old law does not mean that we are not subject to Christ. Freedom does not come without cost. To make the choice to go back to that which is old is a poor choice.

The old law had many cumbersome rituals that must be followed to the letter. These include sacrifices, festivals, feasts that must be attended, offerings that must be brought to the priests and various washings and etc. These all must be obeyed to the letter. Those who did not obey were cut off from their people. Many offenders were stoned, all because they were born into the family and required to obey the law. The old was centered around don't do this or that, but the new on the other hand is centered around do this. Compare verses 22-23 that says fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness temperance. Against such there is no law. Also, we are blessed to be able to do it because we want to, not because we were born into the family as a result of nature.

Galatians 5:2

To follow one of those rituals meant that each and every ritual and law must be followed. (Galatians 5:3) This goes back to the fact that we cannot live under two laws at the same time. To do so would be spiritual adultery (Romans 7:1ff). Being guilty of spiritual adultery would mean that Christ will do us no good. (Galatians 5:4)

It is clear to see that if we go back to any of the laws or rituals of the old law we will be lost. Under the new law we are free to serve Christ. We serve Christ because we choose to be born into the family of God. We have the liberty to lay down our life for Jesus Christ. To willingly serve Christ means that we want to. The definition of "spirit" includes the aspect of doing something willingly. The fact that many do not study the words that God has put in the scriptures but have a desire for some mystical excitement has caused many to form improper understanding of what it means to serve Christ in the spirit.

As in this great land of the free in which we live, we must understand that liberty in Christ comes with great responsibility. Yes, we are free. Free from the old law of bondage that citizens were born into through no fault of their own, by natural birth. But, with the freedom we have, we must take our responsibility seriously.

Galatians 5:7

We must remember that obedience is still a requirement in liberty (Galatians 5:7). In America it is obedience to the rulers of our land and locality. In Christ it is obedience to Christ and the things that He has laid down for us to obey. We can see clearly in passages like I John 1:7 that in order to have the cleansing blood of Jesus in our lives we must walk as He has prescribed. Notice the cleansing is conditional. Therefore we live under a law of liberty (James 2:12). Choose to obey or choose to disobey. Also, in Galatians 6:1 it is clear to see that if one in the family strays away from what Jesus has decreed to be followed we have the responsibility to bring them back in line with obedience.

Liberty requires that we deal properly with those who will stray away from the proper teaching, and also that we keep our own mind in the proper path. Those who had come into the churches in Galatia were teaching things that were false and leading brethren away from the liberty that they had gained. Other passages like Romans 16:17, 18 and II Thessalonians 3:14, 15 show clearly that our liberty is to be able to make a choice to follow Christ in a liberating law that enables us to serve a wonderful master in the way He chooses.

Galatians 5:9

As owners of liberty we must also be a permeating influence in the body of Christ. Galatians 5:9 shows what a little can do. It certainly does do a lot. One member of the body can show an example of kindness that causes others to follow in the same path. An example of compassion toward a brother who is going through difficult troubles will cause all in the flock to see the things that need to be done and cause them to do the same when they come across a similar situation. One soul winner in a congregation can motivate the whole congregation to get off of their seats and get busy inviting their neighbors and those they meet to study the Bible. We must understand that the good influence is just as likely to catch as a bad influence.

Galatians 5:10-12

It is important to remember followers will not rise above leaders. Many congregations do not grow or mature because their leaders are not leading them to. Leaders have a big influence in a congregation. We must remember that we do not need a title to be leaders. Isaiah 11:6 teaching about the kingdom of Christ says that a child shall lead them. Someone is following you. Are you leading properly?

Galatians 5:13

Many times people will use the fact that they are free as an excuse to do the wrong thing, but Galatians 5:13 teaches that we are to use our liberty as an excuse to serve one another out of a love for them and their soul. What a great excuse to do good for others. As we do this it will truly bless our life and we will come to learn what true liberty is. When we do offend we learn that we are to go to that individual and rectify the wrong (I John 1:9). What a great relationship we gain through such an avenue. What true liberty. We are not to go on and sin. God forbid. (Romans 6:1,2)

Galatians 5:14

It is easy to forget that even the old law of bondage taught that we are to love our neighbor.

(Galatians 5:14) We must take that command to heart and work heartily at treating Christian's right. (Galatians 5:15) It is so easy to treat those we are closest to in an unkind way. Consider the marriage relationship. Some of the most disappointing stories are told of a husband and wife and the way they treat each other. May it never be said that a Christian was unkind to another. Is it any wonder that many will not want anything to do with the Lord's church after the way they were treated by a religious person? It is easy to overlook the way we treat the lost in the world. It is in the news of how religious people treat sinners in an unkind way. May it never be said of the Lord's people that we treated them rude. Be they drug dealers, harlots, or homosexual. They all have a soul and we need to remember that. We are at liberty to show them the joys of liberty so that they will have a desire to be free themselves from the ravages of sin.

Jesus teaches us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44,45; Romans 12:19-21). If we are to love our enemies we certainly must love those we would like to teach. We do want to teach, don't we?

We also have the liberty to walk in wisdom toward them that are without (Colossians 4:5). We live in a society that is different in many ways than any other. They must be approached in such a way that they will be lead to Christ and not away from him. The relationship must be nurtured so that they will be motivated to come closer to Christ. Each individual is different and each community will be different as well. Think about it as you rub shoulders with the people in your community. The option is clear. Walk in wisdom or don't win them to Christ.

Often as Christians we are involved in the world, but not with the intention of winning them to Christ. No wonder we are not winning the lost.

This life of liberty is a dream life. It is what all dream that they could have in their life. The realities of that dream life is that there are responsibilities for the one who is free. If those responsibilities are not followed then the dream turns into a nightmare.

As we look at passages like I Timothy 4:8 we learn that God gives us all that we need in his word to meet all the needs in our life and that it gives us all that we need to go to heaven when this life is all over. So using our liberty as an occasion to serve Christ brings great blessings.

Galatians 5:16

But, we must remember that it is all in how you walk each day (Galatians 5:16). Daily we are faced with choices to make. Do we betray our liberty and in reality become enslaved to sin, bringing on ourselves the shame and troubles that come with sin? What a poor choice to make. We must remember that in our lives we will always have a battle to decide. We must fight it daily. The flesh and the spirit are always at war. The winner is determined by the choice that we make. Which is winning in your life?

Galatians 5:17-21

As we make those choices, if we follow the path of the flesh we will be in bondage to sin. It is a terrible master. As we look at all of those fleshly actions it is very easy to see the pain that is involved. Each of these leads to heartache and pain, both for the one doing them and those that they are done to. The ultimate end of a life of bondage to the flesh is found in verse 21 where it says that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. I want to go to heaven. The options are heaven or eternal damnation. (Romans 2:6,8,9)

Galatians 5:22,23

The spiritual path on the other hand is a life of freedom. (Galatians 5:22,23) A life that is full of many blessings. It brings blessings to the individual who follows that path and it brings blessings

to those around that person. Just to look at the things that a spiritual life brings forth as seen in these verses is a picture of a person that we want to be around. It pictures a wonderful life full of joy, one that will truly be a blessing and will truly be free. Freedom is a wonderful quality, a quality that we all truly want, one that we all chase. But, it is a choice that most chase in all the wrong ways. Instead of following the list given by God in verses 22,23, they follow the list in verses 19-21. Seeking self-fulfillment and all the while enslaving themselves to a miserable life here, and also enslaving those around them with the same punishment.

Let us all work to apply the list that we see in verses 22,23 to our life. Honestly look within to see if we really have that freedom in our life or if we are enslaved to a life of bondage. It is easy to fool ourselves. When we follow that path given by God we will have liberty and in the end we will enjoy that fruit of a wonderful life in heaven with God. (Romans 2:6,7,10)

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GALATIANS CHAPTER 6

“The Christian and Eleven Bears”

by Scott Nedland

OUTLINE

- A. Bearing the Burden of Loving Your Brethren (Galatians 6:1-6).
 - 1. Restoring an erring brother with humility (vs. 1-3).
 - 2. Proving your own work with Christian fellowship (vs. 4-6).
- B. Bearing the Burden of Good Works (Galatians 6:7-10).
 - 1. Preparing your soil for Seed planting (vs.7-8).
 - 2. Helping everyone just like God does (vs. 9-10).
- C. Bearing the Burden of Separation from the World (Galatians 6:11-18).
 - 1. Suffering persecution because of the cross of Christ (vs. 11-15).
 - 2. Living according to God’s rule: showing the marks of Christ (vs. 16-18).

I. Remember the Context

Not seriously considering the context of the segment of Scripture you are studying can lead to the same problem Paul was writing to the congregations in Galatia about: false teaching. Context is: (1) “the parts before and after a statement that can influence its meaning.” (2) “The circumstances that surround a particular event, situation, etc.” (Webster, p. 153). When looking at explicit verses in Scripture a careful consideration must be made with the immediate context (verses directly before and after) in relationship to the remote context (any verses anywhere else in Scripture having to do with the subject at hand which clarify and modify the meaning of the explicit passage being studied). Because all Scripture is inspired of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and are the Words of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13), we can know absolutely there are no errors or contradictions in the Bible. Furthermore, by knowing the immediate context and using the remote context of the segment we are studying, the Bible will be the best commentary we can use. The importance of context is stated by David Allen Black when he wrote: “Greek grammar is at best secondary to the context, both literary and historical, in the interpretation of any passage of Scripture. If a proposed meaning cannot be established apart from an appeal to a subtlety of the Greek case system, chances are good that the argument is worthless” (Black, p. 45). Carefully consider the context of this Book as we study Galatians chapter six.

God, through Paul, is telling Christians of various congregations in the area of Galatia that false teachers have come to them teaching a doctrine that could cause those who believe it to fall from grace. Paul, by inspiration: (1) identifies the false teaching, (2) gives proof of his apostleship, (3) gives proof that the Gospel he is teaching is from God, (4) refutes the false teaching, (5) tells how a Christian should walk, (6) gives the reason why the false teachers are not teaching the truth, (7) gives eleven burdens a Christian must bear. These apply to all Christians today.

II. Bearing the Burden of Loving Your Brethren

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one

examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load. Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.” (Gal. 6:1-6)

Chapter six really starts in verse fifteen of chapter five. The freedom we have has not been given us so we can continue to sin. Our freedom is not a license to sin (Romans 6:1-2). The curse of the law is that if you have sinned one time you have been severed from God and have burned the only bridge that you can return to Him with (Isaiah 59:2; Galatians 3:10). We have all sinned (Romans 3:23). Christ has become that bridge. His blood brings us back to a right relationship with God (1 Peter 1:18-19). The blood of Christ has given us freedom from the consequences of sin (Romans 8:1). This freedom does not give the Christian an opportunity to live for the flesh any longer, but is to be used to serve one another out of love. We do have law today; a rule of conduct by which Christians are to walk (our total behavior pattern), (Romans 4:14; Galatians 6:16). The love we have is reserved for God first and then for mankind (Matthew 22:37-40; Galatians 5:14).

Certainly, most people have heard of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. In Galatians chapter six we can identify the Christian and eleven bears. These are burdens (“work that is carried”) that every Christian must bear (“to hold up or support”).

1. Bearing the burden of restoring an erring brother/sister to Christ (6:1-2).
2. Bearing the burden of humility (6:3).
3. Bearing the burden of proving your own work (6:4-5).
4. Bearing the burden of Christian fellowship (6:6)
5. Bearing the burden of preparing your soil for Seed planting (6:7-8).
6. Bearing the burden of doing the Lord’s work (6:9-10).
7. Bearing the burden of proclaiming God’s Word (6:11).
8. Bearing the burden of suffering persecution, (6:12).
9. Bearing the burden of separation from the world (6:14-15).
10. Bearing the burden of living by God’s rule (6:16).
11. Bearing the burden of the marks of Christianity (6:17).

Like *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* we can condense the eleven burdens a Christian must bear down to three. These three bears are extremely large bears that a Christian faces daily. Bearing the burden of loving your brethren is one of the largest bears you will face on a daily basis. If a brother or sister is overtaken in any trespass that has occurred in the past but the sin has not been confessed or repented of, the mature Christian must take steps to restore them to a state of righteousness (what is right and correct according to God). We use God’s Word as the authority upon which we can build or restore the erring brother/sister (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The discipline is from the Lord not from us (Hebrews 12:5-11). The Lord uses His church to bring about a change in an erring Christian’s behavior. They must be confronted with their error and what they must do about it. This is to be done with an attitude of humility, since we have been in the same boat as they are in (we have all sinned) and have no grounds to think we are superior to them in any way. A great example is found in Acts 8:14-24. A new convert named Simon wanted to buy the ability the apostles had to lay his hands on a Christian so they would receive a spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit. Peter strongly rebuked this new Christian! Simon confessed and repented of his sin and asked Peter to pray for him. Another example is Paul (an apostle) rebuked Peter (another apostle) to his face (Galatians 2:11-15). Peter repented (2 Peter 3:15-16)!

If a Christian is sinning and does not know they are sinning, how are they going to know it if no one tells them? They won’t and their blood will be on your hands (see Ezekiel 3:16-21; Acts 20:17-27)! The Lord has commanded that a Christian who is walking in the light restore an erring brother/sister. We hope telling them the truth will turn them back to the right path, but if it does not then stronger actions must be taken (Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:10-11;

Matthew 18:17). A Christian is not to punish an erring brother/sister; it is not under our authority to do such. It is God who is correcting and not us, but God is using His church as the means by which this discipline takes place. If you love the brethren then you will help them to remain faithful. Heaven should be our goal and sometimes we have to get out of our comfort zone and tell someone what they are doing is wrong. God demands this be done, and in a spirit of gentleness.

III. Bearing the Burden of Good Works

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” (Gal. 6:7-10)

Another large burden to bear is bearing the burden of Good works. This bear might even be a larger bear to face than the one of loving our brethren. Somehow, and I don't know how, the idea has crept into the church that after baptism you really don't have to do anything at all except maybe assemble together on the first day of some weeks in order to sit for an hour and then go home. The rest of the week is spent the same as you did before you were baptized! Amazing! Where exactly is the transformation in that (Romans 12:1-2)? Christians who act this way are not fooling God. God knows exactly what you are doing and what you are thinking. Among the greatest works you can do is preparing your soil (heart) for Seed planting. The Seed planted is the Word of God (Luke 8:11). The Seed that falls on good ground (a noble and good heart) keeps it (obeys) and bears much fruit with patience (Luke 8:15; Galatians 5:22-24). Jesus said *“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit”* (Matthew 12:33). You are not going to fool God. If you live a carnal life you will reap eternal condemnation; if you live a righteous life (what is right and correct according to God) you will reap everlasting life.

Our Christian life is a marathon. God tells us to not grow weary of doing good while running our marathon. This is one thing we all have the ability to do. The *“doing”* is a present tense, plural verb. Doing *“good”* is an on-going process that includes many things. Just as God gave Adam work to do in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15), He has given the Christian work to do on earth. God has never asked anyone to do what they cannot do. Christianity is a family that works together. We all work to our ability so the will of God is done (Matthew 6:10b). God has given the church the responsibility of teaching the Gospel to the world (Acts 8:4). There is a part of that process that everyone can do. Door knocking, mailing, inviting people to an event, attending all events including Bible study and worship, etc. As a Christian you should never be asking the following questions: (1) should I go to Sunday morning class or just to worship? (2) Should I go to worship? (3) Should I go to Wednesday Bible class? (4) Should I help my congregation with the door knocking? (5) Should I invite school friends to our youth rally? Etc.

We should all be willing to do whatever we can to help the body of Christ. Whatever opportunity that is presented to us we should do the good. This good we are to do is to all of mankind, but by degree most of all to those who are of the household of faith. There is a false teaching in the church today that teaches we cannot use monies collected by the church for those who are not of the household of faith. I am glad God does not do this. *“He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good. And sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”* (Matthew 5:45). God tells us to *“do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you”* (Matthew 5:44). We cannot let Divine light shine on

those around us if we refuse to do good to all of mankind. If Christians worked together for the good of the church and did hard, toiling, laborious work we could have a part in God changing the world for the better. There would definitely be Christians made if we worked hard at it. The Word of God has been given to us; we need to give it to others and that being everyone we can! Please don't be fooled into thinking a government or a particular political party can really change anything. They can't! Only the Gospel can change the heart of mankind. Christians have been given the responsibility to teach the Gospel to the world. The soul of mankind is valuable; Christians should take this responsibility very seriously. Bearing the burden of good works is one of the largest bears we face every day (Titus 2:14).

IV. Bearing the Burden of Separation from the World

"See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen" (Gal. 6:11-18).

One of the greatest burdens a Christian has to bear is keeping *"oneself unspotted from the world"* (James 1:27). It would be similar to being thrown into the ocean and not getting wet. It is possible, but it takes some ingenuity and work. In the Christian's case we live in the world so it takes large doses of Bible study, self-control and prayer to remain unspotted. God does give us the equipment we need to succeed (Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Peter 1:5-11). There are so many bad influences we have to deal with: TV, movies, internet, false teaching in our school system, media promotion of sinful activities, etc. We are bombarded with ungodliness on a daily basis!

Not only do we have to keep unspotted from the outside forces and pressure the world puts on us, but we have to identify and refute the false teaching of false teachers in the church. God has given us some great examples on how this is done. When Paul and Silas arrived in Berea they found those in Berea were more noble minded than those who were in Thessalonica. The reason those in Berea had better hearts in which to plant the Word of God in, was because they received the Word with all readiness and then made a search of their Bibles to make sure Paul and Silas were preaching the truth. This resulted in many of them obeying the Gospel, both men and women (Acts 17:10-12). We are told to do the same thing today because many false prophets have gone out into the world (1 John 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:1). False teachers come in unnoticed (Jude v.4). The false teacher can be identified when we compare what they are teaching to what the Bible says. Have you noticed in your study of the New Testament that every Book has a warning against false teachers? From this information do you think God wants us to be especially careful when we hear preaching or when someone is teaching us? There is a great burden on a preacher or teacher to teach the truth (James 3:1), but there is also a burden on the listener to make sure what they are hearing is truth. And yes we can know the truth (2 Timothy 2:25-26). False teachers are those who will not change their teaching when confronted with truth (see Acts 18:24-28). They want to change Christian minds to conform to their own teachings. Paul gives a reason why false teachers present another gospel to us: so *"they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ"* (Galatians 6:12). Instead of influencing the world for the cause of Christ the world

has influenced them and they change their message so it will conform to the teachings of the world. A Gospel “watered down” will drown those who believe it. Of course we don’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings do we? We are to present truth with a humble and gentle spirit (disposition), but we are still to present the truth. A big problem today is how people have gotten their lives so messed up. It was not God or the messenger that made their lives a mess; it was their decision to do so. How many times have you heard “we didn’t know it at the time?” It would seem to be easier if we could just twist the Scripture a little bit to allow their ungodly behavior. Everyone would feel better then; but only until the Day of Judgment comes upon both parties (2 Peter 3:16)! Remember that God is never fooled. Whatever a person sows that is exactly what they will reap! Do we really love a brother or sister if we hold back the truth so they can continue to live in their sin and feel good about doing so? NO! Just the opposite is true: *“May it never be that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”* May every Christian have the courage to identify, rebuke, and correct the false teachers who have invaded our congregations. If they won’t change then we must part company with them (Romans 16:17-19; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; Titus 3:9-10). Why do you think the church is becoming so weak in our part of the country? What are we standing for today? How many hours do you put into pure Bible study each day? Week? Each month? How active are you in making sure that what you hear is the truth? It is time for us to grow (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18).

If you make a stand for the truth you will be careful to walk according to the measuring stick of God or the standard He has set (Galatians 6:16). The Israel of God walks in this manner (Galatians 5:16-26, 6:16). The Israel of God is the church (Romans 9: 6-8). The physical Israel of God was destroyed in A.D. 70 and no longer exists. The land mass called Israel in the Middle East is not the Israel of God but is the Israel of the United Nations created in 1947 with resolution 181. The Israel of God was created in A.D. 33 on the day of Pentecost when the Gospel was preached and 3000 souls were baptized for the remission of their sins and were added by God to His church (Acts chapter 2). God adds those to the church today in the same manner; those who obey the Gospel of Jesus the Christ and continue in it. That is why it is so important that we preach the correct and total Gospel not adding anything or taking anything away (Galatians 1:6-10). It is not a small matter to add even one seemingly small detail to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I don’t imagine those who were circumcised because they were taught it was a part of obedience to the Gospel thought it was a small thing when they found out the truth. Think of the pain they suffered because they thought they had to do this one “small” thing, and think of their outrage when they found out it was unnecessary and in fact they were not supposed to do it (Genesis 34:24-25)! How upset would you be at the false teachers if you went through that? I would be furious with them! There is no difference today when anyone is not honestly teaching the truth. How many confused Christians have fallen away because we do not all *“speak the same thing”* (1 Corinthians 1:10)? One would be way too many! Souls are precious.

V. Bearing The Marks of the Lord Jesus

The marks Paul was bearing were located in his body. These were not the physical marks such as scars from beatings which could be seen on the outside of his body but were the same marks that all Christians should bear by living a Christ centered life. People around you will be able to see these marks in you. There are eleven marks to bear in Galatians chapter six.

1. The mark of concern for lost souls (6:1).
2. The mark of compassion for those burdened with life (6:2).
3. The mark of humility (6:3).
4. The mark of maturity (6:4).
5. The mark of taking personal responsibility (6:4).

6. The mark of being spiritually minded (6:7-9).
7. The mark of doing good to all of mankind (6:10).
8. The mark of proclaiming God's Word (6:11).
9. The mark of suffering persecution (6:12).
10. The mark of separation from the world (6:13-15).
11. The mark of living by God's rule (6:16).

"Brethren, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

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Notes

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Announcements

11th MN Bible Lecture, will be on last Saturday of April, 2014
Location will be the STC Church of Christ
Contact: Randy Martin

2013 Beaver Creek Bible Camp
June 30 - July 6, 2013
Eau Claire, Wisconsin
Director: Baxter Exum
<http://fourlakescoc.org/beavercreek.htm>

Fisher of Men
Evangelistic Training
Ron Maynard
Fishers of Men Classes in the Fall (Sept thru November) in MN and IA?
We'd love to schedule some more classes in the area. Contact:
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(612) 963-2808

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THANKS FOR COMING!

See you next year.