

The Epistle To The Galatians



Sermon Outlines

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To God Be The Glory!

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Table Of Contents

To The Churches Of Galatia (1:1-2)	3
Deliverance From An Evil Age (1:3-5)	6
Perversions Of The Gospel (1:6-10)	9
Paul's Remarkable Conversion (1:11-24)	12
Circumcision And The Gospel (2:1-5)	15
Paul And Peter (2:6-19)	18
The Life Which I Now Live (2:20-21)	21
Bewitched And Befooled (3:1-5)	24
The Heirs Of Abraham (3:6-14,26-29)	26
The Purpose Of The Law (3:15-25)	29
From Heirs Apparent To Heirs Actual (4:1-7)	32
The Danger Of Religious Holidays (4:8-11)	35
Sacrifices In Evangelism (4:12-15)	38
True Friends And False Friends (4:16-20)	40
The Allegory Of Hagar and Sarah (4:21-31)	42
Standing Fast In The Liberty Of Christ (5:1)	45
Consequences Of Trusting In The Law (5:2-4)	48
Eagerly Awaiting Our Hope (5:5)	51
That Which Has Power In Christ (5:6)	53
The Sin Of Hindering Others (5:7-12)	56
The Proper Use Of Our Liberty (5:13-15)	58
The Flesh Versus The Spirit (5:16-18)	60
The Works Of The Flesh - I (5:19-21)	63
The Works Of The Flesh - II (5:19-21)	66
The Works Of The Flesh - III (5:19-21)	70
Inheriting The Kingdom Of God (5:21)	73
The Fruit Of The Spirit - I (5:22-23)	76
The Fruit Of The Spirit - II (5:22-23)	78
The Fruit Of The Spirit - III (5:22-23)	81
Those Who Belong To Christ (5:24-26)	84
Bearing Burdens (6:1-5)	86
Sharing And Doing Good (6:6,10)	88
We Reap What We Sow (6:7-9)	90
Two Very Different Boasts (6:11-18)	92

To The Churches Of Galatia

Galatians 1:1-2

INTRODUCTION

1. We live in troubling times...
 - a. Sin is ever present, depravity seemingly on the rise
 - b. There are many religions seeking to address the problem, but their solutions are amiss
2. Christians in the first century A.D. found themselves facing similar circumstances...
 - a. Immorality was rampant, moral virtue was scarce
 - b. Religions were many, yet ineffective in saving and sanctifying souls
3. In his letter to the churches of Galatia, Paul addressed such concerns...
 - a. Dealing with false gospels and false hopes
 - b. Providing guidance for salvation and godly living

[Paul's epistle to the Galatians remains a powerful and relevant guide for Christians today. In this lesson, we shall consider some **background information** on the book of Galatians...]

I. THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE (1:1-2)

A. PAUL...

1. Mentions himself by name twice - **Ga 1:1; 5:2**
2. Known formerly as Saul of Tarsus, persecutor of the church - **Ac 9:1-2**
3. Who became known as the "apostle to the Gentiles" - **Ac 9:15**
4. Author of half of the books of the New Testament
5. Regarding his authorship of Galatians
 - a. This was the unanimous view of the early church
 - b. Even modern critics who challenge the authorship of many of the New Testament books concede that Galatians is truly Pauline

B. AN APOSTLE...

1. He immediately identifies as an apostle
 - a. "not from men nor through man"
 - b. "but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead"
2. His gospel and apostleship were questioned by some, this epistle offers an aggressive defense beginning with this opening statement

C. THE BRETHREN WITH HIM...

1. "and all the brethren who are with me"
2. Other Christians send their greetings along with Paul
3. Though not named, their inclusion implies support of Paul and the gospel he preached

[Having identified himself as the author of this epistle, Paul then addresses...]

II. THE RECIPIENTS OF THE EPISTLE (1:2)

A. THE REGION OF GALATIA...

1. Galatia was a name used both geographically and politically in the first century - **ISBE**
2. Geographically, it was used to describe the northern part of central Asia minor
3. Politically, it included parts of Pontus, Phrygia and Lycaonia, i.e., more southern regions of central Asia Minor
4. I believe Paul like had reference to the latter (the Roman province of Galatia)

B. THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA...

1. During their first missionary journey (45-47 A.D.), Paul and Barnabas had the opportunity to establish several churches in the Roman province of Galatia - **Ac 13:14-14:23**
2. On Paul's second trip (51-54 A.D.), he and Silas visited them again - **Ac 16:1-5**
3. On Paul's third trip (54-58 A.D.), he visited them yet again - **Ac 18:23**
4. It is quite likely that the churches of Galatia included those established on his first journey
 - a. E.g., Antioch, Lystra, Derbe
 - b. The home of Timothy - **Ac 16:1-6**
5. Paul and Peter would later make mention of these brethren in other epistles
 - a. Paul in reference to the collection for the saints - **1 Co 16:1**
 - b. Peter in writing his first epistle - **1 Pe 1:1**

[The **time** and **place** of writing is uncertain (perhaps from **Ephesus**, sometime around **55 A.D.**). What is more certain because of what was written is...]

III. THE PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF THE EPISTLE

A. THE PURPOSE...

1. The churches in Galatia were being influenced by those who would “pervert the gospel of Christ” - **Ga 1:6-7**; cf. **3:1**
2. Known as ‘Judaizing teachers’, these individuals taught that Gentile Christians needed to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses - cf. **Ac 15:1**
3. Paul recognized this doctrine would jeopardize the salvation of those souls who accepted it - cf. **Ga 5:4**
4. Because the enemies of the true gospel were trying to support their case by undermining Paul's authority as an apostle of Christ, it was necessary to verify that he was truly an apostle “not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father” - **Ga 1:1**
5. Therefore, Paul writes **to verify His apostleship and the gospel of justification by faith in Christ**

B. THE CONTENT...

1. Because of his outstanding defense of the gospel of Christ in which we have freedom from sin and the Law, this epistle has been called “**The Magna Carta Of Christian Liberty**”
2. Here is a **brief outline** of the epistle:
 - a. **Paul's defense of his apostleship - Ga 1-2**
 - 1) Introduction - **Ga 1:1-10**
 - 2) Divine origin of his gospel - **Ga 1:11-17**
 - 3) Relationship to the other apostles - **Ga 1:18-2:21**
 - b. **Paul's defense of the gospel of justification by faith - Ga 3-4**
 - 1) Personal argument - **Ga 3:1-5**

- 2) Scriptural argument - **Ga 3:6-25**
- 3) Practical argument - **Ga 3:26-4:7**
- 4) Sentimental argument - **Ga 4:8-20**
- 5) Allegorical argument - **Ga 4:21-31**
- c. **Call to stand fast in the liberty of the gospel - Ga 5-6**
 - 1) Liberty that excludes the necessity of circumcision - **Ga 5:1-6**
 - 2) Liberty that fulfills the Law - **Ga 5:7-15**
 - 3) Liberty in which one is led by the Spirit - **Ga 5:16-26**
 - 4) Liberty with a sense of responsibility - **Ga 6:1-10**
 - 5) Conclusion - **Ga 6:11-18**

CONCLUSION

1. A passage that expresses the theme of this epistle is **Ga 5:1**...

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.”

2. The **liberty** of which Paul writes about in this epistle pertains to...
 - a. Freedom from the bondage of sin - cf. **Ga 2:16**
 - b. Freedom from the Law of Moses - cf. **Ga 4:4-5**
 - c. Freedom to serve one another in love - cf. **Ga 5:13**
 - d. Freedom from the works of the flesh - cf. **Ga 5:16,19-21**
 - e. Freedom to produce the fruit of the Spirit - cf. **Ga 5:22-25**
3. Do you desire to learn more about the freedom that Christ provides...?
 - a. Jesus spoke of it during His earthly ministry - **Jn 8:34-36**
 - b. Then He chose Paul to write about it in this epistle!

If you want to learn more about true freedom, then give special attention to the epistle written “**To The Churches Of Galatia**”...

Deliverance From An Evil Age

Galatians 1:3-5

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul's greeting to the churches of Galatia (**Ga 1:3**) contains words of grace and peace...
 - a. From God the Father
 - b. And our Lord Jesus Christ
2. As an illustration of such grace and peace, Paul continues in **verse 4**...
 - a. "who gave Himself for our sins" (grace!)
 - b. "that He might deliver us from this present evil age" (peace!)
3. I would like to direct our attention to the latter phrase...
 - a. Undoubtedly we have heard much about Jesus dying for our sins
 - b. But what of this idea of delivering us from an evil age?
4. The word "age" (**aion**) as used here means "period of time"...
 - a. Paul has in mind the **present** period of time
 - b. Paul views this time as **evil** - cf. **Ep 5:16; 6:13**

[Do we take seriously the **evil** of this **age**? Do we appreciate the **deliverance** that Jesus provides? Consider for a few moments...]

I. THE EVIL OF THIS PRESENT AGE

A. EVIL IN PAUL'S DAY...

1. Paul described the sins of those in his day - **Ro 1:18-32**
 - a. Against whom the wrath of God was coming
 - b. For denying the Creator and suppressing the truth
 - c. Given up to their own vile passions, they fell into depravity
 - d. They were filled with all sorts of unrighteousness
 2. He called such sins 'the works of the flesh' - **Ga 5:19-21**
 - a. Sins that are evident (to those not blinded by them)
 - b. Sins unrepented of that will keep one out of the kingdom of heaven - **1 Co 6:9-10**
- **Paul and the early Christians found themselves living in an evil time**

B. EVIL IN OUR DAY...

1. Today, many think lightly of such things as: **fornication, adultery, divorce**
 2. One is considered enlightened when they support: **abortion, homosexuality, same-sex marriage**
 3. More and more our culture is accepting: **lasciviousness, pornography, drug abuse**
 4. All of which reflect a world view impacted by: **humanism, evolution, selfishness**
- **Today we find ourselves living in a very evil time**

[Yes, things are not much different today than they were in Paul's day. Yet Jesus gave Himself for our sins "that He might deliver us from this present evil age" (**Ga 1:4**). Consider therefore...]

II. THE DELIVERANCE THE LORD PROVIDES

A. DELIVERANCE FROM THE GUILT OF SIN...

1. Sin is a transgression of God's law - **1 Jn 3:4**
 2. All have sinned, for which the punishment is death - **Ro 3:23; 6:23**
 3. Jesus' blood frees us from the guilt of sin - **Ep 1:7**
 4. We receive remission of sins when we are baptized - **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
- **In Jesus, there is no condemnation for sin - Ro 8:1; 3:24**

B. DELIVERANCE FROM THE POWER OF SIN...

1. Sin enslaves, but Jesus provides freedom from the dominion of sin - **Jn 8:31-36**
 2. This He does by giving us the Spirit - **Jn 7:37-39**
 3. We receive the Spirit when we are baptized - **Ac 2:38; Ga 3:26-27; 4:6**
 4. With the Spirit's aid, we can put to death the deeds of the flesh - **Ro 8:12-13; Ep 3:16,20**
- **In Jesus, we are set free from the law of sin and death - Ro 7:24-25; 8:2**

C. DELIVERANCE FROM THE TEMPTATION OF SIN...

1. We continue to be tempted by fleshly desires - **1 Pe 2:11; Ja 1:14**
 2. Jesus teaches us to watch and pray that we might avoid temptation - **Mt 26:41**
 3. His Father will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear - **1 Co 10:13a**
 4. In every temptation He will provide a way of escape - **1 Co 10:13b**
- **In Jesus, the godly can find deliverance out of temptations - 2 Pe 2:9**

D. DELIVERANCE FROM THE MORAL DARKNESS OF OUR WORLD...

1. Those enslaved to sin are darkened in their understanding - **Ep 4:17-18; cf. 2 Co 4:3-4**
 2. Which explains their lewdness and greediness - **Ep 4:19**
 3. But Jesus reveals moral truth, and how we are to be renewed in true righteousness and holiness - **Ep 4:20-24**
- **In Jesus, light shines in the moral morass that plagues our world - Jn 8:12; 12:46**

E. DELIVERANCE FROM THE WORLD THAT IS PASSING AWAY...

1. This present age with its lusts is passing away - **1 Jn 2:17**
 2. The day is coming when this world and its works will be burned up - **2 Pe 3:10**
 3. Even if we live out our lives, they are as momentary vapor - **Ja 4:14**
 4. Our deliverance may come in the form of our own death - cf. **Isa 57:1-2**
 5. It will eventually come at the return of Christ - **1 Th 4:15-17**
- **In Jesus, we have the promise of deliverance from every evil work - 2 Ti 4:18**

CONCLUSION

1. Living in a morally confused and spiritual dark world, in Jesus we find...
 - a. Deliverance from **the guilt of sin**
 - b. Deliverance from **the power of sin**
 - c. Deliverance from **the temptation of sin**
 - d. Deliverance from **the moral darkness of our world**
 - e. Deliverance from **the world that is passing away**
2. We note that such deliverance is "according to the will of our God and Father"... - **Ga 1:4c**

- a. It was His plan from the very beginning - **Ep 1:3-6**
 - b. It was His love that offered His Son for our sins - **1 Jn 4:9-10**
3. How shall we respond to such deliverance...?
- a. It was designed to be “to the praise of the glory of His grace” - **Ep 1:6**
 - b. Thus Paul writes concerning God: “to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” - **Ga 1:5**

Shall we not glorify God by accepting His graceful deliverance from this evil age that He makes possible through His Son Jesus Christ? We do so through obedience to the gospel... - cf. **Mk 16:15-16**

Perversions Of The Gospel

Galatians 1:6-10

INTRODUCTION

1. As soon as Paul began his epistle to the Galatians, he expressed concern...
 - a. Marveling they were turning so soon to a different gospel - **Ga 1:6**
 - b. Letting themselves be troubled by some perverting the gospel of Christ - **Ga 1:7**
2. It is important to know the difference between the pure gospel and perverted gospels...
 - a. To accept a different gospel is to be accursed - **Ga 1:8-9**
 - b. To not obey the true gospel is to face condemnation - cf. **2 Th 1:7-8; 1 Pe 4:17**

[Today we need to be just as concerned about “**Perversions Of The Gospel**”. Are we aware of how some have perverted the gospel of Christ? There has been at least four such perversions...]

I. THE GOSPEL OF FAITH PLUS THE LAW

A. THIS PERVERSION EXPLAINED...

1. This ‘gospel’ was the problem Paul faced in his day
2. Some Jewish Christians demanded that Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses as well as obey the gospel of Christ - **Ac 15:1-5; Ga 2:1-5**

B. THIS PERVERSION REFUTED...

1. At the council in Jerusalem - **Ac 15:22-31**
2. In the epistle to the Galatians - **Ga 5:1-6**
3. In other epistles of Paul (e.g., Romans, Colossians)

[Note carefully that those who seek to be justified by the Law fall from grace (**Ga 5:4**). This illustrates the danger of accepting a ‘perverted gospel’. Another such ‘gospel’ is...]

II. THE GOSPEL OF WORKS WITHOUT FAITH

A. THIS PERVERSION EXPLAINED...

1. This ‘gospel’ developed later in the course of church history
2. It exalted the efficacy of certain ordinances to the exclusion of faith
3. Thus some believed you could baptize others without the need of faith
 - a. Such as **infant baptism**
 - b. Such as **infidel baptism** (e.g., at the point of a sword)

B. THIS PERVERSION REFUTED...

1. Faith is essential to pleasing God and our salvation - **He 11:6; Jn 8:24; Mk 16:16**
2. Repentance of sins and faith in Christ are prerequisites to baptism - **Ac 2:38; 8:35-37**
3. It is faith in the working of God that results in rising to a new life - **Co 2:12-13**

[A popular perversion of the gospel is what we will call...]

III. THE GOSPEL OF GOOD WORKS ONLY

A. THIS PERVERSION EXPLAINED...

1. Many have the idea that as long as you are a basically ‘good person’, you will be saved
2. Especially if your ‘good deeds’ outnumber or outweigh your ‘bad deeds’
3. Thus a good moral person, especially if religious, is assumed to be saved

B. THIS PERVERSION REFUTED...

1. Good moral people, even devout, are in need of salvation
 - a. Cornelius was a good, moral, devout man - **Ac 10:1-6**
 - b. Yet he needed to be saved - **Ac 11:14**
2. Many examples of conversion in Acts involved religiously devout people
 - a. The 3000 on the day of Pentecost - **Ac 2:5**
 - b. The Ethiopian eunuch - **Ac 8:27**
 - c. Lydia of Thyatira - **Ac 16:14**
 - d. Paul - **Ac 22:3**
3. We cannot be saved by our good works - **Ep 2:8-9; Ti 3:4-7**

[Sometimes a perversion of the gospel leads others to overreact with another perversion...]

IV. THE GOSPEL OF FAITH ONLY

A. THIS PERVERSION EXPLAINED...

1. This ‘gospel’ proclaims that one is saved by “faith only”
2. I.e., no obedience is required, especially not baptism
3. An overreaction to salvation by works without faith, or to the gospel of good works

B. THIS PERVERSION REFUTED...

1. The gospel of Christ requires obedience
 - a. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him - **He 5:9**
 - b. Paul proclaimed what he called “the obedience of faith” - **Ro 1:5; 16:25-26**
 - c. Paul and Peter warned of those who obeyed not the gospel - **2 Th 1:7-9; 1 Pe 4:17**
 - d. We are not saved by “faith only” - cf. **Ja 2:17,20,24,26**
2. Many fail to distinguish between different kinds of works
 - a. **Works of the Law** (of Moses), by which one is not justified - **Ga 2:16**
 - b. **Meritorious works**, done to earn salvation, which is impossible - **Ep 2:8-9; Ti 3:4-7**
 - c. **Works of God**, commanded of us to please Him - cf. **Jn 6:28-29**
3. Works of God are done, **not to earn** salvation, **but to receive** God’s grace
 - a. Faith in Jesus is a work of God - **Jn 6:29**
 - b. Repentance of sins is a work of God - **Ac 17:30**
 - c. Confessing Jesus is a work of God - **Ro 10:9-10**
 - d. Such works in of themselves do not save us - cf. **Lk 17:10**
4. So **baptism is a work of God**, not a work of man
 - a. Commanded by Jesus and His apostles - **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 - b. In which God does the work of saving - **Co 2:11-12; Ti 3:5**
 - c. In which we put on Christ - **Ga 3:26-27**
 - d. Which, when obeyed, causes others to thank God - **Ro 6:17-18; cf. 6:3-7**

CONCLUSION

1. There have been other perverted gospels...
 - a. Such as **Gnosticism**, which denied Jesus coming in the flesh
 - b. Such as **Mormonism**, which proclaims a different gospel based upon 'angelic revelation'
2. We need to be careful to receive the gospel preached by the apostles...
 - a. Even angelic revelations are to be rejected if different from what the apostles' preached
 - b. Otherwise we will be accursed
3. The pure gospel of Christ may not be popular, but who are we trying to please...?
 - a. If it is men, then we are not true servants of Christ - **Ga 1:10**
 - b. If it is the majority, we are on the wrong path - **Mt 7:13-14**

Is the gospel you heard, received, and obeyed, the same gospel proclaimed by the apostles of Jesus Christ...? - cf. **Ac 2:36-41; 8:35-38**

Paul's Remarkable Conversion

Galatians 1:11-24

INTRODUCTION

1. In writing to the churches in Galatia, Paul set out to prove that...
 - a. His apostleship came from Jesus, not man - **Ga 1:1**
 - b. His gospel came by revelation from Jesus, not man - **Ga 1:11-12**
2. In doing so, he revealed remarkable facts about his conversion...
 - a. Which not only substantiates his claims regarding his gospel and apostleship
 - b. But also provides evidence for our faith in Jesus as the Son of God

[The latter half of the first chapter of Galatians reveals pertinent facts concerning Paul...]

I. BEFORE AND AFTER HIS CONVERSION

A. BEFORE HIS CONVERSION...

1. He persecuted the church - **Ga 1:13**
 - a. In Jerusalem - **Ac 8:1-3**
 - b. And beyond - **Ac 9:1-2**
 - c. Something he believed he ought to do - **Ac 26:9-11**
2. He was advancing in Judaism - **Ga 1:14**
 - a. As a scholar, trained at the feet of Gamaliel - **Ac 22:3**; cf. **5:34**
 - b. In social standing, advancing beyond many of his contemporaries
 - 1) Holding positions of religious power - **Ac 26:12**
 - 2) Which likely included access to financial power
 - c. He was on the 'fast track' of success among his peers!
3. He was zealous for his ancestral and religious traditions - **Ga 1:14**
 - a. Proud to be a Hebrew - **Ph 3:4-5**
 - b. Proud to be a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee - **Ph 3:5**; **Ac 23:6**
 - 1) A conservative sect of the Jews - **Ac 26:4-5**
 - 2) Noted for their opposition to Jesus during His ministry - e.g., **Mt 12:14**
 - c. With such a religious background, he was naturally prejudiced against Jesus - **Ac 26:9**

B. AFTER HIS CONVERSION...

1. He had limited contact with the apostles - **Ga 1:15-20**
 - a. He did not see them for three years after his conversion
 - b. Even then, it was for just fifteen days - cf. **Ac 9:26-30**
 - c. Even then, he saw only Peter, and James the Lord's brother
2. He was unknown by face to the churches of Judea - **Ga 1:21-24**
 - a. He spent ten years in Syria and Cilicia - cf. **Ac 9:30**
 - b. Those in Judea only heard about him
 - c. Though they came to glorify God in him - cf. **Ac 9:31**

[The circumstances of Paul's conversion should cause us to glorify God as well, which should become more apparent as we consider various...]

II. EXPLANATIONS FOR HIS CONVERSION

A. PERHAPS THERE WAS AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE...

1. Could it have been **wealth**?
 - a. He had that with the Jews
 - b. He left it for the poverty of following Christ - cf. **1 Co 4:11-12; Ac 20:33-34**
 2. Could it have been **fame**?
 - a. He had that with the Jews
 - b. Consider what he experienced as a Christian - cf. **1 Co 4:10,13**
 - 1) Regarded as foolish and weak, even by other Christians
 - 2) Viewed as the filth of the world by those in the world
 3. Could it have been **power**?
 - a. He had that with the Jews
 - b. Compare this with what he suffered as a Christian - cf. **2 Co 11:24-28**
- **Indeed, no ulterior motive can be found to explain Paul's conversion**

B. PERHAPS HE WAS DECEIVED...

1. Then who deceived him?
 - a. Friends would not, for he was their champion against the Christians
 - b. Christians could not, because of his persecution against them
 - 1) Putting them into prison, chasing them into other towns - **Ac 8:3; 9:1-2**
 - 2) Even after his conversion, many feared him - cf. **Ac 9:26**
 2. His testimony does not allow for the possibility of deception
 - a. He claimed to receive his gospel from Jesus, not man - **Ga 1:11-12**
 - b. He claimed to see Jesus raised from the dead - **1 Co 15:8**
- **The empirical nature of his testimony precludes the possibility of deception**

C. PERHAPS HE WAS MAD...

1. Such was the conclusion of Festus, the governor - **Ac 26:24**
 2. Others have tried to explain his conversion in psychological terms
 - a. That his intense persecution of Christians gave him a guilt-ridden conscience
 - b. That combined with the heat on the road to Damascus, he became delirious and only thought he saw Jesus!
 3. Yet consider the testimony of Paul
 - a. He had a clear conscience regarding persecuting the Christians - **Ac 23:1**
 - 1) It was something he thought he should do - **Ac 26:9**
 - 2) He did it out of ignorance, for which he knew he received mercy - **1 Ti 1:13**
 - b. He said he saw Jesus more than once
 - 1) Not just on the road to Damascus!
 - 2) But on other occasions as well - **Ac 18:9-10; 22:17-21; 23:11; 2 Co 12:8-9**
- **Read his epistles, do they seem like letters written by a mad man?**

D. THE ONLY PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION: HE SAW JESUS...!

1. The explanation given by Paul himself
 - a. Before the Jerusalem mob - **Ac 22:1-16**
 - b. Before King Agrippa and Festus the governor - cf. **Ac 26:12-23**
2. It is the only explanation that explains his conversion
 - a. Why he was willing to forego wealth, fame, and power

- b. Why he was willing to suffer poverty, shame, and persecution
- **As he said “I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision...” - Ac 26:19**

CONCLUSION

1. **“Paul’s Remarkable Conversion”** is best explained by...
 - a. His own testimony that it was the resurrected Jesus who appeared to him
 - b. Not once, but continuously throughout the rest of his life-- **Serving as one of the greatest evidences for the resurrection of Jesus!**
2. What will you do with **“Paul’s Remarkable Conversion”**...?
 - a. If you do not yet believe in Jesus, may it spark further investigation into the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ!
 - b. If you already believe in Jesus, may it move you to glorify God! - cf. **Ga 1:24**
3. One of the best ways to glorify God is to give heed to the words of His servant Paul...
 - a. Who would have us come to **know** and **obey** the One he saw on the road to Damascus
 - b. Who has written of the true **life** and **liberty** that Jesus offers to all who believe and obey

Through such evidence as **“Paul’s Remarkable Conversion”**, God has given testimony to the resurrection of Jesus. Have you responded to this evidence with the obedience of faith...?

Circumcision And The Gospel

Galatians 2:1-5

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul's primary purpose in writing to the Galatians was to defend...
 - a. His apostleship - **Ga 1:1**
 - b. His gospel - **Ga 1:11-12**

2. In doing so, he recounts a meeting that took place in Jerusalem, in which...
 - a. He, Barnabas, and Titus attended - **Ga 2:1**
 - b. He had the opportunity to relate the gospel he preached - **Ga 2:2**
 - c. Some tried to compel Titus (a Greek) to be circumcised - **Ga 2:3-5**
 - a. By false brethren, who sought to force Titus to keep the Law
 - b. Which Paul adamantly refused, standing fast for "the truth of the gospel"

3. The issue of circumcision and the gospel was a major concern in the first century...
 - a. Did Gentiles (non-Jews) who became Christians have to be circumcised as per the Law?
 - b. The question preoccupied many churches, and much of Paul's ministry

[While the issue was resolved sufficiently that it is rarely a problem today, there are important lessons to be gleaned from a study of "**Circumcision And The Gospel**". Let's review, therefore...]

I. THE PRACTICE OF CIRCUMCISION

A. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT...

1. As a sign of a covenant, it began with Abraham - **Gen 17:9-14,23-27**; cf. **Ro 4:11**
2. It continued with Isaac, Jacob and his sons - **Gen 21:4; 34:14-17**
3. Moses circumcised his sons, and gave the ordinance to Israel - **Exo 4:26**; cf. **Jn 7:22**
3. It was required to observe the Passover - **Exo 12:48**
4. Male children were to be circumcised the eighth day - **Lev 12:1-3**
5. The Jews born in the wilderness had not been circumcised, but were after they crossed the Jordan River - **Josh 5:1-8**

B. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. John the Baptist was circumcised as an infant - **Lk 1:59**
2. Jesus was likewise circumcised on the eighth day - **Lk 2:21**
3. It became an issue when the gospel was first preached to Gentiles - **Ac 11:1-3**
4. It was the focus of controversy in Antioch and Jerusalem - **Ac 15:1-2,4-6**
5. Paul had Timothy circumcised - **Ac 16:1-3**
6. It was rumored that Paul taught Jews not to be circumcised - **Ac 21:18-21**
7. It was certainly a frequent subject in Paul's epistles
 - a. To the Romans - **Ro 2:25-29; 3:1,30; 4:9-12; 15:8**
 - b. To the Corinthians - **1 Co 7:18-19**
 - c. Especially to the Galatians - **Ga 2:1-9,12; 5:2-6,11; 6:12-15**
 - d. Mentioned in Ephesians - **Ep 2:11**
 - e. Also to the Colossians - **Co 2:11; 3:11; 4:11**

[Because of the role of circumcision in Israel's history, and its significance in early history of the church, it is important that we properly understand it in relation to...]

II. THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL

A. PHYSICAL CIRCUMCISION NOT REQUIRED...

1. Evidenced by the conversion of Cornelius and his family - **Ac 10:44-48; 11:17-18**
2. Confirmed at that conference in Jerusalem - **Ac 15:7-21**
3. Proclaimed by the letter sent by the apostles and elders - **Ac 15:22-31**
4. Expounded upon by Paul in his letters - **Ro 4:8-12; 1 Co 7:19; Ga 5:1-6; 6:15**

B. SPIRITUAL CIRCUMCISION NOW AVAILABLE...

1. A circumcision made without hands, in which sins are cut away - **Co 2:11**
2. Which occurs when we buried with Christ in baptism, then raised with Him - **Co 2:12**
3. When God makes us alive with Christ, forgiving our sins - **Co 2:13**

[The physical rite of circumcision has become a matter of indifference to God, though it can be used and misused. From both the practice of circumcision and the truth of the gospel as revealed in the Bible, let's summarize...]

III. THE LESSONS FROM CIRCUMCISION

A. RITUAL ALONE NOT ADEQUATE...

1. This was true even when circumcision was required of Israel
2. God desired circumcision of the heart as well as of the flesh - **Deu 10:16; 30:6; Jer 4:4**
3. Paul explained that the true Jew was the one circumcised in heart - **Ro 2:28-29**
- **The same is true of baptism; it must be accompanied with faith and repentance - Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; 8:36-37; Co 2:12**

B. THE LAW HAS PASSED AWAY...

1. Jesus said not one jot or tittle of the Law would pass until all was fulfilled - **Mt 5:17-18**
2. Circumcision was required by the Law - **Exo 12:48; Lev 12:1-3**
3. If circumcision is no longer binding, the change implies the passing away of the Law
- **A similar point is made with reference to the priesthood of Christ - He 7:12-19**

C. 'EVERLASTING' MAY NOT MEAN 'LASTING FOREVER'...

1. Circumcision was described as the sign of an 'everlasting covenant' - **Gen 17:10-14**
2. In the case of circumcision, 'everlasting' (Heb., **olam**) did not mean 'lasting forever'
 - a. **BDB** defines **olam** as "long duration, antiquity, futurity, for ever, ever, everlasting, ever more, perpetual, old, ancient, world"
 - b. The **Complete Word Study Dictionary** defines **olam** as "meaning a very long time."
 - c. "It may cover a given person's lifetime (**Exo 21:6; 1 Sam 1:22**); a period of many generations (**Josh 24:2; Pro 22:28**); the time of the present created order (**Deu 33:15; Psa 73:12**); time beyond this temporal sphere, especially when used regarding God (**Gen 21:33; Psa 90:2; Dan 12:2, Dan 12:7**) - **ibid.**
 - d. "The term also applies to many things associated with God, such as His decrees, His covenants, and the Messiah (**Gen 9:16; Exo 12:14; Mic 5:2**)."- **ibid.**
3. If 'everlasting' **always** meant 'lasting forever', then we should still be observing:

- a. The Passover - **Exo 12:14**
 - b. The Feast of Unleavened Bread - **Exo 12:17**
 - c. The priesthood of Aaron - **Exo 29:9**
 - d. The Sabbath - **Exo 31:16-17**
 - e. The sacrifices, with their portions for the priests - **Lev 6:18; 7:34-36; 10:15**
 - f. Fasting and animal sacrifices on the Day of Atonement - **Lev 16:29-34**
 - g. The Feast of Tabernacles - **Lev 23:39-42**
 - h. ...and many other elements of the Law described as ‘everlasting ordinances’
4. From the context of the Scriptures, one discerns when ‘everlasting’ means ‘lasting forever’
 -- **Since circumcision is no longer binding, we should not be surprised such is true with other elements of the Law - cf. Co 2:16-17; He 9:10**

D. WHEN TRADITION BECOMES SINFUL...

- 1. Paul did not hesitate to use the tradition of circumcision when expedient - **Ac 16:3**
 - a. The same with other Jewish traditions - **Ac 18:18,21**
 - b. Even some that involved animal sacrifices - **Ac 21:18-26**
 - 2. Yet he opposed circumcision (and other elements of the Law) when people attempted to:
 - a. **Bind** it on Gentiles, as in the case of Titus - **Ga 2:3-5**
 - b. Use it for the purpose of **justification** - **Ga 5:2-4**
 - 3. Thus Jesus also condemned **traditions of men** when they:
 - a. Are taught as commandments to be bound on others - **Mk 7:6-7**
 - b. By their observance prevent keeping the commandments of God - **Mk 7:8-13**
- **Under the right circumstances, traditions may be observed - cf. Ro 14:5-6**

CONCLUSION

- 1. The issue of circumcision may seem antiquated and unimportant...
 - a. It certainly is not one of the ‘hot issues’ of our day
 - b. Yet lessons learned from studying the issue can be very helpful
- 2. Understanding the issue of **circumcision** can help us preserve the truth of the **gospel**...
 - a. We are saved by an obedient faith in Christ, not by keeping the Law of Moses
 - b. The Law as a system of justification came to an end at the cross of Christ
 - c. Elements of the Law, such as circumcision, the Passover, Sabbath, etc., are not binding today
 - d. Traditions of the Law might be observed on a personal level, but it is a sin to base one’s salvation on them, or to bind them on other people

While circumcision of the flesh is nonessential, the circumcision ‘**without hands**’ is certainly necessary if we are to have our sins ‘cut away’... - cf. **Co 2:11-13**

Paul And Peter

Galatians 2:6-19

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul's defends his apostleship in Galatians by recounting...
 - a. His limited contact with the other apostles, in particular Peter - **Ga 1:11-24**
 - b. Two episodes when he met with the apostles, especially Peter - **Ga 2:1-21**
2. The relationship between Paul and Peter has often been misrepresented...
 - a. That Peter had primacy over Paul (**Catholicism**)
 - b. That they had doctrinal differences (**Criticism**)

[The Biblical evidence shows otherwise. Both in Galatians and elsewhere in the Scriptures, we note their equality and respect for one another. From our text (**Ga 2:6-19**), consider first...]

I. PAUL'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM

A. THE OCCASION...

1. Paul, Barnabas and Titus had gone to Jerusalem by revelation - cf. **Ga 2:1-2**
 - a. Likely the visit to Jerusalem described in **Ac 15:2-4**
 - b. Though some think it may have occurred earlier - cf. **Ac 11:29-30; 12:25**
2. Paul withstood pressure by false teachers - cf. **Ga 2:2-5**
 - a. In a private meeting, he spoke with those "of reputation" (Peter? James?)
 - b. False brethren sought to compel Titus to be circumcised
 - c. Paul refused to yield to their demands
3. Paul met with Peter, James, and John, who "seemed to be pillars" - cf. **Ga 2:6,9**

B. THE OUTCOME...

1. With those "who seemed to be something" (James, Cephas, John) - **Ga 2:6-10**
 - a. They added nothing to Paul (made no demands, gave no instructions or authority)
 - b. They saw that Paul had been given the gospel to the uncircumcision
 - c. Paul recognized God's effective work in Peter's ministry and Peter's apostleship to the circumcision
 - d. James, Cephas (Peter) and John perceived the grace given to Paul
 - e. They extended the right hand of fellowship to Paul
 - f. They asked only that Paul remember the poor, which he was eager to do
2. Of the meeting together with all the apostles and elders at Jerusalem - **Ac 15:6-29**
 - a. Peter related his preaching to the Gentiles, and their salvation without circumcision
 - b. Paul and Barnabas related their ministry and God's working among the Gentiles
 - c. James offered scriptural support, and then a letter to which all agreed
 - d. The letter confirmed the ministry of "beloved Barnabas and Paul"

[Paul's visit to Jerusalem certainly illustrated that he and Peter were in **doctrinal agreement** regarding the gospel they preached. The nature of their **relationship** is made clearer with...]

II. PETER'S VISIT TO ANTIOCH

A. THE OCCASION...

1. Peter played the hypocrite - **Ga 2:11-13**
 - a. He had come to Antioch (some think this was during **Ac 15:1**; others think it was later)
 - b. At first he ate with the Gentiles
 - c. After certain men came from James, Peter withdrew and separated himself
 - d. He feared those of the circumcision
 - e. His actions encouraged other Jews to be hypocrites, even Barnabas
2. Paul confronted Peter - **Ga 2:11,14-19**
 - a. He withstood Peter to his face, because he was to be blamed
 - b. He rebuked Peter before them all, showing him to be inconsistent
 - c. Paul's gospel (justification by faith in Christ, not by the works of the Law) vindicated by Peter, who normally lived like a Gentile himself - cf. Peter also, in **Ac 15:7-11**

B. THE OUTCOME...

1. Paul's equality with Peter demonstrated - **Ga 2:11,14**
 - a. Paul had the authority to withstand him to his face
 - b. Paul had the authority to charge him with hypocrisy before all
2. Peter's respect for Paul undiminished - cf. **2 Pe 3:15-16**
 - a. Peter later described Paul as "our beloved brother Paul"
 - b. Peter acknowledged the wisdom given to Paul
 - c. Peter recognized Paul's epistles as "Scriptures"

[Peter's visit to Antioch was not a happy occasion, but it did provide an opportunity to illustrate **the equality of Peter and Paul**, and that despite Peter's momentary lapse, his overall life demonstrated that **his gospel was the same as Paul's**. Finally, some thoughts regarding a couple of...]

III. LESSONS FROM PAUL AND PETER

A. THE COURAGE OF PAUL...

1. We note the **courage** manifested by Paul in Jerusalem and Antioch
 - a. Refusing to concede to pressure by false brethren
 - b. Standing alone with even your closest brethren are led astray
 - c. Having to rebuke a respected brother in Christ
2. Paul's courage was motivated by **faithfulness**
 - a. Faithfulness to the Lord whom he served
 - b. Faithfulness to the gospel of which he was not ashamed - cf. **Ro 1:16**

B. THE HUMILITY OF PETER...

1. We note the **humility** manifested by Peter in his last epistle
 - a. Not holding a grudge against Paul for his public rebuke
 - b. Willing to publicly acknowledge Paul's wisdom given by inspiration
2. Peter's humility was motivated by **love**
 - a. Love for a brother in Christ
 - b. Love consistent with what he himself taught others - cf. **1 Pe 3:8-9**

CONCLUSION

1. The relationship between Paul and Peter illustrates the power of Christ...

- a. To turn persecutor and persecuted into coworkers for the gospel
 - b. To help brethren at odds work through their problems to become brethren beloved
2. While Paul and Peter had a different focus in their respective ministries...
- a. They served the same Lord, preached the same gospel
 - b. One was not superior to the other, they were fellow-apostles in the kingdom of God

Rather than trying to find some perceived 'rift' between two faithful apostles, may we use their examples to motivate us in our service to the Lord and to one another...

The Life Which I Now Live

Galatians 2:20-21

INTRODUCTION

1. Much that we know of the Christian life is dependent upon the apostle Paul...
 - a. Who wrote half the books of the New Testament
 - b. His conduct and attitudes are set before us as an example - **1 Co 11:1; Ph 3:17**
 - **But what principles governed Paul's life as a Christian?**

2. In our text (**Ga 2:20-21**) we find Paul expressing some of the principles...
 - a. That guided his life as a disciple of Christ
 - b. As he speaks of "the life which I now live in the flesh"
 - **What kind of life was that? Are we governed by the same principles?**

[Notice first of all that Paul says his life which he lived in the flesh was...]

I. A LIFE CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST (20a)

A. HOW IS "CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST" POSSIBLE...?

1. We can't go back in time and join Christ on the cross!
2. But we can be united with Christ in His death when we are baptized! - **Ro 6:3-8**
3. Note that baptism into Christ is...
 - a. A baptism into His death - **Ro 6:3-4**
 - b. Being united together in the likeness of His death - **Ro 6:5**
 - c. Crucifying our old man with Christ - **Ro 6:6**
 - d. Dying together with Christ - **Ro 6:8**
- **If we have been baptized into Christ, we can say together with Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ"**

B. WHAT DOES "CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST" MEAN...?

1. For **some** it means a death "**to the Law**" - **Ga 2:19**
 - a. Paul wrote of himself as a Jew who was at one time under the Law of Moses
 - b. Those who have been crucified with Christ have died to the Law - **Ro 7:1-6**
2. For **all** it means a death "**to self**" - **Ga 2:20**
 - a. "It is no longer I who live"
 - b. As Jesus taught, we must be willing to deny self to follow Him - **Lk 9:23-24**
3. For **all** it means we have crucified "**the flesh**" - **Ga 5:24**
 - a. Which occurred in **principle** at our baptism - **Ro 6:6,11-14**
 - b. Which occurs in **practice** as we continue to "put to death" the deeds of the body - **Ro 8:12-13; Co 3:5-9**
4. For **all** it means we have been crucified "**to the world**" - **Ga 6:14**
 - a. Before our obedience to Christ, we were in bondage to the rudiments of the world - **Ga 4:3,9**
 - b. But now, Christ is our rule and authority in life - **Co 2:8-10,20-22; 3:17**
- **Any external (Law, world) or internal (self, flesh) controls have now surrendered to the authority of Christ**

[One who has been baptized into Christ and is letting Jesus be his or her authority in all things is living a “life crucified with Christ”. But note that Paul also wrote “**the life which I now live**” is...]

II. A LIFE IN WHICH CHRIST LIVES IN ME (20b)

A. HOW DOES CHRIST LIVE IN ME...?

1. It is like electricity
 - a. I may not comprehend how it works
 - b. But I know how to get it working!
 2. We are taught how to make sure that He will abide in us
 - a. By Jesus Himself - **Jn 14:21-23; 15:9-10**
 - b. By His beloved disciple John - **1 Jn 3:24**
- **As we keep the commandments of Christ, we are assured that He lives in us!**

B. WHAT BENEFITS COME FROM CHRIST LIVING IN US...?

1. The wonderful **love** of the Father and the Son - **Jn 14:21**
 2. There is fulness of **joy** - **Jn 15:11**
 3. There is **peace**, even in the midst of tribulation - **Jn 16:33**
 4. There is the **hope** of being with Jesus and beholding His glory - **Jn 17:24**
- **These are just a few of the many blessings of a life in which Christ lives in us!**

[Paul has more to say about “**the life which I now live**”. It should be...]

III. A LIFE LIVING BY FAITH IN CHRIST (20c)

A. WHAT IS LIVING BY FAITH IN CHRIST...?

1. The word ‘faith’ implies trust
 2. Living by faith in Christ means constantly trusting in Jesus
 - a. E.g., for the forgiveness of our sins
 - 1) Trusting in His blood to cleanse us from our sins - **1 Jn 1:7,9**
 - 1) Trusting in Him as our Advocate - **1 Jn 2:1**
 - 2) Trusting in Him as our Propitiation - **1 Jn 2:4**
 - b. E.g., that His words will provide a solid foundation for our lives - **Mt 7:24-25**
 - c. E.g., that He will never forsake us - **Mt 28:20**
- **Trusting in Jesus, not in self, not in the Law, not in the world!**

B. WHY SHOULD WE SO TRUST JESUS...?

1. Because He loves us! - cf. **Ga 2:20**
 2. Because He gave Himself for us! - **Ga 2:20**
 3. Shall He not do more if we continue to trust Him? - cf. **Ro 8:34-39**
 4. Such love naturally compels one to live a life of faith in Him - cf. **2 Co 5:14-15**
- **Does such love should compel us to trust in Jesus, living by faith in Him?**

[Finally, the life which we now live should be...]

IV. A LIFE WHICH DOES NOT SET ASIDE GOD’S GRACE (21)

A. WE MUST DILIGENTLY KEEP JESUS’ COMMANDMENTS...

1. As a true indication of our love for Him - cf. **Jn 14:15**
 2. As a true indication that we really know Him - cf. **1 Jn 2:3**
- **One cannot ignore the commandments of the Lord**

B. YET WITHOUT GOD'S GRACE, ALL IS VAIN...

1. We cannot nor dare not try to earn or merit our salvation - cf. **Ti 3:4-5; Ep 2:8-9**
 2. After all is said and done, we are still unworthy servants - cf. **Lk 17:10**
 3. If not for the grace of God...
 - a. Our faith would be useless
 - b. Our repentance would be meaningless
 - c. Our baptism would be fruitless
 - d. Our salvation would be impossible!
 4. And so, from beginning to end...
 - a. We must look to God and the Word of His grace
 - b. We must trust in His mercy offered through Jesus
 - c. We are totally dependent upon Jesus and His death on the cross for any degree of true righteousness
- **If we think we have earned or merited salvation on our own, Christ died in vain!**

CONCLUSION

1. Such was the life Paul lived in the flesh...
 - a. A life crucified with Christ
 - b. A life in which Christ lived in Him
 - c. A life living by faith in Christ
 - d. A life that did not set aside the grace of God
2. Can the same be said of us...?
 - a. Have we been crucified with Christ (in baptism)?
 - b. Is Christ living in us (manifested by keeping His commandments)?
 - c. Are you living by faith in Christ (trusting His blood, His Word)?
 - d. Are you trusting always in the grace of God (not your own goodness or obedience)?

May the words of Paul move us to live the kind of lives becoming of those who call themselves Christians...

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain." - Ga 2:20-21

Bewitched And Befooled

Galatians 3:1-5

INTRODUCTION

1. When Paul wrote of his concern to the churches in Galatia...
 - a. He described them as **“foolish”** - **Ga 3:1,3**
 - 1) For seeking to be perfected by the flesh - e.g., via circumcision
 - 2) For suffering many things in vain, as their salvation was endangered - cf. **Ga 5:4-8**
 - b. He wondered if they had been **“bewitched”** - **Ga 3:1**
 - 1) A word (**baskaino**) which means “to be fascinated” (Strong), “charmed” (Thayer)
 - 2) Led astray by charming misrepresentations
 - c. He sought to reason with them - **Ga 3:1-5**
 - 1) Was not Christ clearly portrayed to them as crucified?
 - 2) Had they not received the Spirit by the hearing of faith rather than by the works of the Law?
 - 3) Had not the One who supplied the Spirit done so through the hearing of faith?
2. Could we face similar dangers today...?
 - a. Might someone “bewitch” and “befool” us through false representations?
 - b. Should we not be led by calm reasoning rather than fascinating claims?

[We may indeed find ourselves **“Bewitched And Befooled”**, for the Scriptures reveal there is...]

I. A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER

A. DANGER CLEARLY DECLARED...

1. Jesus and John warned of false prophets - **Mt 7:15; 1 Jn 4:1**
 2. Paul warned of false apostles, ministers of Satan - **2 Co 11:13-15**
 3. He warned of being cheated through philosophy and principles of the world - **Co 2:8**
 4. He warned of some departing from the faith- **1 Ti 4:1-3**
 5. He warned of being turned aside to fables - **2 Ti 4:3-4**
 6. Peter warned of false teachers with destructive heresies, by covetousness exploiting with deceptive words - **2 Pe 2:1-3**
- **Such warnings clearly confirm the danger of being “Bewitched And Befooled”**

B. DANGER CLEARLY PRESENT...

1. We are beleaguered by traditions of men (e.g., Catholicism and denominationalism)
 2. We are assaulted by philosophies of men (e.g., humanism, secularism, postmodernism)
 3. We are allured by false teachers who appeal to greed (e.g., gospel of health and wealth)
 4. We are challenged by false doctrines denying God and Jesus (e.g., evolution, the ‘Jesus Seminar’)
 5. We are assailed by changing trends (easy divorce, same-sex marriage)
- **The world has clearly been “Bewitched And Befooled”; what about us?**

[Yes, there is “a clear and present danger” that we face today. If we are to avoid being **“Bewitched And Befooled”**, then consider from our text (**Ga 3:1-5**) what is...]

II. THE SOLUTION

A. REMEMBER WHAT HAS BEEN CLEARLY PORTRAYED...

1. Jesus and Him crucified - **Ga 3:1**
 - a. Proclaimed by the apostles - **1 Co 1:23-24; 2:2**
 - b. Proclaimed in the Lord's Supper - **1 Co 11:26**
 2. Never forget that Jesus was crucified for our sins
 - a. Thus the Law of Moses with its works (e.g., circumcision) can't save us
 - b. Nor can any doctrine which denies God and the need for Jesus' death
- **There is no other gospel that can save us - Ro 1:16; Ga 1:8-9**

B. REMEMBER HOW ONE RECEIVES THE SPIRIT...

1. It is by the hearing of faith - **Ga 3:2**
 - a. Promised to those who believe, repent and are baptized - **Jn 7:37-39; Ac 2:38**
 - b. Given to those who are the children of God - **Ga 4:6**
 2. Never forget that our spiritual lives began in the Spirit - **Ga 3:3**
 - a. We are born of the Spirit - **Jn 3:5; Ti 3:5**
 - b. We are strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man - **Ep 3:16**
- **There is no other means by which we can grow as Christians - Ro 8:9-14**

C. REMEMBER WHO SUPPLIED THE SPIRIT AND WORKED MIRACLES...

1. It was God - **Ga 3:5**
 - a. Who poured out the Spirit abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior - **Ti 3:6**
 - b. Who bore witness by the signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit - **He 2:4**
 2. Never forget that God bore witness to Christ and His apostles - **He 2:3**
 - a. Miracles confirmed those sent out by the Lord - cf. **Mk 16:19-20**
 - b. What miracles have been done by false teachers, foolish professors, pompous theologians who would mislead us today?
- **There is no other way to know the will and word of God other than through the apostles of Jesus Christ - 1 Jn 4:5-6**

CONCLUSION

1. Many people today have been "**Bewitched And Befooled**"...
 - a. Evidenced by the many different religions
 - b. Exhibited by the rapidly changing moral standards
- **Too many people are being misled so they do not obey the truth**
2. If we desire not to be "**Bewitched And Befooled**"...
 - a. Then follow Jesus who was crucified for our sins
 - b. Listen to Him and His apostles with "the hearing of faith"

Only then can we be sure to "know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." - **Jn 8:31-32**

The Heirs Of Abraham

Galatians 3:6-14,26-29

INTRODUCTION

1. Abraham is a key figure in three of the world's great religions...
 - a. He is the ancestor of the **Jews** (Hebrews) through his son Isaac
 - b. **Muslims** regard him (Ibrahim) as the ancestor of the Arabs through Ishmael
 - c. **Christians** regard him as their spiritual father through Christ - cf. **Ga 3:29**
 - **Such is truly consistent with the meaning of his name, "father of many" - Gen 17:5**
2. Central to the importance of Abraham are the promises God made to him...
 - a. The **land** promise - **Gen 12:1,7; 13:15-17**
 - b. The **nation** promise - **Gen 12:2; 13:16; 17:6; 18:18**
 - c. The **seed** promise - **Gen 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14**
 - **The fulfillment of these promises to Abraham is the theme of the Bible**
3. The Bible reveals that God fulfilled these promises...
 - a. The **nation** promise - via the descendants of Israel - **Gen 46:3; Exo 1:7; Deu 26:5**
 - b. The **land** promise - in the days of Joshua, and in the days of Solomon - **Josh 21:43-45; 23:14-15; 1 Kin 8:56; 2 Chr 9:26**
 - c. The **seed** promise - with the coming of Christ - **Ac 3:25-26**
4. In the early church, there were evidently some who sought to limit the seed promise...
 - a. To those who were physical descendants of Abraham
 - b. Or Gentile Christians who were circumcised and kept the Law - cf. **Ac 15:1,5**

[In his epistle to the Galatians, Paul dealt with this issue. As we now turn to our text (**Ga 3:6-14, 26-29**), we note that the true heirs of Abraham are...]

I. THOSE WHO ARE OF FAITH

A. THEY ARE THE SONS OF ABRAHAM...

1. Just as Abraham **believed** God - **Ga 3:6**
 - a. Without faith, it is impossible to please God - **He 11:6**
 - b. Abraham's faith was accounted to him for righteousness - **Gen 15:6**
2. Indeed, **only those of faith** are sons of Abraham - **Ga 3:7**
 - a. This is what the seed promise had reference to - **Ga 3:8**
 - b. It is those of faith who are blessed with believing Abraham - **Ga 3:9**
3. Those who have **the same kind of faith** as Abraham
 - a. To do the works of Abraham - cf. **Jn 8:39**
 - b. Willing to "walk in the steps of the faith" which Abraham had - cf. **Ro 4:11-12**
 - c. I.e., to have an obedient faith like he did - cf. **He 11:8-10**

B. NOT THOSE WHO ARE OF THE WORKS OF THE LAW...

1. That is, those **who seek to be justified by the Law of Moses**
 - a. As many in Israel were seeking to do - cf. **Ro 9:31-32**

- b. They sought to establish their own righteousness - cf. **Ro 10:1-13**
- 2. For **they are under the curse** of the Law - **Ga 3:10**
 - a. The Law cursed those who did not confirm (keep) it - cf. **Deu 27:26**
 - b. The Law also proclaimed all men to be sinners - cf. **Ro 3:10-20**
- 3. They are **not justified** by the works of the Law - **Ga 3:11-12**
 - a. As the Law itself foretold - **Hab 2:4**
 - b. The Law required perfect obedience, which none could offer - cf. **Lev 18:5**

[It is through **faith like Abraham's that one becomes an heir of Abraham**. Those who seek salvation through the works of the Law are not his true descendants. But it is **more than simply faith, it is faith in the right Person**. Thus the true heirs of Abraham are...]

II. THOSE WHOM CHRIST HAS REDEEMED

A. THEY ARE REDEEMED FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW...

- 1. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law
 - a. He became a curse for us by dying on the tree - **Ga 3:13**
 - b. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree - **1 Pe 2:24**
- 2. Thus He offers redemption
 - a. From every lawless deed - **Ti 2:14**
 - b. Through His blood, providing the forgiveness of sins - **Ep 1:7**

B. THEY ARE RECIPIENTS OF THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM...

- 1. Even Gentiles, in Christ Jesus - **Ga 3:14**
 - a. As indicated in the promise to Abraham ("all the families of the earth") - **Gen 12:3**
 - b. As indicated in the promise to Abraham ("in your seed") - **Gen 22:16**; cf. **Ga 3:16**
- 2. They have received the promise of the Spirit - **Ga 3:14**
 - a. The Spirit Jesus promised to those who believe- cf. **Jn 7:37-39**
 - b. Which Paul reminded the Galatians they had received through faith - cf. **Ga 3:2**
 - c. "... that promise which agreed to give the Spirit to all who rendered the obedience of faith - **Ac 2:38-39**." - **McGarvey** (commenting on **Ga 3:14**)

[The heirs of Abraham are those who have been **redeemed by Christ** and made **recipients of the blessing** promised to Abraham (which included receiving the Spirit). Closely connected to this is Paul's point at the end of the chapter (**Ga 3:26-29**), that the true heirs of Abraham are...]

III. THOSE WHO HAVE BECOME SONS OF GOD

A. THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS...

- 1. We become sons of God through faith in Christ - **Ga 3:26**
 - a. Faith in Jesus as the Messiah - **Jn 8:24; 6:69**
 - b. Believing that He died for our sins - **1 Co 15:1-2**
 - c. Faith in His resurrection from the dead - **Ro 10:9**
- 2. A privilege offered to those who believe in Jesus - cf. **Jn 1:12**
 - a. Those who believe are given the right to become children of God
 - b. How their faith leads them to become children of God is explained in **Ga 3:27**

B. THROUGH BAPTISM INTO CHRIST...

- 1. We become sons of God through faith, through our baptism into Christ - **Ga 3:27**

- a. Note carefully the conjunction “for”
 - b. Paul explains how they became children of God by faith in Christ
 - c. It was when they put Christ on in baptism
2. For in baptism one is buried with Christ, crucified with Christ, and raised to live with Him - cf. **Ro 6:3-8**
 - a. In baptism we are united with Christ
 - b. In baptism we are thus “clothed” with Christ (put Him on)

CONCLUSION

1. Who, then, are the heirs of Abraham, heirs of the promise made regarding his seed...?
 - a. Those who are of faith, walking in the steps of faith like Abraham did
 - b. Those whom Christ has redeemed, recipients of the promise of the Spirit
 - c. Those who have become sons of God through faith in Christ, having clothed themselves with Christ in baptism
2. The heirs of Abraham regarding the seed promise are **not** those...
 - a. Who claim to be so because of their lineage through Isaac or Ishmael
 - b. Who seek salvation through keeping the Law of Moses

Rather, as aptly summarized in the words of Paul himself:

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” - Ga 3:28-29

Are you in Christ, having been baptized into Christ and in so doing “put on Christ”? If so, then you are blessed to be a true heir of Abraham according to the promise...!

The Purpose Of The Law

Galatians 3:15-25

INTRODUCTION

1. In teaching they were justified by faith in Christ, Paul reminded the Galatians that...
 - a. They received the Spirit by the hearing of faith - **Ga 3:1-5**
 - b. The heirs of Abraham were those “of faith” - **Ga 3:6-9**
 - c. Those of the works of the Law were under a curse - **Ga 3:10-12**
 - d. Christ has redeemed them from the curse of the Law, that even Gentiles could now receive the promise of the Spirit through faith - **Ga 3:13-14**
2. With such comments regarding the Law, Paul anticipated a likely objection...
 - a. What purpose did the Law then serve?
 - b. What was its relation to the promise given to Abraham?
3. We might also ask ourselves...
 - a. What value does the Law (Old Testament) have for us today?
 - b. Do we even need to study it, since we are not under the Law?

[Such questions are easily answered, first from our text (**Ga 3:15-25**), and then from other statements of Paul regarding the value of the OT. Beginning with our text, consider the purpose of the Law...]

I. FOR THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

A. WHAT IT'S PURPOSE WAS NOT...

1. Not to **change the promises** made to Abraham - **Ga 3:15-17**
 - a. Even a man's covenant cannot be annulled or added to once confirmed
 - b. The Law which came 430 years later, cannot annul the covenant confirmed by God
2. Not to **provide the promise** made regarding the Seed - **Ga 3:16-18**
 - a. To Abraham and his Seed (Christ) were the promises made
 - c. The Law did not make the promise of no effect, nor did it provide the inheritance regarding the Seed

B. WHAT IT'S PURPOSE WAS...

1. It was added **because of transgression** - **Ga 3:19-23**
 - a. “for the purpose of revealing and manifesting to man his sinfulness,” - **McGarvey**
 - b. Till the Seed (Christ) should come to whom the promise was made
 - c. Not against the promise, but it could not provide life
 - d. Confined all under sin, that the promise might be given to those who believe
 - e. Kept them under guard, kept for the faith (Christ) afterward revealed
2. It was **a tutor** to lead them to Christ - **Ga 3:24-25**
 - a. To bring them to Christ
 - b. Now that faith (Christ) has come, they are no longer under it
 - 1) It came to an end when nailed to the cross - cf. **Co 2:14-17; Ep 2:14-16**
 - 2) Jews converted to Christ have died to the law - cf. **Ro 7:1-6**
 - 3) Thus it was replaced with a new covenant - cf. **He 7:18; 8:13; 9:9-10; 10:9**

[The Law was “holy”, “just”, and “good” (**Ro 7:12**), but it was designed to be **temporary**. With the coming of Christ and His New Covenant, it came to end as a system of justification (**Ga 5:4**). What purpose, if any, does the Law (Old Testament) serve the people of Christ today...?]

II. FOR THE PEOPLE OF CHRIST

A. FOR THEIR LEARNING...

1. Note carefully what Paul wrote in **Ro 15:4**
 - a. Things “written before” (i.e., the OT) were **“written for our learning”**
 - b. The OT was written and preserved especially for Christians’ benefit!
 - c. The OT provides “patience and comfort”, that we “might have hope”!
 2. The OT provides a record of God’s faithfulness, how He kept His promises:
 - a. To Abraham and the nation of Israel
 - b. To judge the wicked and avenge the righteous
 - c. To forgive the penitent, and protect the humble
- **As we read this history of God's dealings with Israel, it gives us hope that God will keep His promises to us!**

B. FOR THEIR ADMONITION...

1. Paul had just reminded the Corinthians of Israel’s fall in the wilderness - **1 Co 10:1-10**
 2. Note carefully what he says in **1 Co 10:11**
 - a. The events described may have happened to Israel
 - b. “They were **written for our admonition**, upon whom the ends of the ages have come”
 - c. Again, the OT was written and preserved especially for the benefit of Christians!
 3. We should not be surprised to see how often NT writers appealed to the OT in their efforts to admonish Christians
 - a. As the writer of Hebrews, in exhorting Christians to remain steadfast - **He 3:12-19**
 - b. As James, in encouraging Christians to be patient in their suffering - **Ja 5:7-11**
 - c. As Peter, in warning of false teachers and scoffers - **2 Pe 2-3**
- **We need to study the OT to be reminded of the very real danger of apostasy!**

C. FOR THEIR WISDOM...

1. Paul noted that Timothy had known the “Holy Scriptures” since childhood - **2 Ti 3:14-15**
 - a. When Timothy was a child, the only scriptures available was the OT
 - b. So Paul clearly had the OT in view
 2. He said the OT is “able to **make you wise for salvation** through faith which is in Christ”
 3. How is this possible? The OT provides:
 - a. The fall of man and the rise of sin
 - b. The background and development of God’s scheme of redemption
 - c. Hundreds of Messianic prophecies which describe what to expect when He comes
 4. One cannot hope to fully understand such books of the New Testament like:
 - a. Hebrews, without an understanding of the Levitical priesthood
 - b. Revelation, without an understanding of OT prophecy and apocalyptic literature
- **If one wishes to be wise concerning their salvation in Christ, it is imperative to study the Old Testament!**

D. FOR THEIR PROFIT...

1. “All Scripture” includes the OT scriptures, especially in this context - **2 Ti 3:16-17**

2. Therefore the OT is **profitable** for:
 - a. **Doctrine** - such as the nature of God, man, and sin
 - b. **Reproof and correction** - the need for repentance
 - c. **Instruction in righteousness** - how to live godly lives
 3. Thus the apostles frequently appealed to the OT when teaching Christians their conduct:
 - a. E.g., **Ro 12:19-21; 2 Co 6:16-7:1; 9:7-10**
 - b. E.g., **Ja 2:20-26**
 - c. E.g., **1 Pe 3:8-12**
- **While certain aspects of justification and worship have changed, many principles of righteousness remain the same under the New Covenant**

CONCLUSION

1. For **the people of Israel**, the Law served a valuable purpose...
 - a. It helped them to understand the nature of sin, and the need for redemption
 - b. It guided them until the promised Seed (Christ), through Whom God blessed all nations
2. For **the people of Christ**, the Law continues to serve a valuable purpose...
 - a. For our learning and admonition
 - b. For our wisdom and spiritual profit

While we rejoice in the salvation now offered through faith in Christ, let us never underestimate the value of studying the Old Testament. Its many examples of obedience through faith (cf. **He 11:1-40**) should inspire us to likewise walk in “the steps of faith”...

From Heirs Apparent To Heirs Actual

Galatians 4:1-7

INTRODUCTION

1. In his epistle to the churches of Galatia, Paul...
 - a. Opposed those teaching that Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses
 - b. Presented a series of five arguments contending that we are justified by faith in Christ

2. We have seen Paul make three of these arguments so far...
 - a. **The personal argument - Ga 3:1-5**
 - 1) How they received the Spirit
 - 2) From whom they received the Spirit
 - b. **The scriptural argument - Ga 3:6-25**
 - 1) The example of Abraham
 - 2) The curse of the Law
 - 3) The priority of the Promise over the Law
 - 4) The purpose of the Law
 - c. **The practical argument - Ga 3:26-29**
 - 1) In Christ they are one, as children of God, Abraham's seed
 - 2) As such they are heirs of the promise regarding the Seed

3. As we begin **the fourth chapter**, Paul continues with his **practical argument**...
 - a. Under the Law they were simply **“heirs apparent”**
 - b. In Christ Jesus they have become **“heirs actual”**

[That we might appreciate our blessings in Christ, especially the **earnest** of our inheritance, let's examine Paul's explanation of how they went **“From Heirs Apparent To Heirs Actual”**...]

I. UNDER THE LAW AS HEIRS APPARENT

A. THEY WERE NO DIFFERENT THAN SLAVES...

1. They were still children - **Ga 4:1-2**
 - a. Heirs, yet no different from slaves regarding inheritance
 - b. Masters, yet still under guardians and stewards
2. They were in bondage under the elements of the world - **Ga 4:3**
 - a. “The word rendered ‘elements’ (**stoicheion**), properly means a row or series; a little step; a pin or peg, as the gnomon of a dial; and then anything ‘elementary,’ as a sound, a letter. It then denotes the elements or rudiments of any kind of instruction, and in the NT is applied to the first lessons or principles of religion; **He 5:12.**” - **Barnes**
 - b. “Here the figure is kept up of the reference to the infant (**Ga 4:1,3**); and the idea is, that lessons were taught under the Jewish system adapted to their nonage - to a state of childhood. They were treated as children under tutors and governors.” - **Barnes, ibid.**

B. THEY WERE UNDER GUARD...

1. They were kept under guard by the Law - cf. **Ga 3:23**
2. The Law had been their tutor, schoolmaster (**paidagogos**) - cf. **Ga 3:24**

- a. “a tutor, i.e. a guardian and guide of boys. Among the Greeks and the Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them before arriving at the age of manhood.” - **Thayer**
- b. “**paidagogos**; from **pais** (G3816), a child, and **agogos**, a leader, which is from **ago** (G71), to lead. An instructor or teacher of children, a schoolmaster, a pedagogue (**1 Co 4:15; Ga 3:24-25**). Originally referred to the slave who conducted the boys from home to the school. Then it became a teacher or an educator.” - **Complete Word Study Dictionary**

[Such was the condition of those under the Law of Moses. But now in Christ things are dramatically different...]

II. IN JESUS CHRIST AS HEIRS ACTUAL

A. THEY ARE NOW SONS...

1. They are no longer under a tutor
 - a. The Law had served its purpose as tutor well - cf. **Ga 3:23-24a**
 - b. But now they were called to be “justified by faith” - cf. **Ga 3:24b-25**
2. They are now sons of God
 - a. Through faith in Christ Jesus - cf. **Ga 3:26**
 - b. For those baptized into Christ have put on Christ - cf. **Ga 3:27**
 - c. They have been “born again” - cf. **Jn 3:5**

B. THEY HAVE RECEIVED THE ADOPTION OF SONS...

1. They have been redeemed - **Ga 4:4-5**
 - a. By the Son sent by His Father
 - 1) When the fullness of time had come (when conditions were just right)
 - 2) Born of a woman (Mary), born under the Law (of Moses)
 - b. For the purpose of:
 - 1) Redeeming those under the Law (Jews)
 - 2) Receiving the adoption as sons (both Jews and Gentiles)
2. They have received the Spirit of God in their hearts - **Ga 4:6**
 - a. By whom they cry out “Abba, Father!” - cf. **Ro 8:15**
 - b. Who bears witness with their spirit that they are children and heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ - cf. **Ro 8:16-17**
 - c. Who pours out the love of God in their hearts - cf. **Ro 5:5**
 - d. As explained by others:
 - 1) “And being made sons by the Son through the operation of faith (**Jn 1:12**), the Spirit of Christ is bestowed upon us to bring us to blissful realization of our son ship, so that we may speak to God, calling him Abba, Father. Abba is the Syriac for father. The Syriac and Greek names are both used by Paul, probably that all the tender associations which, to either Jews or Greeks, clustered around the paternal name, might be, at the sound of the sacred word, transferred to God. Thus, by the blessed ministration of Christ, all who believed on him in Galatia passed from servitude and wardship to the estate of sons and heirs - **Ro 8:17**.” - **McGarvey on Ga 4:6**
 - 2) “**For ye did not receive the spirit of bondage**. The time is referred to when they

were born again, and entered the kingdom of God. They did not receive the spirit of bondage, of slavery to sin, so that they would obey its dictates, and thus be in fear of death. Instead, they received the Holy Spirit according to promise (**Ac 2:38**).”

- **B. W. Johnson on Ro 8:15**

- 3) **“The Spirit of adoption.** The Spirit God bestows upon those who are accepted as his children. Paul was writing to the Romans, among whom the adoption of children, not their own by nature, was common. They would understand this to mean that those converted, or born again, are adopted as children of God; upon those thus adopted he bestows his Spirit; this Spirit in their hearts produces a loving trust that enables them to address God as Father.” - **Johnson, ibid.**
3. They are heirs of God through Christ - **Ga 4:7**; cf. **Ro 8:16-17**
 - a. Receiving the Spirit as a guarantee (**arrabon**) - cf. **Ep 1:13-14**; **2 Co 1:22**; **5:5**
 - 1) “An earnest; money which in purchases is given as a pledge or down payment that the full amount will subsequently be paid.” - **Thayer**
 - 2) “A pledge, something which stands for part of the price and paid beforehand to confirm the transaction. Used in the NT only in a figurative sense and spoken of the Holy Spirit which God has given to believers in this present life to assure them of their future and eternal inheritance.” - **Complete Word Study Dictionary**
 - b. The Spirit is but the first fruits - cf. **Ro 8:23**
 - 1) With the redemption of the body (the resurrection) yet to come - cf. **Ep 4:30**
 - 2) Until the redemption of the purchased possession - cf. **Ep 1:14**
 - 3) When we will receive the ultimate inheritance: “God is with us!” - **Re 21:1-7**

CONCLUSION

1. To seek justification by the works of the Law is to return to being **“heirs apparent”**...
 - a. In which one is but a child under a guardian
 - b. In which one is still in bondage to basic elements of religion
2. To be justified by an obedient faith in Christ is to become **“heirs actual”**...
 - a. In which one has begun to receive the inheritance as sons of God
 - b. The first fruit being the Spirit of God, who is a guarantee of that which is to come
3. Are we benefiting from the blessing of the Spirit in our lives...?
 - a. Promised to those who believe? - **Jn 7:37-39**
 - b. Given to those who become children of God? - **Ga 4:6**
 - c. Whose indwelling should engender a strong affection for God as our Father? - **Ga 4:6**; **Ro 5:5**

Paul will have much more to say about the Spirit in the life of the Christian in his epistle to the Galatians (cf. **Ga 5:5,16-25**; **6:8**). For now, let Peter remind you how to receive the Spirit... - cf. **Ac 2:38-39**

The Danger Of Religious Holidays

Galatians 4:8-11

INTRODUCTION

1. The observance of holidays is a common feature in many religions...
 - a. Judaism and Islam have their many feast days and holy days
 - b. Catholicism and Protestantism are known for their holidays like Christmas and Easter
2. Holidays in New Testament Christianity, on the other hand, are strikingly absent...
 - a. The church did assemble on the Lord's Day (Sunday) to observe the Lord's Supper
 - b. But there is no record of celebrating any holiday like Christmas, Easter, Lent, etc.
3. In fact, Christians were warned regarding religious holidays...
 - a. Not to let others judge them regarding their observance - **Co 2:16-17**
 - b. Concern was expressed regarding those who observed them - **Ga 4:10-11**
4. One might wonder regarding the New Testament and religious holidays...
 - a. Why didn't the early church observe such holidays?
 - b. Why was Paul concerned about their observance?
 - c. Are there circumstances when Christians might observe religious holidays?

[To answer such questions, let's take a closer look at **Ga 4:8-10** where we learn...]

I. THEY CAN ENDANGER OUR LIBERTY IN CHRIST

A. THEY ARE WEAK AND BEGGARLY ELEMENTS OF RELIGION...

1. Paul refers to rites and ceremonies, such as found in Judaism and paganism
 - a. He has in mind those who have come out of paganism - **Ga 4:8-9**
 - b. Who evidently were being encouraged to observe elements of Judaism - **Ga 4:10**
 2. Mentioned specifically were those found in the Law of Moses - **Ga 4:10**
 - a. **Days** - e.g., the Sabbath
 - b. **Months** - e.g., the new moons
 - c. **Seasons** - e.g., festivals like the Passover, Feast of Tabernacles, Pentecost
 - d. **Years** - e.g., annual atonement, sabbatical years, jubilees
 3. They are described as weak and beggarly elements - **Ga 4:9**
 - a. **Weak** - powerless to save the soul or justify the sinner - cf. **Co 2:20-23**
 - b. **Beggarly** - unable to impart true spiritual riches - cf. **Ep 1:3**
 - c. **Elements** - rudimentary, designed to be replaced - cf. **Co 2:16-17; He 9:9-10**
- **Religious days, like other elements of the Law of Moses, were carnal ordinances designed to be replaced with a more spiritual form of worship - cf. Jn 4:20-24**

B. THEY CAN BRING ONE INTO BONDAGE...

1. Those under the Law were under guard
 - a. Like children under guardians and stewards - cf. **Ga 3:23; 4:1-2**
 - b. In bondage to the elements of the world - cf. **Ga 4:3**
2. Those in Christ had been redeemed (set free)

- a. God sent His Son for this very purpose - cf. **Ga 4:4-5**
- b. They had become sons and heirs - cf. **Ga 4:6-7**
- **Observing religious holidays can be a return to bondage, when Christ came to set us free! - Ga 4:9-10**

[Many believe observing holy days enhances their faith, when in fact it can be a step backward from true spirituality! From **Ga 4:11**, we learn something else about the danger of religious holidays...]

II. THEY CAN ENDANGER OUR SALVATION IN CHRIST

A. APOSTASY IS POSSIBLE...

- 1. Otherwise, why would Paul be fearful?
 - a. Doubtful over their condition? - **Ga 4:11,20**
 - b. Aware of the possibility of his own apostasy? - cf. **1 Co 9:27**
- 2. The Bible teaches one can fall from grace
 - a. In the book of Hebrews - **He 12:15**; cf. **He 3:12-14**
 - b. And in many other places - cf. **Jn 15:2,6; 2 Pe 2:20-22; 3:17-18; Re 2:5**
- **If we observe religious holidays based on the Law of Moses out of a sense of necessity for our salvation, then we have fallen from grace! - cf. Ga 5:4**

B. WORSHIP CAN BE IN VAIN...

- 1. Paul described the vanity of “self-imposed religion” - cf. **Co 2:20-23**
 - a. Based on the commandments and ordinances of men
 - b. Which were of no true value against the indulgence of the flesh
- 2. Jesus warned against vain worship - **Mt 15:9**
 - a. Such worship is based on doctrines commanded by men
 - b. Especially when its observance displaces the commandment of God - cf. **Mt 15:3-8**
- **If we impose religious holidays through man-made traditions, then we offer worship that is in vain!**

[Perhaps we can see why observance of holy days was a major concern to Paul. But we should also note that he wrote of...]

III. CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THEY MIGHT BE OBSERVED

A. ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS...

- 1. Paul spoke of one observing a day above another - **Ro 14:5-6**
 - a. Likely a reference to the Sabbath Day
 - b. But generic enough to refer to exalting any day above another for religious purposes
 - c. In the context, it appears to have been something allowed a weak brother
- 2. Paul himself observed certain rites of Judaism
 - a. He took vows, sought to attend the feasts in Jerusalem - **Ac 18:18,21; 20:16**
 - b. On one occasion, he even helped the completion of a vow involving animal sacrifices, evidently to accommodate weaker brethren - **Ac 21:17-26**; cf. **Num 6:1-20**
- **Note carefully: these were things done on an individual basis, not as a work or the worship of the church**

B. AWARE OF CERTAIN LIMITATIONS...

- 1. They cannot save one, they cannot be done for the purpose of salvation

- a. This was the issue of the controversy in Antioch - cf. **Ac 15:1,5**
- b. This was Paul's point in Galatians - cf. **Ga 5:4**
- 2. They cannot be imposed on others
 - a. This was the conclusion of council in Jerusalem - cf. **Ac 15:10-11**
 - b. This was illustrated by Paul in Galatians - cf. **Ga 2:3-5**
- **Note carefully: this is why religious holidays should not be church functions: lest they leave the impression they are necessary, plus such functions are necessarily imposed on others**

CONCLUSION

- 1. Christians need to be careful about their liberty in Christ... - cf. **Ga 5:1**
 - a. Jewish Christians have been redeemed from the bondage of the Law
 - b. Gentile Christians have been redeemed from the bondage of weak and beggarly elements
- 2. What liberty we have in Christ must be handled carefully... - cf. **Ga 5:13-16**.
 - a. We should be careful not to impose our liberty in ways that cause division
 - b. We should progress to a higher plane of spirituality, not regress to carnal forms of religion

What about your observance of religious holidays? If Paul wrote to you today, would he say: **"I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain."...? - Ga 4:11**

Sacrifices In Evangelism

Galatians 4:12-15

INTRODUCTION

1. In writing to the Galatians, Paul reminds them of their shared history...
 - a. How he first came to them in preaching the gospel - **Ga 4:12-14**
 - b. How he was confident they were willing to sacrifice for him - **Ga 4:15**
2. This passage describes a **sentimental argument** by Paul...
 - a. One of several arguments (personal, scriptural, practical, sentimental, allegorical)
 - b. Defending justification by faith in Christ rather than by the Law of Moses
3. This passage reminds me of the need for sacrifice in evangelism...
 - a. Not just by those willing to preach the gospel
 - b. But also by those willing to support preachers

[The spread of the gospel can be hindered if we do not appreciate the necessity for sacrifice. Who needs to be willing to sacrifice in evangelism? Most understand the need to sacrifice...]

I. BY THOSE WHO PREACH

A. THEY MUST BE WILLING TO GO...

1. As Jesus commanded - **Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15**
2. Otherwise how shall people hear and believe? - **Ro 10:13-14**
3. Thus the gospel must be preached to all nations - **Mk 13:10; cf. Isa 49:6**

B. THEY MUST BE WILLING TO ENDURE...

1. Paul certainly did - **2 Co 11:23-29; 2 Ti 2:10; 3:11**
2. He wrote that Timothy must be willing to endure - **2 Ti 1:8; 2:3; 4:5**
3. Those who preach today must often endure:
 - a. The inconvenience of frequent moves
 - b. The loss of benefits often provided in many secular jobs
 - c. The dangers of traveling in unsafe places
 - d. The resistance and even persecution by unbelievers
 - e. The lack of understanding by immature or false brethren

C. THEY WILL BE REWARDED...

1. In heaven if not on earth - **Mt 5:10-12**
2. But often even on earth - **Mk 10:28-30**

[Most who preach the gospel understand the need to sacrifice and do so willingly. But there is also a need to sacrifice...]

II. BY THOSE WHO SUPPORT

A. THEY MUST BE WILLING TO SEND...

1. Otherwise how shall preachers preach? - **Ro 10:14-15**
2. Just as the early churches did
 - a. Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch - **Ac 11:22**
 - b. Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas - **Ac 13:1-2**
 - c. Philippi supported Paul in Thessalonica - **Ph 4:15-16**
 - d. Churches supported Paul in Corinth - **2 Co 11:8-9**
3. For they understood that such workers were worthy of support
 - a. As Jesus had taught his disciples - **Mt 10:10; Lk 10:7**
 - b. As Paul taught the Corinthians - **1 Co 9:7-14**

B. THEY MUST BE WILLING TO SACRIFICE...

1. They are **stewards** also
 - a. Just as preachers are stewards of the gospel - **1 Co 4:1**
 - b. They are stewards of their possessions - **1 Pe 4:10**
2. Stewards are expected to be faithful - **1 Co 4:2**
 - a. To minister with the ability God provides - **1 Pe 4:11**
 - c. For which they will one day give account - cf. **Mt 25:14-30**
3. Some believe preachers should be willing to sacrifice more than others
 - a. Should the ‘quartermasters’ at the base be squandering what may have been given them to support the ‘soldiers’ at the front?
 - b. Should we not all have the same willingness to sacrifice if the need is there?
 - c. If brethren ‘at the base’ sacrificed as much as they expect of those who are ‘at the front’, would there not be more good things being done?
4. We may serve different roles, but we should have the same sense of sacrifice! - **1 Pe 4:11**
 - a. Serving with **the same zeal** (“as with the ability which God supplies”)
 - b. Striving for **the same goal** (“that in all things God may be glorified”)

C. THEY WILL BE REWARDED...

1. For they are fellow workers for the truth - **3 Jn 1:5-8**
2. In receiving and sending those whom Christ has sent, they receive Christ - **Mt 10:40**
3. They will receive the same reward as those who proclaim - **Mt 10:41-42**

CONCLUSION

1. The gospel spread around the world in the first century...
 - a. As Paul wrote to the brethren at Rome - **Ro 10:17-18**
 - b. As he wrote to the brethren at Colosse - **Co 1:23**
2. The gospel continues to be spread in countries around the world...
 - a. Wherever preachers are willing to make sacrifices to go
 - b. Wherever brethren are willing to make sacrifices to send them

May the “**Sacrifices In Evangelism**” exemplified by the early Christians inspire us today...!

True Friends And False Friends

Galatians 4:16-20

INTRODUCTION

1. Friends can be a wonderful blessing...
 - a. A source of comfort in times good and bad - **Pro 17:17**
 - b. A source of good counsel - **Pro 27:9**
2. It is not always easy to know who your true friends are...
 - a. Sometimes a true friend tells you what you don't want to hear
 - b. Sometimes a false friend tells you what you do want to hear
3. In writing to the Galatians, Paul found it necessary to remind them of that truth...
 - a. As he defended the gospel of justification by faith in Christ
 - b. As he battled against the influence of those who sought to bind the Law of Moses

[In the course of reasoning with the Galatians on sentimental grounds, Paul has some things to say about "True Friends And False Friends" (Ga 4:16-20). We can glean from Paul's words that...]

I. TRUE FRIENDS SAY WHAT YOU NEED TO HEAR

A. THEY WILL TELL YOU THE TRUTH...

1. Even if it makes them your enemy - **Ga 4:16**
 2. Even when the tone hurts - **Ga 4:20**
- **Paul had been a true friend to his brethren**

B. YOU NEED TRUE FRIENDS...

1. When hearing the gospel of Christ
 - a. Who will tell you the full gospel as preached by Christ and His apostles - **Mk 16:15-16**
 - b. Not just what is popularly believed, or what may appeal to our sensitivities - **Ga 1:8-9**
 2. When growing in grace
 - a. Who will tell us of the need to grow, and the danger of apostasy - **2 Pe 3:17-18**
 - b. Not just tickling our ears with things we enjoy hearing - **2 Ti 4:3-4**
 3. When drifting from God
 - a. As Paul reached out to the Galatians in our text - **Ga 4:19-20**
 - b. As Paul encouraged them to do the same to others - **Ga 6:1**
- **Do we appreciate the value of such friends in our lives?**

C. HEED THE WISDOM OF DAVID AND SOLOMON...

1. "Let the righteous strike me; it shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; it shall be as excellent oil; let my head not refuse it." - **Psa 141:5a**
2. "Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, but he who regards a rebuke will be honored." - **Pro 13:18**
3. "The ear that hears the rebukes of life will abide among the wise. He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, but he who heeds rebuke gets understanding." - **Pro 15:31-32**

4. "Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear."
- **Pro 25:12**

[May we always appreciate the value of true friends. On the other hand...]

II. FALSE FRIENDS SAY WHAT THEY WANT YOU TO HEAR

A. THEY WILL TELL YOU WHAT THEY WANT...

1. When it makes you on their side - **Ga 4:17**
 2. When you have something they want - cf. **Ga 6:12-13**
- **The Judaizing teachers were not true friends of the Galatians**

B. YOU NEED TO BEWARE OF FALSE FRIENDS...

1. When you are being courted with zeal
 - a. Their motives may not be right - **Ga 4:17**; cf. **Ro 16:17-18**
 - b. Their knowledge may be wrong - cf. **Ro 10:1-2**
 2. When you are being manipulated
 - a. As the false teachers were trying to manipulate the Galatians - **Ga 4:17**
 - b. A tactic first used by Satan, and since by many others - **2 Co 11:3,13-15**; **2 Pe 2:1-3**
 3. When you are pursued only in their presence
 - a. Paul sought their devotion even in his absence - **Ga 4:18**; cf. **Ph 1:27**; **2:12**
 - b. False friends often forget about you when they are no longer with you
- **Do we appreciate the danger of the wrong kind of friends?**

C. HEED THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON...

1. "Fervent lips with a wicked heart are like earthenware covered with silver dross. He who hates, disguises it with his lips, and lays up deceit within himself; when he speaks kindly, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart; though his hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness will be revealed before the assembly." - **Pro 26:23-26**
2. "Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." - **Pro 27:5-6**

CONCLUSION

1. Many people have been led astray by the wrong kind of friends...
 - a. Good habits have been corrupted by bad company - **1 Co 15:33**
 - b. Immature Christians have been tossed around by cunning and deceitful teachers - **Ep 4:14**
2. May we learn from the interaction between Paul and the Galatians...
 - a. True friends say what you need to hear
 - b. False friends say what they want you to hear

Speaking of true friends, the greatest friend we can have is Jesus... - cf. **Jn 15:13-14**

The Allegory Of Hagar And Sarah

Galatians 4:21-31

INTRODUCTION

1. In the first four chapters of Galatians, Paul defends...
 - a. His apostleship as being from God, not man - **Ga 1-2**
 - b. His gospel of justification by faith in Christ, not by the Law of Moses - **Ga 3-4**
2. In defending the gospel of justification by faith in Christ, Paul makes five arguments...
 - a. Personal argument - the Galatians' own experience - **Ga 3:1-5**
 - b. Scriptural argument - the testimony of the Old Testament - **Ga 3:6-25**
 - c. Practical argument - how one becomes a son and heir of God - **Ga 3:26-4:7**
 - d. Sentimental argument - appealing to their relationship with Paul - **Ga 4:8-20**
 - e. Allegorical argument - using Hagar and Sarah as an illustration - **Ga 4:21-31**
3. In this study, we will consider Paul's allegorical argument...
 - a. "Allegory" comes from Greek **allos** (other) and **agoreuein** (to speak in public)
 - b. An allegory is "a figurative representation conveying a meaning other than and in addition to the literal" - **Wikipedia**
4. It is important to note...
 - a. "Paul does not deny the actual historical narrative, but he simply uses it in an allegorical sense to illustrate his point for the benefit of his readers who are tempted to go under the burden of the law" - **Robertson's Word Pictures**
 - b. "the apostle gives an allegorical interpretation to the historical narrative of Hagar and Sarah, not treating that narrative as an allegory in itself" - **Smith's Bible Dictionary**

[To better understand Paul's allegorical argument, perhaps it is best to first review...]

I. THE HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

A. SARAH AND HAGAR...

1. Sarah, who is barren, has a handmaiden named Hagar - **Gen 16:1**
2. Sarah gives Hagar to Abraham to bear a child in her place - **Gen 16:2-3**
3. Hagar conceives and despises her mistress Sarah - **Gen 16:4**
4. Sarah deals harshly with Hagar - **Gen 16:5-6**
5. Hagar returns to Sarah, and bears Ishmael - **Gen 16:7-16**

B. ISHMAEL AND ISAAC...

1. God promises that Sarah will have a son - **Gen 17:15-17**
2. God confirms the covenant will be through Isaac, not Ishmael - **Gen 17:18-21**
3. Sarah bears Isaac as God promised - **Gen 21:1-8**
4. Sarah has Abraham send Hagar away - **Gen 21:9-14**

[With the historical account of Hagar and Sarah fresh on our minds, we now turn to...]

II. THE APOSTOLIC APPLICATION

A. PAUL REVIEWS THE HISTORICAL ACCOUNT...

1. Abraham had two sons - **Ga 4:21-22a**
2. One (Ishmael) by a slave woman (Hagar) - **Ga 4:22b**
3. One (Isaac) by a free woman (Sarah) - **Ga 4:22b**
4. The son of the slave was born of the flesh - **Ga 4:23a**
 - a. Ishmael's conception was natural
 - b. When Abraham went into Hagar
5. The son of the free woman was born through promise - **Ga 4:23b**
 - a. Isaac's conception was by God's power - cf. **He 11:11-12**
 - b. As promised by God - cf. **Gen 21:1-2**

A. PAUL APPLIES THE ALLEGORICAL ELEMENTS...

1. The two women are two covenants - **Ga 4:24-27**
 - a. **Hagar** represents Mount Sinai in Arabia, bearing children for slavery
 - 1) She corresponds to present Jerusalem
 - 2) She is in slavery with her children
 - b. **Sarah** represents Jerusalem above, those who are free
 - 1) She corresponds to heaven (the New Jerusalem)
 - 2) She is 'our mother' (those in Christ)
 - 3) She who was barren is no longer desolate
2. Those in Christ are like **Isaac** - **Ga 4:28-31**
 - a. They too are children of promise
 - b. They too have been persecuted
 - 1) Ishmael (born of the flesh) persecuted Isaac (born according to promise)
 - 2) Judaizing teachers (born of the flesh) persecuted Christians (born according to the Spirit)
 - c. The Scriptures portend what will be the end
 - 1) The son of the slave woman (i.e., Judaizing teachers)
 - 2) Will not inherit with the son of the free woman (i.e., those in Christ)
 - d. Those in Christ...
 - 1) Are children of the free woman (heaven above)
 - 2) Are not of the slave (present Jerusalem, with the Law of Moses)

CONCLUSION

1. Thus Paul illustrates why the Galatians should not heed the Judaizing teachers...
 - a. It would be a return to slavery (to the Law of Moses)
 - b. It would be turning their back on the Spirit who conceived them - cf. **Ti 3:5-7**
 - c. It would be turning away from the promises of heaven - cf. **He 12:22-25**
2. Our threat today might not be from Judaizing teachers...
 - a. But there are those who would have us turn away from Christ
 - 1) Voices in the world
 - 2) False religions
 - b. The end result would be the same
 - 1) A return to slavery - cf. **Jn 8:31-34**
 - 2) Falling short of receiving the promises - cf. **He 4:1-2,11**

Only by remaining in Christ can we be the free children of promise, with Jerusalem above as our true mother...! - cf. **Re 2:10c; 3:12**

Standing Fast In The Liberty Of Christ

Galatians 5:1

INTRODUCTION

1. Galatians has been called “**The Magna Carta Of Christian Liberty**”; ‘Magna Carta’ refers to...
 - a. The royal charter of political rights given to rebellious English barons by King John in 1215 - **WordWeb**
 - b. A document or piece of legislation that serves as a guarantee of basic rights. - **Dictionary.com**
2. The reason it has been so called is because of Paul’s discussion regarding ‘bondage’...
 - a. In connection with the meeting in Jerusalem - **Ga 2:4-5**
 - b. In arguing that we are justified by faith in Christ, not works of the Law - **Ga 4:3-5,9,24-25**
 - c. With his climax found in the text for our study today - **Ga 5:1**

[The liberty we have in Christ is indeed precious, and it is imperative that we stand fast in it. Yet exactly what does that liberty entail...?]

I. THE LIBERTY WE HAVE IN CHRIST

A. FREEDOM FROM THE LAW OF MOSES...

1. This is Paul’s primary concern in this epistle - cf. **Ga 2:16**
2. Upon which he expounded in the first four chapters - e.g., **Ga 3:23-25**
3. Concerning which he wrote elsewhere - **Ro 7:4-6**
- **Christ has delivered the Jews from their obligation to keep the Law of Moses**

B. FREEDOM FROM THE BONDAGE OF SIN...

1. Writing of being “justified”, Paul refers to being “not guilty” of sin - cf. **Ga 2:16-17**
2. Concerning which he wrote elsewhere - **Ro 8:1-2**
3. Jesus also spoke of the deliverance from bondage of sin - **Jn 8:31-34**
- **Christ has delivered all men from the guilt and power of sin**

C. FREEDOM FROM THE TRADITIONS OF MEN...

1. Paul wrote of this in chapter four - **Ga 4:9-11**
2. Also in his writing to the Colossians - **Co 2:20-23**
3. Jesus also spoke of the danger of human traditions - **Mt 15:3-9**
- **Christ has delivered us from the need to keep human traditions**

D. FREEDOM FROM WORKS OF THE FLESH...

1. Paul will have much more to say about the works of the flesh - **Ga 5:13,17,19-21; 6:8**
2. As he warned against in writing to the Corinthians - **1 Co 6:9-11**
3. About which Jesus also warned - **Mk 7:20-23**
- **Christ offers deliverance from deeds of the flesh which endanger our salvation**

[Such are the things we experience through the liberty that we have in Christ. Of course, that presumes that we are indeed...]

II. STANDING FAST IN OUR LIBERTY

A. **HANDLE THE LAW PROPERLY...**

1. The Law is good if used properly - **1 Ti 1:8; 2 Ti 2:15**
 2. It was written for our learning and admonition - **Ro 15:4; 1 Co 10:11**
 3. It is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness - **2 Ti 3:14-17**
 4. But it has its limitations
 - a. It has ceased as a system of justification - cf. **Ga 5:4**
 - b. It has been replaced as a covenant - cf. **He 8:6-13**
 - c. Its religious observances have been replaced - cf. **He 9:9-10; Jn 4:20-24**
- **The Law must be properly handled if we are to preserve our liberty in Christ**

B. **APPLY OUR BLESSINGS IN CHRIST LIBERALLY...**

1. The blood of Christ frees us from the guilt of sin - **Ep 1:4**
 - a. The remission of sins is promised to those who repent and are baptized - **Ac 2:38**
 - b. The blood of Christ remains available for Christians who repent of sin - **1 Jn 1:7-10**
 - c. Christians need to repent and pray when they sin - **Ac 8:22**
 2. The Spirit of God can free us from the power of sin - **Ro 8:12-13**
 - a. God can strengthen us by His Spirit in the inner man - **Ep 3:16**
 - b. We can do all things through God and Christ - **Ph 2:12-13; 4:13**
- **We must not hesitate to access the blood of Christ and the Spirit of God to make use of our liberty in Christ**

C. **DEAL WITH TRADITIONS OF MEN CAUTIOUSLY...**

1. Traditions may have a place on an individual level - cf. **Ro 14:5-6**
 - a. When not taught as a doctrine of God - **Mk 7:7**
 - b. When not done instead of keeping a command of God - **Mk 7:8-9**
 2. But they must be handled with the utmost of caution on a congregational level
 - a. Things done on a congregational level necessarily bind them upon all the members
 - b. That is why religious holidays are reasons for such grave concern - **Ga 4:10-11**
- **We must be careful not to let human traditions destroy our liberty in Christ**

D. **FOLLOW THE SPIRIT DILIGENTLY...**

1. We must not use our liberty as an occasion for the flesh - **Ga 5:13**
 2. Our best weapon against the flesh is to follow the Spirit - **Ga 5:16-18**
 3. Those who are led by the Spirit will produce the fruit of the Spirit - **Ga 5:22-23**
 4. Our new life in Christ makes it possible to walk in the Spirit - **Ga 5:25**
- **We must be diligent to set our minds on the things of the Spirit if we want to enjoy life and peace - Ro 8:5-6**

CONCLUSION

1. The liberty we enjoy in Christ is great...
 - a. Freedom from the law of Moses
 - b. Freedom from the bondage of sin
 - c. Freedom from the traditions of men
 - d. Freedom from the works of the flesh
2. But it is not license to do whatever we want; we must...

- a. Handle the Law properly
- b. Apply our blessings in Christ liberally
- c. Deal with traditions of men cautiously
- d. Follow the Spirit diligently

With the aid of Paul's epistle to the Galatians, we will succeed in "**Standing Fast In The Liberty Of Christ**". Have you begun to enjoy the liberty Christ offers through obedience to the gospel...?

Consequences Of Trusting In The Law

Galatians 5:2-4

INTRODUCTION

1. The churches of Galatia were troubled by those who taught...
 - a. Christians needed to keep the Law of Moses
 - b. Men needed to be circumcised as commanded by the Law
 - **A problem that plagued many churches in the beginning - cf. Ac 15:1-5**

2. Paul presented powerful arguments in defense of the gospel of Christ...
 - a. Personal argument - the Galatians' own experience - **Ga 3:1-5**
 - b. Scriptural argument - the testimony of the Old Testament - **Ga 3:6-25**
 - c. Practical argument - how one becomes a son and heir of God - **Ga 3:26-4:7**
 - d. Sentimental argument - appealing to their relationship with Paul - **Ga 4:8-20**
 - e. Allegorical argument - using Hagar and Sarah as an illustration - **Ga 4:21-31**
 - **Thus Paul sought to reason with his brethren in the churches of Galatia**

[Then, with apostolic authority (cf. **Ga 5:2-4**), Paul testifies to the “**Consequences Of Trusting In The Law**”. The consequences are grave, and should be considered seriously by every Christian...]

I. YOU WILL NOT PROFIT FROM CHRIST

A. “IF YOU BECOME CIRCUMCISED...”

1. This should be understood in its context
2. Paul did not condemn circumcision in every case - cf. **Ac 16:3**
3. He opposed it when done with the idea it was necessary for justification - cf. **Ga 2:3-5**
- **Paul is dealing with those teaching that circumcision was necessary for salvation**

B. “CHRIST WILL PROFIT YOU NOTHING...”

1. What a terrifying thought!
2. The blessings that Christ provides will not be theirs; for example:
 - a. The forgiveness of sins through His blood - cf. **Ep 1:7**
 - b. The gift of the Spirit as a guarantee of their inheritance - cf. **Ep 1:13-14**
 - c. The greatness of God's power toward those who believe - cf. **Ep 1:19**
 - d. The privilege of being fellow-citizens and members of God's family - cf. **Ep 2:19-22**
- **Indeed, all the blessings that Jesus offers will not benefit them!**

[Not only will Christ not profit any who are circumcised in order to be saved...]

II. YOU WILL BE INDEBTED TO THE WHOLE LAW

A. “EVERY MAN WHO BECOMES CIRCUMCISED...”

1. Again, this should be understood in its context
2. Paul makes it clear that the consequences affect everyone
 - a. Not just to “you” (if you become circumcised)
 - b. But to “every man” (to every man who becomes circumcised)

3. Paul makes it clear that he writes with great solemnity
 - a. He already wrote “Indeed I, Paul...” - **Ga 5:2**
 - b. Now he adds “And I testify again...” - **Ga 5:3**
- **Paul’s statements are to be taken seriously, for they are in the form of an oath**

B. “HE IS A DEBTOR TO KEEP THE WHOLE LAW...”

1. “He binds himself to obey all the Law of Moses” - **Barnes**
 2. “Circumcision was the distinguishing badge of the Jews, as baptism is of Christians. A man, therefore, who became circumcised became a professor of the Jewish religion, and bound himself to obey all its special laws.” - **ibid.**
 3. Which placed one under an insupportable yoke - cf. **Ac 15:10**
 - a. The Law put those who did not obey it under a curse - cf. **Ga 3:10**
 - b. Those who stumbled in just one point were guilty of all - cf. **Ja 2:10-11**
 - c. And the blood of bulls and goats was inadequate - cf. **He 10:1-4**
- **Such a person has truly become entangled with a yoke of bondage (Ga 5:1)**

[The apostle continues to describe the consequences of trusting in the Law for their salvation...]

III. YOU WILL BE ESTRANGED FROM CHRIST

A. “YOU WHO ATTEMPT TO BE JUSTIFIED BY LAW...”

1. Those seeking salvation on the basis of keeping the Law of Moses
 2. An effort on the part of many in Israel
 - a. Not just those who were Jewish Christians - cf. **Ac 15:1,5**
 - b. But also Israelites who did not believe in Christ - cf. **Ro 9:31-32; 10:1-4**
- **This would apply to anyone who seeks to be saved through the Law of Moses**

B. “YOU HAVE BECOME ESTRANGED FROM CHRIST...”

1. As expressed by various translations:
 - a. “severed from Christ” (ESV, NASB)
 - b. “alienated from Christ” (NIV)
 - c. “have cut yourselves off from Christ” (NRSV)
 - d. “Christ is become of no effect” (KJV)
 2. Similar to warnings given by Jesus Himself to His disciples
 - a. To those who do not bear fruit - **Jn 15:1-6**
 - b. To those had lost their first love - **Re 2:4-5**
 - c. To those who were lukewarm - **Re 3:15-16**
- **Note carefully: both Jesus and Paul are addressing Christians!**

[The consequences for Christians who trust in the Law of Moses for salvation is then stated most ominously...]

IV. YOU WILL FALL FROM GRACE

A. “YOU WHO ATTEMPT TO BE JUSTIFIED BY LAW...”

1. Again, Paul is addressing Christians who felt that circumcision and the Law were necessary
 2. But by the Law no one can actually be justified - cf. **Ro 3:20**
- **Thus their efforts are destined for failure**

B. “YOU HAVE FALLEN FROM GRACE...”

1. This is one of the clearest statement of the possibility of apostasy
 - a. Paul is warning Christians
 - b. One cannot fall from something if they were never there
 - c. Those in a state of grace were in danger of falling from it
 - d. If there is no danger of apostasy, Paul’s statement is meaningless
 2. This is just one of many passages that warn of the danger of apostasy
 - a. Jesus warned His disciples of being cut off - **Jn 15:1-6**
 - b. Paul warned the Gentile Christians in Rome - **Ro 11:19-22**
 - c. The epistle to the Hebrews is filled with many warnings - **He 2:1; 3:12-15; 4:1,11; 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 12:15**
 - d. Peter also left many warnings - **2 Pe 2:1-3,20-22; 3:17**
- **The security of the believer (Jn 10:28-29) is for those who remain faithful to Christ; otherwise, they will not receive their inheritance - cf. Re 2:10c**

CONCLUSION

1. How terrible are the consequences of trusting in the Law of Moses for salvation...!
 - a. Christ will be of no profit
 - b. Indebted to a Law that cannot save
 - c. Severed from Christ
 - d. Fallen from grace
2. Christians may not be tempted to trust in the Law of Moses today; but we still must take care...
 - a. Not to trust in ourselves, nor in any law or religion of man
 - b. Otherwise the consequences will be the same!
3. How much better, to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, and enjoy...
 - a. The blessings of salvation and sanctification that Jesus offers - cf. **Ep 1:3**
 - b. A law whose commandments are not burdensome - cf. **1 Co 9:21; 1 Jn 5:3**
 - c. Union with Christ, with the life and strength such communion offers - cf. **Jn 15:4-5**
 - d. Standing in the grace of God - cf. **Ro 5:1-2**

Are you placing your trust in Jesus Christ by heeding His gospel and the words of His apostles...?

Eagerly Awaiting Our Hope

Galatians 5:5

INTRODUCTION

1. A few questions to stimulate your thinking...
 - a. What is your hope as a Christian?
 - b. How strong is that hope?
 - c. Can you say that you are **eagerly** awaiting your hope?
2. Much of the joy of being a Christian is related to our hope...
 - a. How real that hope is to us
 - b. How eager we are to one day realize that hope
 - c. How it enables us to serve the Lord with joy and patience
3. In **Ga 5:5**, Paul writes concerning his hope...
 - a. What he was waiting for
 - b. How he was **eagerly** waiting for it (Grk., **apekdechomai**, to await eagerly)

[From his words in this verse and elsewhere we can glean truths that can make a great difference in our **attitude** and **service** as Christians. Consider first...]

I. WHAT WE ARE TO EAGERLY WAIT FOR

A. THE HOPE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS...

1. The hope of justification
 - a. Paul had been writing about justification - **Ga 5:4**
 - b. Justification and righteousness come from the same Greek word (**dikaiosune**)
 - c. Thus Paul is talking about the hope of being made right, not guilty of sin
 2. They had no other hope of justification than by faith in the Redeemer - **Barnes**
 - a. This was Paul's hope expressed to the Philippians - **Ph 3:9**
 - b. A hope that sustained him in his last days, his darkest hours - **2 Ti 4:8**
- **We are to have a strong desire plus expectation (the meaning of hope) regarding our standing before the Lord guiltless of sin**

B. THE SAVIOR FROM HEAVEN...

1. The Corinthians were eagerly waiting for the revelation of Jesus - **1 Co 1:7**
 2. Paul also was eagerly waiting for Jesus from heaven - **Ph 3:20**
 3. For those who so eagerly await Him, Jesus will bring salvation - **He 9:28**
- **We are to eagerly await the coming of the Lord, for He will bring the righteousness (justification) we hope for!**

C. THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY...

1. Paul also wrote of eagerly awaiting the redemption of our bodies - **Ro 8:23**
2. This pertains to the hope of the resurrection - **Ac 23:6; 24:15**
3. In which our mortal bodies will be raised and put on immortality - **1 Co 15:42-44,48-54**
4. Made possible by the coming and power of our Lord Jesus Christ! - **Ph 3:20-21**

- **We are to eagerly await that glorious transformation in which our bodies as well as our souls will be redeemed by the Lord!**

[Such are the things we are to hope for and await eagerly: Our justification from sin, our Savior from heaven, our resurrection from the dead! Now let's consider...]

II. HOW WE CAN EAGERLY WAIT FOR IT

A. BY FAITH...

1. This is **our part**
 - a. We are to have faith - cf. **ESV** ("For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait...")
 - b. Faith in Christ and His sacrifice, faith in His coming
 2. A faith that is Bible-based
 - a. A strong conviction in things unseen; in particular, Jesus - **He 11:1; Jn 3:36**
 - b. Which comes through the Word of God - **Ro 10:17; Jn 20:30-31**
 - c. Which gives us hope, like a light shining in darkness - **Ro 15:4; 2 Pe 1:19**
- **The eagerness with which we wait is proportional to the degree of faith we have**

B. THROUGH THE SPIRIT...

1. This is **God's part**
 - a. "...strengthened by the Spirit we wait for the fulfillment of the hope which righteousness by faith instead of the law insures to us." - **B.W. Johnson**
 - b. Paul wrote of God helping us to abound in hope via His Spirit - **Ro 15:13**
 2. We receive the Spirit's aid as we:
 - a. Walk in the Spirit - **Ga 5:16**
 - b. Set our minds on the things of the Spirit (i.e., the Word) - **Ro 8:5-6; Ep 6:17**
 - c. Ask God for strength by His Spirit (via prayer) - **Ep 3:16,21**
- **The eagerness with which we wait is proportional to the strength we receive from the Spirit**

CONCLUSION

1. **What is your hope** (desire plus expectation) as a Christian? It should include...
 - a. The hope of righteousness (justification)
 - b. The Savior's revelation from heaven
 - c. The glorious resurrection from the dead
2. **How strong is your hope?** It all depends...
 - a. Are you growing in faith (through the Word)?
 - b. Are you being strengthened by the Spirit (through prayer)?

If so, then we will **eagerly** await that for which we both desire and expect to see...!

That Which Has Power In Christ

Galatians 5:6

INTRODUCTION

1. The rite of circumcision was a major issue in the early church...
 - a. Judaizing teachers taught it was necessary to be saved - **Ac 15:1,5**
 - b. Paul argued that it had become irrelevant - **Ga 5:6**
2. Note that Paul wrote “neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything...”
 - a. The Greek word translated ‘avails’ is transliterated **ischuo**
 - b. As defined by Thayer, the word **ischuo** means:
 - 1) **to be strong**, such as to be strong in body, to be robust, to be in sound health
 - 2) **to have power**
 - a) to have power as shown by extraordinary deeds; to exert, wield power, to have strength to overcome
 - b) to be a force, avail

[If neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has power in Christ, what does? Paul reveals that there are three things working in conjunction that have power. The first is...]

I. FAITH

A. THE DEFINITION OF FAITH...

1. A Scriptural definition of faith is found in **He 11:1**
2. The NIV is helpful: “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”
3. **Vine** describes faith as “a firm conviction”
4. I like to think of faith as “a confident trust”

B. THE IMPORTANCE OF "FAITH"...

1. Faith in God is essential to pleasing Him - **He 11:6**
2. Faith in Jesus is essential to finding forgiveness and eternal life - **Jn 8:24; 20:30-31**
3. Without faith, the only alternative is doubt accompanied with fear - cf. **Mt 14:30-31**

C. THE POWER OF FAITH...

1. Faith in Christ has the power to produce:
 - a. Hope - **Ro 5:2**
 - b. Joy - **1 Pe 1:8**
 - c. Peace - **Ro 15:13**
2. Those with faith in Christ receive the power to:
 - a. Live - **Ga 2:20**
 - b. Overcome the world - **1 Jn 5:4-5**
 - c. Overcome the devil - **Ep 6:16**

D. THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAITH...

1. Faith comes from the Word of God - **Ro 10:17; Jn 20:30-31**

2. Faith involves a growth process - **2 Th 1:3**

[A thriving, growing faith in Christ has great power, to enable us to live strong, vibrant spiritual lives. Such a faith will naturally involve the element of...]

II. WORKS

A. THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF WORKS...

1. **Works of merit**
 - a. These are works done to 'earn' something
 - b. Those who have done such works believe they 'deserve'
 - c. No one can be saved by such works - cf. **Ti 3:4-5; Ep 2:8-9**
2. **Works of faith**
 - a. These are things done to 'receive' something
 - b. Those who have done such works believe they deserve nothing! - cf. **Lk 17:10**
3. Works of faith can also be called **works of God**
 - a. Of which faith itself is called by Jesus - **Jn 6:28-29**
 - b. Other works of faith commanded by God include repentance, confession, and baptism - cf. **Ac 17:30; Ro 10:9-10; Co 2:12-13**
 - c. Such works are those prepared beforehand by God - **Ep 2:10**

B. THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF FAITH...

1. There is **dead faith** - **Ja 2:14-17,20,26**
 - a. Faith without works
 - b. Substituting words for deeds
2. There is **demonic faith** - **Ja 2:18,19**
 - a. Faith with the wrong kind of works
 - b. Such as trembling instead of acting
3. There is **dynamic faith** - **Ja 2:20-26**
 - a. Faith that works the will of God
 - b. An obedient faith, as required by the gospel - **Ro 1:5; 6:17; 16:25-26**

C. WITH THE RIGHT KIND OF FAITH AND WORKS...

1. Salvation is possible - **Ac 10:35**
2. We can bring glory to God - **Mt 5:16; 1 Pe 2:12**
3. We can receive glory, honor, and peace - **Ro 2:10**
4. Our efforts to serve are strengthened by God! - cf. **Ph 2:12-13; 4:13; Ep 3:16,20**

[Faith without works is dead; faith with works has great power in Christ! Especially so, when faith and works are done in...]

III. LOVE

A. LOVE TOWARD GOD...

1. Love is what God desires from us more than anything - **Mt 22:37**
2. Love is what inspires the noblest form of obedience - **Jn 14:15,23a**
 - a. Some obey out of **fear** (of being punished)
 - b. Others obey out of **selfishness** (for what they get out of it)
 - c. The highest form of obedience is out of **love** (glad to be of service)

B. LOVE TOWARD ONE ANOTHER...

1. The kind of love Jesus showed toward us - **Jn 13:34-35**
2. Our liberty in Christ is for the very purpose of serving one another in love - **Ga 5:13**

CONCLUSION

1. When faith, works, and love **are joined** together, there is great **synergy**...
 - a. There is salvation from sin
 - b. There is power over the devil
 - c. There is hope, joy, and peace for the children of God!
2. When faith, works, and love are **not joined** together, **nothing works right**...
 - b. Faith without works is dead
 - a. Works without faith cannot save
 - c. Works without love produce a cold, heartless religion

Is our faith working through love? May Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians be our prayer for one another:

*Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and **THE WORK OF FAITH WITH POWER**, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. - 2 Th 1:11-12*

The Sin Of Hindering Others

Ga 5:7-12

INTRODUCTION

1. It is not unusual in foot races for runners to jostle one another...
 - a. Bumping elbows, tripping over one another's feet
 - b. Often resulting in breaking one's stride, hindering one's ability to keep up
2. Paul expressed his concern about Christians being '**hindered**' in their spiritual race.. - **Ga 5:7-12**
 - a. The word used here (**anakopto**) means properly to beat or drive back - **Barnes**
 - b. Hence, it means to hinder, check, or retard. Dr. Doddridge remarks that this is "an Olympic expression, and properly signifies "coming across the course" while a person is running in it, in such a manner as to jostle, and throw him out of the way." - **ibid.**

[We are in a race in which we must all run well (cf. **1 Co 9:24; He 12:1**). As we run, do we **help** or **hinder** others who run along with us? Here are some thoughts on "**The Sin Of Hindering Others**"...]

I. HOW WE CAN HINDER OTHER CHRISTIANS

A. THROUGH FALSE TEACHING...

1. The problem in our text (those teaching the necessity of circumcision) - cf. **Ga 5:1-6**
 2. A concern later voiced by Peter - cf. **2 Pe 3:17**
 3. Preventing one from obeying the truth - **Ga 5:7**
- **Certainly a warning to those who would teach and preach**

B. THROUGH SINFUL CONDUCT...

1. Such as **immorality**, being a bad influence on others - cf. **1 Co 15:33**
 2. Such as **slothfulness**, which is as detrimental as those who would destroy - cf. **Pro 18:9**
 3. The example we set can have an adverse effect on others
- **This should be a warning to all Christians, whether teachers or not**

[In different ways, then, we can easily become a hindrance to those who are running. To appreciate how serious a matter this is, consider...]

II. HOW GOD FEELS ABOUT THOSE WHO HINDER

A. FROM THE WORDS OF PAUL...

1. They are like leaven that leavens the whole lump - **Ga 5:9**; cf. **1 Co 5:6-8**
 - a. Their negative influence spreads, infecting others
 - b. Similar to how one runner may jostle another, who then bumps into another, etc.
2. They will bear their judgment (be held accountable) - **Ga 5:10**
 - a. The Lord takes notice of those who are a hindrance
 - b. It matters not who they are (or think they are)
3. He could wish that they cut off themselves - **Ga 5:12**
 - a. Some believe Paul had in mind that they may emasculate themselves
 - b. Others believe Paul desired they cut themselves off from the community of the church

-- **Strong words from the inspired pen of the apostle!**

B. FROM THE WORDS OF JESUS...

1. Woe to those who cause offenses (occasions of stumbling) - **Lk 17:1**
 2. It is better to place a millstone around one's neck, and be cast into the sea - **Lk 17:2**
 3. Jesus takes mistreating His disciples personally - cf. **Mt 25:41-45; Ac 9:1-5**
- **Equally strong words from the voice of the Son of God!**

[In view of such strong words, we do well to be concerned about not hindering our brethren...]

III. HOW WE CAN AVOID BECOMING A HINDRANCE

A. GIVE CAREFUL ATTENTION TO OUR EXAMPLE...

1. So Paul encouraged young Timothy - cf. **1 Ti 4:12**
 2. Give attention to our **attendance**
 - a. The example we set influences others to be either faithful or slothful
 - b. Is our example in attending services of the church hindering others in this regard?
 3. Give attention to our **attitude**
 - a. We can inspire others by our love, spirit, speech and faith
 - b. Are we a source of spiritual encouragement to those around us?
- **What kind of example are we providing to our fellow 'runners'...?**

B. GIVE CAREFUL ATTENTION TO THE WORD...

1. So Paul admonished young Timothy - **1 Ti 4:16**
2. Give attention to the **study** of God's Word
 - a. Only through careful study can we discern between truth and error
 - b. Is our example of attending Bible study encouraging others to do the same?
3. Give attention to the **proclamation** of the Word
 - a. To what we say or teach about God's Word, whether in private or in public
 - b. Is what we tell others helping them to draw closer to God?

CONCLUSION

1. We either hinder or help our brethren in Christ...
 - a. Who are running a great race, the race of faith
 - b. Who can easily be made to stumble by the other runners around them
2. Christians should be a source of great encouragement to one another...
 - a. If we are, how wonderful it will be when we are together in eternity!
 - b. If we hinder others, woe to us, for we will be judged harshly!

Paul had confidence in his brethren (**Ga 5:10**); do we give each other reason for similar confidence? We will, if we run "looking unto Jesus" and with "straight paths for your feet" (**He 12:1-2,12-16**)...

The Proper Use Of Our Liberty

Galatians 5:13-15

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Ga 5:1**, Paul mentioned our liberty in Christ...
2. An earlier study summarized what this liberty entails...
 - a. Christ has delivered the Jews from their obligation to keep the Law of Moses
 - b. Christ has delivered all men from the guilt and power of sin
 - c. Christ has delivered us from the need to keep human traditions
 - d. Christ offers deliverance from the deeds of the flesh which endanger our salvation-- **See the lesson "Standing Fast In The Liberty Of Christ" (Ga 5:1)**
3. In **Ga 5:13-15**, Paul returns to the theme of liberty...
 - a. With an admonition regarding its proper use in Christ
 - b. Which we do well to give close attention

[His concerns are simple yet significant. In the exercise of liberty, we must...]

I. NOT TO SERVE THE FLESH

A. THE WORKS OF THE FLESH THREATEN OUR SPIRITUALITY...

1. As Jesus warned during His earthly ministry - **Mk 7:20-23**
 2. The works of the flesh include hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions - cf. **Ga 5:20**
 3. If not careful, through such actions we may consume one another! - **Ga 5:15**
-
- Liberty in Christ does not mean license to do whatever we want**

B. THE WORKS OF THE FLESH ENDANGER OUR SALVATION...

1. By being contrary to the desire of the Spirit - **Ga 5:16-17**
 2. By forfeiting our inheritance in the kingdom of God - **Ga 5:19-21**; cf. **1 Co 6:9-11**
 3. By reaping corruption for those who sow to the flesh - **Ga 6:8**
-
- We should take the danger of the works of the flesh seriously**

C. THE WORKS OF THE FLESH MUST BE CRUCIFIED...

1. Because of the wrath of God which is coming - **Co 3:5-8**
 2. With the aid of the Spirit - **Ro 8:12-13**
 3. Otherwise, we are not truly Christ's - **Ga 5:24-26**
-
- We have been set free from bondage of sin that we might serve God (Ro 6:11-19)**

[How the Christian is able to do this, Paul will discuss later (**Ga 5:16-18**). In our text, though, we find the other side of the coin regarding our liberty in Christ. We are not to serve the flesh...]

II. BUT TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER

A. WE ARE TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER...

1. The Lord has blessed each of us with different abilities - **Ro 12:3-8**
 2. We are to minister such gifts to one another - **1 Pe 4:10-11**
 3. The strong bearing with the infirmities of the weak - **Ro 15:1**
 4. Each of us focused on edifying our brethren - **Ro 15:2-3; 14:19**
- **Liberty in Christ means to be free to serve one another!**

B. SERVING ONE ANOTHER THROUGH LOVE...

1. Loving one another fulfills the Law - **Ga 5:14; Ro 13:8-10**
 2. Love enables one to serve others with sacrifice - **Ph 2:17; 1 Jn 3:16**
 3. Love will serve others, even when it is not reciprocal - **2 Co 12:15**
- **Love, not begrudging obligation, should motivate our service to one another!**

CONCLUSION

1. Our liberty in Christ is a wonderful blessing...
 - a. Deliverance from the guilt and power of sin
 - b. Deliverance from the works of the flesh which endanger our salvation
2. Our liberty in Christ should produce the right response...
 - a. Gratitude in our hearts to God
 - b. Loving service in our lives to one another

Until we are serving one another through love, we have yet to properly exercise the liberty that we have in Christ...!

The Flesh Versus The Spirit

Galatians 5:16-18

INTRODUCTION

1. In discussing our liberty in Christ, Paul warned about the flesh...
 - a. Not to use our liberty as an opportunity for the flesh - **Ga 5:13**
 - b. To beware of being consumed by one another - **Ga 5:15**
2. How can one avoid the destructive influences of the flesh? Paul is clear...
 - a. We must walk in the Spirit - **Ga 5:16-17**
 - b. We must be led by the Spirit - **Ga 5:18**

[Why is it important for the Christian to know this? And how does one walk in the Spirit? How is one led by the Spirit? From our text (**Ga 5:16-18**) we observe regarding the flesh and the Spirit that...]

I. THE TWO ARE CONTRARY TO ONE ANOTHER

A. TWO OPPONENTS, FIGHTING FOR YOUR SOUL...

1. They are in opposition against each other - **Ga 5:17a**
 2. Is the "Spirit" referring to the Holy Spirit, or the human spirit?
 - a. There is certainly a war between the flesh and human spirit - **1 Pe 2:11; Ro 7:23**
 - b. Yet I believe here in Galatians it has reference to the Holy Spirit
 3. The context of the epistle suggests that it is the Holy Spirit
 - a. Note Paul's earlier references to the Spirit - **Ga 3:2-3; 4:6**
 - b. Through the Spirit we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness- **Ga 5:5**
 - c. Paul's later argument "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" would not make sense if the human spirit is meant - **Ga 5:25**
 - d. Reaping everlasting life "of the Spirit" must refer to the Holy Spirit - **Ga 6:8**
- **While the flesh pulls us in one direction, the Spirit would have us go in another!**

B. A CHRISTIAN MUST SERVE ONE OR THE OTHER...

1. If we follow the lusts of the flesh, we can not do the will of the Spirit - **Ga 5:17b**
 2. Following the flesh will enslave, placing one in a dilemma - cf. **Ro 6:12-13,16; 7:14-23**
 3. But with the help of the Spirit, the flesh can be overcome! - cf. **Ro 8:12-14**
- **We must walk in the Spirit, otherwise we will succumb to the lusts of the flesh**

C. HOW DOES ONE "WALK IN THE SPIRIT"...?

1. By setting our minds on the things of the Spirit - cf. **Ro 8:1-6**
 2. The things of the Spirit would be that which the Spirit has revealed
 3. I.e., the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit - cf. **Ep 6:17**
 4. Just as Jesus used the Word to resist temptation - cf. **Mt 4:4,7,10**
- **We walk in the Spirit to the degree we follow the Word which He revealed!**

[So whom will we serve? The lust of the flesh, or the Spirit of God? Only one offers life and peace; the other offers death, and prevents us from serving God (**Ro 8:6-8**). Paul then adds another point...]

II. ONLY ONE OFFERS FREEDOM FROM THE LAW

A. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “UNDER THE LAW”...?

1. In the context, “the law” has primary reference to the “Law of Moses” - cf. **Ga 4:21**
 2. The purpose of the law was primarily twofold:
 - a. To reveal sin - cf. **Ga 3:19a; Ro 3:20**
 - b. To condemn the sinner as guilty - cf. **Ro 3:19**
- **To be “under the Law”, then, is to be under a state of condemnation!**

B. THOSE LED BY THE SPIRIT ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW...

1. I.e., they are not under the condemnation of the Law
 2. For obedience to the gospel revealed by the Spirit results in freedom
 - a. Freedom from condemnation - **Ro 8:1**
 - b. Freedom from the law of sin of death - **Ro 8:2; 6:17-18**
 - c. Freedom from the obligation to keep the Law - cf. **Ro 7:1-6**
- **Led by the Spirit, one is free from both the condemnation and obligation of the Law**

C. HOW IS ONE “LED BY THE SPIRIT”...?

1. “The Spirit leads both externally and internally. Externally, the Spirit supplies the gospel truth as set forth in the New Testament, and the rules and precepts therein found are for the instruction and guidance of God’s children. Internally, the Spirit aids by ministering strength and comfort to the disciples in his effort to conform to the revealed truth and will of God.”
- **J.W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton**, Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians and Romans, p. 361 (commenting on Ro 8:14)
2. The Spirit leads us **externally** through the Word
 - a. The Word is the instrument used by the Spirit to instruct and convict
 - 1) The Spirit was sent to convict the world - **Jn 16:7-11**
 - 2) The Spirit guided the apostles into all the truth - **Jn 16:12-13**
 - 3) Thus the Word is the “sword” (instrument) used by the Spirit - cf. **Ep 6:17**
 - b. To resist the Word is to resist the Spirit
 - 1) As when Israel resisted the inspired word given through prophets - **Ac 7:51-53**
 - 2) As when we resist the inspired word given through apostles - **1 Co 14:36-37**
 - c. When one sets their mind on the things of the Spirit (i.e., His revealed Word)...
 - 1) They will live according to the Spirit - **Ro 8:5**
 - 2) They will experience life and peace - **Ro 8:6**
 - d. When one walks in the Spirit (by heeding His Word)...
 - 1) They will not fulfill the lust of the flesh - **Ga 5:16**
 - 2) They will be thus led by the Spirit - **Ga 5:18**
 - 3) They will produce the fruit of the Spirit - **Ga 5:22-25**

-- Do you desire to be led by the Spirit? Let Him lead you through His Word!
3. The Spirit leads us **internally** through His indwelling
 - a. By strengthening the inner man...
 - 1) God is at work in the Christian - **Ep 3:20**
 - 2) Even as we work out our own salvation - **Ph 2:12-13; 4:13**
 - 3) The instrument by which God strengthens the Christian is His Spirit in the inner man - **Ep 3:16**; cf. **1 Co 6:19**
 - 4) By His Spirit, we are able to put to death the deeds of the body - **Ro 8:13**
 - 5) In this way the Spirit likewise leads us - **Ro 8:14**; cf. **Ro 8:11**
 - b. In conjunction with the Word...

- 1) When we make effort to heed the Word, the Spirit aids us
 - a) Supplying what strength we may need
 - b) So that which is produced may rightly be called the ‘fruit’ of the Spirit
 - 2) To illustrate, consider the development of a Christ-like character
 - a) Peter reminds us of the need for diligence on our part - **2 Pe 1:5-10**
 - b) Paul explains these qualities produced are the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ - **Ga 5:22-23**
- Do you desire to be led by the Spirit? Let Him strengthen you as you obey His Word!
- **Christians are led by the Spirit externally as they are taught by the Word, and internally by His strengthening the inner man as they strive to obey the Word**

CONCLUSION

1. Paul has more to say about...
 - a. The works of the flesh and their jeopardy to our souls - **Ga 5:19-21**
 - b. The fruit of the Spirit and the blessedness He provides - **Ga 5:22-23**
2. What Paul has said so far is this...
 - a. There is a great conflict between the flesh and the Spirit
 - b. Only those who walk in the Spirit and are led by the Spirit experience true freedom

In the battle of “**The Flesh Versus The Spirit**”, which side are you on? Are you being led by your own fleshly lusts, or by the Spirit of God? Eternal consequences hang in the balance...!

The Works Of The Flesh - I

Galatians 5:19-21

INTRODUCTION

1. Of grave danger to the Christian are the works of the flesh...
 - a. They can destroy the liberty we enjoy in Christ - **Ga 5:13-15**
 - b. They prevent us from following the Spirit and doing the things we wish - **Ga 5:16-17**
 - c. They keep us from inheriting the kingdom of God - **Ga 5:21**
2. It is imperative that we know what are the works of the flesh...
 - a. Those things that are contrary to the Spirit - **Ga 5:17**
 - b. Those sins which wage war against the soul - cf. **1 Pe 2:11**

[To aid us in this battle, Paul provides a list of sins that are quite evident (**Ga 5:19-21**). At the top of the list are...]

I. SINS OF MORAL IMPURITY

A. FORNICATION (Grk., porneia)...

1. **Note:** Some translations begin with 'adultery' which is not found in some of the oldest manuscripts; it is certainly covered by 'fornication'
2. **Porneia** - illicit sexual intercourse - **Vine**
3. As used in the New Testament, we find it having at least four different applications...
 - a. A reference to premarital sex - **1 Co 7:1-2**
 - b. A synonym for adultery - **Mt 19:9**
 - c. A generic term referring to all forms of unchastity - **1 Co 6:13,18**
 - d. A specific sense referring to harlotry and prostitution - **Re 2:20-21**
4. It therefore includes any sort of sexual intercourse between partners who are not married; e.g., premarital sex, adultery, homosexuality, prostitution, incest
5. God's disdain for such immorality is seen in the fact...
 - a. There are seven lists of evil in the writings of Paul
 - b. Fornication is listed in five of them, and is the first in each of them

B. UNCLEANNES (Grk., akatharsia)...

1. **Akatharsia** - in a moral sense: the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living - **Thayer**
 - a. It originally had reference to dirt or dirtiness in a physical sense
 - b. In the Greek OT, it is used to denote ritual and ceremonial impurity which made it impossible for the worshipper to approach God - cf. **Lev 22:3-9**
 - c. It then came to be used in a moral sense, of that moral depravity which disgusts the person who sees it
2. Three ideas are therefore inherent in the word
 - a. The quality of that which is soiled and dirty; some minds are like that
 - b. An impurity where there is a repulsive quality that awakens disgust in decent persons
 - c. That which separates man from God; in contrast, compare **Mt 5:8; Re 3:4**

C. LEWDNESS (Grk., aselgia)...

1. **Aselgia** - also translated as lasciviousness, licentiousness, sensuality
2. The basic meaning of the word
 - a. In the NT it seems to be linked with sexual excess in a public way
 - b. Barclay distinguishes three characteristics of this sin:
 - 1) It is wanton and undisciplined action
 - 2) It has no respect for the persons or rights of anyone else
 - 3) It is completely indifferent to public opinion and to public decency
3. The general idea is one of shameless behavior
 - a. Thayer defines this word by giving these examples:
 - 1) “filthy words”
 - 2) “indecent bodily movements”
 - 3) “unchaste handling of males and females”
 - b. This word is one that best describes...
 - 1) What is often seen in much of modern dance, music, theater
 - 2) What goes on at many concerts, and on many talk shows
 - c. The context in which it is often found in the Scriptures helps to understand this word
 - cf. **Ro 13:11-14; Ep 4:17-19; 1 Pe 4:1-4**

[With these three words (**porneia, akatharsia, aselgia**), we learn that “the works of the flesh” involve sins of moral impurity. As we continue with Paul’s list, we note that they also involve...]

II. SINS OF IDOLATRY AND SORCERY

A. IDOLATRY (Grk., eidololatreia)...

1. **Eidololatreia** - image worship - **Strong**
2. Concerning idolatry as commonly considered...
 - a. In the beginning stages of idolatry, no one worships the idol or image itself
 - 1) The idol simply served two purposes:
 - a) To localize the god it represents
 - b) To visualize the god it represents
 - 2) It is simply designed to make it easier to worship the god represented by the idol
 - b. Inevitably, however, people will wind up worshipping the idol or image itself
 - 1) We see this in various forms of Catholicism
 - 2) Where the leaders say the image is not an idol, only an ‘icon’
 - 3) But who can deny that the average worshipper begins to view the image itself as something holy and to be revered?
 - 4) Thus that which is ‘created’ begins receiving adoration rightfully due the ‘Creator’
 - c. According to **Ro 1:18-23**, the basic error of idol worship is the worship of the ‘created thing’ rather than the ‘Creator of all things’!
3. Concerning idolatry as that which displaces God...
 - a. Idolatry is not just the adoration or worship of images
 - b. Paul defines ‘covetousness’ as idolatry - **Ep 5:5; Co 3:5**
 - 1) Any strong desire for material things that replaces our desire for God is a form of idolatry!
 - a) Our hearts are such that they are drawn to whatever is our treasure - **Mt 6:21**
 - b) If our treasure is earthly things, our heart (devotion) is drawn away from God
 - c. Thus we can be idolaters when we make things other than God Himself our priority in life, such as: our job, house, hobby, family

B. SORCERY (Grk., pharmakeia)...

1. **Pharmakeia** is found to be used in three ways
 - a. Medically, to the use of drugs with no bad meaning at all
 - b. The misuse of drugs so as to poison, not cure
 - c. The practice of sorcery and witchcraft, which often used drugs to cast spells and alter the behavior of others
2. The practice of witchcraft and sorcery is strongly condemned - **Exo 22:18; Re 21:8**
3. Examples of this sin today...
 - a. There is an increasing number of religions based upon the occult, and that make use of drugs in their religion
 - b. The “recreational” use of drugs also falls into this category
 - 1) Remember that altering the behavior of others through such drugs was a basic function of sorcery and witchcraft
 - 2) What is the difference between using drugs to alter others’ behavior and your own?
 - 3) This is not to discount the proper medicinal use of drugs
 - 4) But just as the Bible condemns drunkenness, which is an altered state brought on by alcohol (a drug), so it would seem to condemn similar use of other drugs

CONCLUSION

1. In this study we have seen that the works of the flesh include...
 - a. Sins of moral impurity (fornication, uncleanness, lewdness)
 - b. The sins of idolatry and sorcery-- **Our next study will survey sins violating the law of love**
2. **William Barclay** observed that each of these sins is a perversion of something good...
 - a. **Fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness** - perversions of the sexual instinct which in itself can be a beautiful thing as part of true love between a man and a woman
 - b. **Idolatry** - a perversion of worship
 - c. **Sorcery** - a perversion of the proper use of drugs-- **He also noted: “The awfulness of the power of sin lies precisely in its ability to take the raw material of potential goodness and turn it into the material of evil.”**
3. Because of the power of sin to corrupt, we need divine help to break free from its bondage...
 - a. Jesus promises freedom from the bondage of sin - **Jn 8:31-36**
 - b. He sent the Holy Spirit to deliver on that promise - **Ro 8:12-13; Ga 5:16**

Have you responded in obedience to the gospel that you might enjoy true freedom from the corrupting power of sin...? - cf. **Ac 2:38-39**

The Works Of The Flesh - II

Galatians 5:19-21

INTRODUCTION

1. Our study of the “works of the flesh” as found in **Ga 5:19-21** now focuses on eight sins...
 - a. They are “hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy” (NKJV)
 - b. Which have been categorized as **infractions of the law of love**

2. Many find it hard to conceive that these eight sins are really all that terrible...
 - a. Notice this news clipping that made the front page of the **Orlando Sentinel (1/7/81)** under the heading, “**Pope Widens Sin Definition**”:

“Pope John Paul II said today that sins of the flesh are not limited to fornication, orgies and drunkenness, but include idolatry, jealousy, envy and unfriendliness.

“The pope made the remarks to his weekly general audience at the Vatican, his forum for the past 14 months on the subject of sex and sin.

“In his latest discussion of the subject, the pope cited St. Paul, the first-century apostle, as giving Christianity a very wide definition of sins of the flesh.

“It is significant that when Paul speaks about the works of the flesh, he mentions not only fornication, impurity, libertinage, drunkenness and orgies which are the sins of sensual pleasure,’ the pope said, ‘but also speaks of other sins to which we are not accustomed to attribute a carnal and sensual character: idolatry, witchcraft, unfriendliness, discord, jealousy, dissent, divisions, factionalism, and envy.’”
 - b. The heading made it sound like the pope is declaring something new, but as the pope himself stated, this is what Paul taught in the very passage we are studying

3. Indeed, what is said of immorality and drunkenness is also said of these eight sins: “*...those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God*”

[Therefore there is a great need to be informed as to what these sins entail, and to make a concentrated effort to put them out of our lives...]

III. SINS VIOLATING THE LAW OF LOVE

A. HATRED, ENMITY (Grk., *echthra*)...

1. **Echthra** means hostility, enmity, hatred - **Strong**
2. It describes a state and attitude of mind toward other people which involves barriers between them and you
3. Enmity is the direct opposite of love (agape); consider the contrast:
 - a. **agape** - an attitude of mind which will never allow itself to be bitter to any man; always seeking the highest good of others
 - b. **echthra** - the attitude which puts up barriers and draws the sword of division
4. When we allow the work of the flesh to rule (e.g., **echthra**), we cannot allow the Spirit to produce the proper fruit in our lives (e.g., **agape**)

B. CONTENTIONS, STRIFE, VARIANCE, DISCORD (Grk., *eris*)...

1. **Eris** is the expression of enmity or hatred; it is the outcome in actual life of that state of mind

2. Paul uses this word to describe one of the evils that was characteristic of the pagan world - **Ro 1:28-29**
3. Sadly, it can also describe the condition that may exist in a church - cf. **1 Co 1:11; 3:3**
4. This particular sin invades churches more often, perhaps, than many others
 - a. Because of our tendency to categorize sins, we may allow this one to linger and fester more than such sins as fornication, adultery
 - b. Yet this sin is most destructive of Christian fellowship; it will just as easily destroy (maybe even more so) a local congregation as will sins of moral impurity

C. JEALOUSIES, EMULATIONS (Grk., *zelos*)...

1. **Zelos** can be either good or bad
 - a. Used in **a good way**
 - 1) **Isa 9:7** - "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this"
 - 2) **Ro 10:1-2** - "...they have a zeal for God..."
 - 3) Used to describe an excitement of mind, ardor, fervor of spirit, for something good
 - b. Used in **a bad way**
 - 1) **1 Co 3:3** - "For where there are envy..."
 - 2) **2 Co 12:20** - "For I fear...lest there be...jealousies..."
 - 3) A fervor of spirit that is misdirected, resulting in a form of envy and jealousy that is destructive of personal relationships
2. Zeal that is misdirected is mostly directed toward self; i.e., "selfish"
 - a. When we are zealous for God, that is good
 - b. When we are zealous in behalf of others' good welfare, that is good
 - c. But when we are jealous for selfish reasons, it is wrong!
3. Such jealousy was a mark of carnality in the Christians at Corinth - cf. **1 Co 3:1-3**
4. In view of the coming of Christ, **zelos** (envy) is one of the "works of darkness" we need to cast off - **Ro 13:11-14**

D. OUTBURSTS OF WRATH, FITS OF RAGE (Grk., *thumos*)...

1. This word describes...
 - a. The blaze of temper which flares into violent words and deeds
 - b. The explosive temper which is uncontrolled
2. Not to be confused with...
 - a. Righteous indignation, which is proper and controlled; e.g., the righteous indignation of God - **Ro 2:4-11**
 - b. Anger which is properly checked and not allowed to produce an occasion for sin - cf. **Ep 4:26-27**
3. Some try to excuse their explosive tempers as simply hereditary...
 - a. "That is just the way I am"
 - b. "I am just a fiery Irishman, a hot Italian, etc."
 - c. "It is human nature"
4. But Christians, no matter what their "nature", are blessed to become partakers of "divine nature", and must therefore put away these things - cf. **2 Pe 1:3-4; Ep 4:31-32; Co 3:8-11**

E. SELFISH AMBITIONS, STRIFE, DISPUTES (Grk., *eritheia*)...

1. This word describes a self-centered attitude in the doing of any work; for example...
 - a. Working solely for money
 - b. Seeking and holding political office purely for personal interests and ambition
 - c. Doing the work of the Lord out of a desire for recognition, personal ambition, or rivalry

2. It is used to describe those who were preaching Christ out of jealousy - cf. **Ph 1:17**
3. It is this word which describes those who create party divisions in the church...
 - a. Who are acting out of vainglory and a desire to be first
 - b. Rather than out of a true desire to stand for truth
4. It is contrary to that “mind of Christ” described in **Ph 2:3-5**

F. DISSENSIONS, SEDITIONS (Grk., dichostasia)...

1. This word literally means “a standing apart”
2. It describes a condition where all fellowship, all togetherness are gone
 - a. This was the condition in the church at Corinth - cf. **1 Co 3:3**
 - b. Paul taught we should mark those who cause such divisiveness - **Ro 16:17**
3. Such may be due to:
 - a. **Personal division** (where two people refuse to speak to each other)
 - b. **Class division** (i.e., class warfare between the rich and poor)
 - c. **Party division** (where devotion to party rises above devotion to principle)
 - d. **Racial division** (e.g., Jew vs. Gentile, Greek vs. barbarian, white vs. black)
 - e. **Theological division** (misusing labels and fixing them unfairly on others)
 - f. **Ecclesiastical division** (church division, especially in the form of denominationalism)
4. This sin is committed when we confuse...
 - a. Prejudice with principle
 - b. Unreasonable stubbornness with unwavering resolution

G. HERESIES, FACTIONS (Grk., hairesis)...

1. It most commonly denotes a group belonging to a particular school of thought or action
 - a. Such as the “sect” of the Sadducees - **Ac 5:17**
 - b. Or the “sect” of the Pharisees - **Ac 15:5**
2. Peter used it to describe false teachers who will bring in destructive divisions - **2 Pe 2:1**
3. Thus it refers to divisiveness, especially that brought about by false teaching
4. This word came to mean a belief or doctrine which is contrary to orthodoxy or the truth

H. ENVY, ENVYING (Grk., phthonos)...

1. William Barclay offers this distinction between **phthonos** and **zelos**:
 - a. **zelos** is the envy which casts grudging looks
 - b. **phthonos** is the envy which has arrived at hostile deeds
2. We might also add this distinction:
 - a. **zelos** is less serious, less bitter, less malignant than **phthonos**
 - b. But **zelos**, left unchecked, can result in **phthonos**
3. Whereas **zelos** has both a good and bad sense, **phthonos** is always bad
 - a. It was **phthonos** that moved the Jewish leaders to deliver Jesus to Pilate - **Mt 27:18**
 - b. **phthonos** is indicative of a reprobate mind that has denied God - **Ro 1:28-29**
 - c. It is often the result of striving over words - **1 Ti 6:3-4**
 - d. It is typical of our lives prior to salvation - **Ti 3:3**
 - e. But it is part of that which we are to “lay aside” - **1 Pe 2:1**

CONCLUSION

1. “**Murders**” (KJV, NKJV) is not found in the oldest manuscripts and thus omitted in some translations...
 - a. Though it certainly is an infraction of the law of love - cf. **Ro 13:9**

- b. It is a sin of which even those who hate are guilty - cf. **1 Jn 3:15**
- 2. Why are such sins included in the works of the flesh...?
 - a. **Because of what Jesus did on the cross**
 - 1) It is true that He died to reconcile man back to God - cf. **2 Co 5:18-21**
 - 2) But also to reconcile man back to man in one body! - cf. **Ep 2:13-16**
 - b. **Because we are to preserve this reconciliation**
 - 1) Not only the “vertical” reconciliation we have with God, which we preserve by living holy lives (which is why we must also avoid sins of moral impurity)
 - 2) But also the “horizontal” reconciliation we have with one another, which we preserve by maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the body of peace - cf. **Ep 4:1-3**
- 3. Therefore, infractions of the law of love **undo the work of Christ** on the cross...!
 - a. Dare we commit sins of moral impurity to jeopardize our reconciliation with God?
 - b. Neither should we violate the law of love and jeopardize our reconciliation with one another
- 4. They also **prevent us from producing the fruit of the Spirit** in our lives...
 - a. For such sins are certainly contrary to the Spirit - cf. **Ga 5:17**
 - b. Making it impossible for us to enjoy love, joy, peace, etc. - cf. **Ga 5:22**

Our next study will conclude our look at the works of the flesh by noticing **the sins of intemperance...**

The Works Of The Flesh - III

Galatians 5:19-21

INTRODUCTION

1. For several lessons we have focused on the “works of the flesh” listed in **Ga 5:19-21**
2. We have broken them up into several categories, including...
 - a. **Sins of moral impurity** (adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness)
 - b. **Idolatry and sorcery**
 - c. **Infractions of the law of love** (hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy)
3. In this study, we shall end our study of the works of the flesh by considering two sins...
 - a. **Drunkenness and revelries**, which can be classified as **sins of intemperance**
 - b. We shall also make an observation on the manner in which Paul concludes his list of the “works of the flesh”

[We begin by considering the two...]

IV. SINS OF INTEMPERANCE

A. DRUNKENNESS (Grk., methe)...

1. This word describes the state of intoxication due to alcohol
2. The Bible is very strong in...
 - a. Its condemnation of drunkenness - cf. **1 Co 5:11; 6:9-10**
 - b. Its warning about the dangers of drinking - cf. **Pro 20:1; 23:29-35**
3. What about “drinking” that does not lead to “drunkenness”?
 - a. The level of alcohol in modern day alcoholic beverages makes it difficult to distinguish between the two
 - 1) Levels of alcohol are much higher today due to advanced distilling techniques
 - 2) Some of the strongest drinks in the past were not much stronger than our mild beers today, thus making it much easier to get drunk today
 - 3) In ancient Greece there was very little drunkenness, for the normal practice was to dilute two parts of wine to three parts of water
 - b. The Christian is also bound by the principle of influence - cf. **Ro 14:13-21**
 - 1) Should Christians engage in an activity (social drinking) that contributes to...
 - a) The number one drug problem in our country? (1 in 9 are alcoholics)
 - b) The senseless killing of 25,000 innocent victims a year? (half of all driving related accidents involve driving under the influence of alcohol)
 - c) An estimated 25% of divorces? (which God hates - **Mal 2:16**)
 - 2) The responsibility of the Christian regarding influence is clear - **Ro 14:21; 1 Co 10:31-33**
 - a) Only the insensitive and selfish Christian would try to justify engaging in social drinking today
 - b) The mature Christian considers whether the practice glorifies God, and benefits his fellow man

B. REVELRIES, REVELLINGS, CAROUSING, ORGIES (Grk., komos)...

1. This word refers to feasts and drinking parties that were often extended till late at night and indulge in revelry
2. Such behavior is condemned not only here, but also in **Ro 13:12-14**
3. Modern day forms of this sin would include what goes on at...
 - a. Mardi Gras in New Orleans
 - b. Many New Year's parties
 - c. Some office Christmas' parties
 - d. Some music concerts
4. It does not require too much wisdom to see why such behavior is condemned
 - a. How many friendships, marriages, etc., have been destroyed by unrestrained behavior that goes on at such functions?
 - b. Even the "innocent" can often get caught up in the excitement and do something that ruins the rest of their life!
5. In **1 Pe 4:3-4**, Peter states that...
 - a. Such behavior as Christians is unbecoming
 - b. The world thinks us strange for not engaging in such things

[The world may think us strange because we refrain from such things as **drunkenness** and **revelries**; but as Peter goes on to say in **1 Pe 4:5**, all will have to give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. It is in view of the Judgment that prompts Christians to take the "works of the flesh" seriously. And not just those specifically mentioned in **Ga 5:19-21**, but as Paul goes on to say...]

V. "...AND THE LIKE"**A. CONCLUDING HIS LIST IN THIS WAY IMPLIES...**

1. Paul's list is not to be taken as all inclusive
2. The sins listed are to give us a basic idea of the kind of things we are to avoid
3. We must apply discernment on many activities which may not be specifically condemned in the Scriptures
 - a. Many people want a "Thou shall not..." for anything to be wrong
 - b. But the Bible does not list everything that is wrong (if it did, you would have to carry it around in a wheel barrow)
 - c. Instead, we are given basic principles of conduct, with some specific examples to illustrate such principles
 - d. We are expected to exercise discernment concerning good and evil using the principles found in the Scriptures - cf. **He 5:12-14**

B. DETERMINING THINGS THAT ARE "LIKE" THESE SINS...

1. Today we are often faced with issues that may not be specifically mentioned in the Bible
 - a. E.g., questions related to dancing, drugs, movies, music, smoking, television programs.
 - b. How do I know when something not specifically addressed is right or wrong?
2. One helpful way is to compare the activity in question to the two lists found in **Ga 5:19-23**
 - a. Is the active "like" the works of the flesh?
 - b. Or is it "like" the fruit of the Spirit?
3. The better we understand these "works of the flesh" (as well as what constitutes the "fruit of the Spirit), the better we are to make decisions conducive to godly living

CONCLUSION

1. Such has been the purpose of our study: to learn what sort of things constitute the “works of the flesh”, so that we know what to avoid
2. For remember what Paul has written...

***“Those who practice SUCH THINGS will not inherit the kingdom of God”
(Ga 5:21)***

3. Whether it be one of those things specifically listed, or something “such like” them, the consequences will be devastating!
4. In addition, the practice of such things makes it impossible to produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives - cf. **Ga 5:17**
5. Finally: the use of the word “**practice**” (**Ga 5:21**) implies that Paul is warning against those who persistently engage in such sins and refuse to repent...
 - a. We have all been guilty of one or more of things that can keep us out of the kingdom of heaven
 - b. But by God’s grace anyone can receive forgiveness, as implied in this passage:

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Co 6:9-11)

If you are willing to give up the “practice” of such sins, you too can have your sins washed away, finding sanctification and justification through Jesus and the Spirit of God! - cf. **Ac 2:38; 22:16**

Inheriting The Kingdom Of God

Galatians 5:21

INTRODUCTION

1. In listing the works of the flesh, Paul concludes with an ominous warning...
 - a. One that he had told them about in the past
 - b. That those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God - **Ga 5:21**
2. The kingdom of God was an important theme in Paul's ministry...
 - a. He preached the kingdom of God among the Ephesians - **Ac 20:25**
 - b. He did so for two years while in Rome - **Ac 28:23,30-31**
3. In our text (**Ga 5:21**), Paul refers to 'inheriting' the kingdom of God...
 - a. What is this kingdom of God?
 - b. Is it something that exists now? Is it in the future?
 - c. How can one 'inherit' the kingdom of God?

[In answer to such questions, let's first talk about...]

I. THE PRESENT AND FUTURE KINGDOM

A. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS PRESENT...

1. Note what is said about those in the church
 - a. They were being called into the kingdom - **1 Th 2:12**
 - b. They had been translated (conveyed) into the kingdom - **Co 1:13**
 - c. They were receiving the kingdom - **He 12:28**
 - d. They were companions in the kingdom - **Re 1:9**
 2. The church is that community of souls in whose hearts Christ is recognized as sovereign
 - a. They have confessed Christ as Lord - cf. **Ro 10:9-10; 1 Pe 3:15**
 - b. They freely submit to the Lord in the day of His power - cf. **Psa 110:1-3**
 3. Thus the terms 'church' and 'kingdom' are often used interchangeably
 - a. As when Jesus spoke to Peter - **Mt 16:18**
 - b. The comments made to Christians in the church - **Co 1:13; 1 Th 2:12**
 - c. The description of those in the seven churches of Asia - **Re 1:4,6,9**
 4. The kingdom of God (i.e., the reign of Christ) reaches beyond those in the church (cf. **Psa 110**), but it benefits those in the church - cf. **Ep 1:22-23**
- **In one sense, the kingdom of God is clearly present**

B. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS FUTURE...

1. As spoken of by Jesus
 - a. In the parable of the tares - **Mt 13:40-43**
 - b. In describing the judgment - **Mt 25:34**
2. As referred to by Paul
 - a. Exhorting Christians to be steadfast and holy - **Ac 14:22; 1 Co 6:9-10; Ga 5:19-21**
 - b. Expounding on the hope of the resurrection - **1 Co 15:22-26; 15:50**
 - c. Expressing his own expectation for the future - **2 Ti 4:18**

3. As promised by Peter
 - a. With a call to diligence to make our calling and election sure - **2 Pe 1:10**
 - b. To receive an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom - **2 Pe 1:11**
- **In another sense, the kingdom of God is still in the future**

C. THE KINGDOM IS BOTH PRESENT AND FUTURE...

1. In the **present** sense...
 - a. It is found wherever the sovereignty of Jesus is accepted - **Mt 28:18-20**
 - b. It is a spiritual kingdom, for Jesus rules in the hearts of men - **Lk 17:20-21**
 - c. Its outward manifestation today is the Lord's church - **Mt 16:18-19**
 - d. This rule or kingdom was **inaugurated** on at Pentecost - cf. **Ac 2:36**
 2. In the **future** sense...
 - a. The rule or kingdom will be **culminated** with the coming of the Lord - **1 Co 15:22-26**
 - b. It will be a heavenly and everlasting kingdom - **2 Ti 4:18; 2 Pe 1:11**
 - c. Enjoyed only by those submitting to God's will today! - cf. **Mt 7:21-23**
 - d. In which they shall reign with God and Christ forever! - **Re 22:1-5**
- **The kingdom of God relates to the rule of God in the person of Jesus Christ, with manifestations and blessings of this rule both present and in the future**

[In our text (**Ga 5:21**), Paul evidently has the future blessings of the kingdom in mind. He is concerned that the Galatians will indeed inherit the kingdom. Do you have a similar concern? If so, consider...]

II. INHERITING THE FUTURE KINGDOM

A. WE MUST BE BORN AGAIN...

1. Otherwise we cannot see the kingdom of God - **Jn 3:3**
 2. We must be born of water and Spirit - **Jn 3:5**; cf. **Ti 3:5**
- **A reference to baptism, in which one is born of both water and the Spirit - cf. Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:36-38**

B. WE MUST BE WASHED, SANCTIFIED, AND JUSTIFIED...

1. The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God - **1 Co 6:9-10**
 2. Yet the unrighteous can be washed, sanctified, and justified - **1 Co 6:11**
- **Another reference to baptism, in which our sins are washed away, and we are thus set apart, and declared not guilty for our sins - cf. Ac 22:16; Co 2:12-13; 1 Pe 3:21**

C. WE MUST PUT ASIDE THE WORKS OF THE FLESH...

1. Such as fornication, uncleanness, covetousness - **Ep 5:3-7; Ga 5:19-21**
 2. We must put them to death, put them off, put on the new man - **Co 3:5-8**
- **In their place we must put on Christ-like qualities - Co 3:9-17; Ga 5:22-23**

D. WE MUST DO THE FATHER'S WILL...

1. It is not enough to simply confess the Lord - **Mt 7:21**
 2. It is not enough to do things in the name of the Lord - **Mt 7:22-23**
- **We must have actually done the Father's will! - Mt 7:21**

CONCLUSION

1. Remember that the kingdom of God is both present and future...

- a. The **future** manifestation and blessings will be experienced when Christ comes again
 - b. To inherit that kingdom, we must submit to His rule in our lives in the **present**
2. Have you **entered** the kingdom of God in its **present** sense...?
 - a. By being born again of water and the Spirit?
 - b. By being washed, sanctified, and justified?
 3. Will you **inherit** the kingdom of God in its **future** sense...?
 - a. By putting aside the works of the flesh?
 - b. By submitting to the Father's will in Christ?

Paul found it needful to warn his brethren time and again (**Ga 5:21**). May our hearts be receptive to such warnings, and be determined to let the will of God reign freely in our lives...

The Fruit Of The Spirit - I

Galatians 5:22-23

INTRODUCTION

1. In Galatians, Paul warned regarding the works of the flesh...
 - a. They can destroy the liberty we enjoy in Christ - **Ga 5:13-15**
 - b. They prevent us from following the Spirit and doing the things we wish - **Ga 5:16-17**
 - c. They keep us from inheriting the kingdom of God - **Ga 5:21**
2. He also wrote concerning those led by the Spirit...
 - a. They are not under the law (in particular, the Law of Moses) - **Ga 5:18**
 - b. They produce fruit against which there is no law (i.e., no condemnation) - **Ga 5:22-23**

[Having examined the works of the flesh in previous lessons, let's now turn our attention to the fruit of the Spirit (**Ga 5:22-23**). When we walk by the Spirit instead of indulging the flesh, what fruit does the Spirit produce in our lives...?]

I. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE

A. THE LOVE THE SPIRIT PRODUCES...

1. Grk., **agape** - that love which seeks only the highest good of others
2. Is the love of God poured into our hearts - **Ro 5:5**
3. Which engenders a deeper love for God as our Father - **Ro 8:14-15; Ga 4:6**
4. A love in Christ which "surpasses knowledge" - **Ep 3:16-19**
5. And should produce love for one another - **1 Jn 4:10-11,16,21**
- **Those "led by the Spirit" will produce the fruit of LOVE in their lives**

B. LOVE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN...

1. We are to walk in love - **Ep 5:1-2**
2. We are to love one another fervently - **1 Pe 1:22**
3. Love is to be the "tie that binds" the "garment" the Christian is to put on - **Co 3:12-14**
4. It is to be the "universal motive" for all that we do - **1 Co 16:14**
5. It is to prevent our Christian liberty from turning into destructive selfishness - **Ga 5:13**
- **Do we manifest that we "walk by the Spirit" in regards to our LOVE?**

[When the **love** which the Spirit produces is a dominant presence in our lives, it is only natural that it be accompanied by **joy**...]

II. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS JOY

A. THE JOY THE SPIRIT PRODUCES...

1. Grk., **chara** - joy, gladness (**Thayer**), delight (**Vine**)
2. Is integral to the kingdom of God - **Ro 14:17**
3. Is a gift from God, closely related to our faith and hope - **Ro 15:13**
4. Is a blessing to sustain us in times of persecution - **1 Th 1:6**
5. Can be described as "inexpressible and full of glory" - **1 Pe 1:6-8**

-- Those “led by the Spirit” will produce the fruit of JOY in their lives

B. JOY IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN...

1. Should be a constant presence in our lives - **Ph 4:4**
 2. Finding joy in our association together - **Phe 1:7,20; 1 Th 2:19-20**
 3. Finding joy even in difficult circumstances - **Ja 1:2-4**
 4. Especially when suffering for Christ - **1 Pe 4:13**
- **Do we manifest that we “walk by the Spirit” in regards to our JOY?**

[Walking in **love**, experiencing **joy**, it is understandable that those led by the Spirit would also have **peace...**]

III. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS PEACE

A. THE PEACE THE SPIRIT PRODUCES...

1. Grk., **eirēnē**- “peace between individuals, i.e., harmony, concord” - **Thayer**
 2. Is the result of those who set their minds on the things of the Spirit - **Ro 8:5-6**
 3. Is also integral to the kingdom of God - **Ro 14:17**
 4. Is also a gift from God, closely related to our faith and hope - **Ro 15:13**
- **Those “led by the Spirit” will produce the fruit of PEACE in their lives**

B. PEACE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN...

1. Involves peace with God, when justified by faith - **Ro 5:1**
 2. Involves peace with man, made possible by Jesus’ death - **Ep 2:11-19**
 3. Involves peace within self, received from God through prayer - **Ph 4:6-7**
- **Do we manifest that we “walk by the Spirit” in regards to our PEACE?**

CONCLUSION

1. What a contrast between the Spirit and the flesh...!
 - a. Those who walk by the Spirit experience **love, joy, and peace**
 - b. Those who indulge lusts of the flesh experience **hatred, jealousies, and outbursts of wrath**
2. Which would you rather have...?
 - a. A life **infused** with love, joy, and peace, by the Spirit of Almighty God?
 - b. A life **inflicted** by hatred, jealousies, and outbursts of wrath, due to fleshly lusts?

By the grace of God, all who have been born again of water and the Spirit, and are willing to walk in the Spirit can experience this wonderful love, joy, and peace (with even more, as we’ll see in our next two lessons). How about you...?

The Fruit Of The Spirit - II

Galatians 5:22-23

1. In discussing “the fruit of the Spirit”, the nine graces are often divided into three groups...:
 - a. Those graces **which turns one’s thought toward God...**
 - 1) Love (for love is of God)
 - 2) Joy (for we rejoice in the Lord)
 - 3) Peace (for from God comes the peace that surpasses understanding)
 - b. Those **that directs our attention to our fellowman...**
 - 4) Longsuffering
 - 5) Kindness
 - 6) Goodness
 - c. Those **which refer more directly to oneself...**
 - 7) Faithfulness
 - 8) Gentleness (meekness)
 - 9) Self-control

2. Our previous study focused on the first triad of graces...
 - a. **Love** - active good will, toward God and man
 - b. **Joy** - gladness, delight, which is inexpressible and full of glory
 - c. **Peace** - harmony, concord, that surpasses understanding

[We now turn our attention to the second triplet of graces: **longsuffering, kindness, and goodness...**]

IV. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LONGSUFFERING

A. THE LONGSUFFERING THE SPIRIT PRODUCES...

1. Grk., **makrothumia** (‘patience’ in the NASB)
 - a. Literally, it means being “long-tempered” (the opposite of short-tempered)
 - b. “patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs” - **Thayer**
 2. “Longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish. It is the opposite of anger and is associated with mercy, and is used of God.” - **Vine**
 3. The purpose of God’s longsuffering - cf. **2 Pe 3:7-9**
 - a. That we might have salvation! - **2 Pe 3:15**
 - b. That we might be led to repentance! - **Ro 2:4**
 - c. That those who fear Him and keep His commandments might delight in His lovingkindness, even though they have sinned - cf. **Psa 103:8-18**
- **Those “led by the Spirit” will produce the fruit of LONGSUFFERING in their lives**

B. LONGSUFFERING IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN...

1. Necessary if we desire God to be longsuffering toward us - cf. **Mt 18:32-35**
 2. Necessary to maintain the unity of the Spirit - **Ep 4:1-3**
 3. Necessary for preachers and teachers of the gospel - **2 Ti 2:24-26; 3:10; 4:2**
 4. Developed through love and prayer - cf. **1 Co 13:4-8a; Co 1:9-11**
- **Do we manifest that we “walk by the Spirit” in regards to LONGSUFFERING?**

[When one possesses the quality of **longsuffering, kindness** naturally follows...]

V. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS KINDNESS

A. THE KINDNESS THE SPIRIT PRODUCES...

1. Grk., **chrestotes** - this word describes “the sympathetic kindliness or sweetness of temper which puts others at their ease, and shrinks from giving pain” - **Plummer**
 - a. It therefore describes a quality that makes other people feel at ease when with you
 - b. They know you will be kind, or gentle
 2. In the Septuagint, it is used of God more than anyone else
 - a. Where it is often translated as ‘good’ - cf. **Psa 106:1; 145:9**
 - b. Referring not to God’s moral goodness, but rather to His kindness, expressed in His mercy
 3. In the New Testament, we read of the kindness of God
 - a. In nature, even to ungrateful and evil men - **Lk 6:35; cf. Mt 5:45**
 - b. In the giving of His Son, in whom we have salvation - **Ti 3:4-7**
 - c. Even in the ages to come - **Ep 2:7**
- **Those “led by the Spirit” will produce the fruit of KINDNESS in their lives**

B. KINDNESS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN...

1. Is part of the Christian “garment” we are to put on - cf. **Co 3:12**
 2. Should characterize our treatment of one another - **Ep 4:31-32**
 3. Do we act with kindness toward others?
 - a. So that others are “at ease” in our presence?
 - b. So that others feel they can draw close to us?
 4. Or do we with sharp words, cold shoulders, or arrogant condescension discourage others from feeling comfortable around us?
- **Do we manifest that we “walk by the Spirit” in regards to KINDNESS?**

[Putting the spirit of **kindness** into action is the quality of **goodness**...]

VI. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS GOODNESS

A. THE GOODNESS THE SPIRIT PRODUCES...

1. Grk., **agathosune** - active goodness, benevolent - **Complete WordStudy Dictionary**
 - a. “It is more than **chrestotes**, gentleness, kindness, a mellowing of character.” - **ibid.**
 - b. “It is character energized, expressing itself in **agathon**, benevolence, active good.” - **ibid.**
 2. **Barnabas** was a good man - **Ac 11:24**
 - a. He was happy to see the progress of others; i.e., he was not envious - **Ac 11:23**
 - b. He was an encourager of others - **Ac 11:23**
 - c. He was liberal with his good words, which is how he got his name - cf. **Ac 4:36**
 - d. He was generous with his possessions - cf. **Ac 4:32-37**
 3. **Dorcas** was a good woman - **Ac 9:36**
 - a. She was “full of good works and charitable deeds”
 - b. Even in her death, her goodness was being felt - cf. **Ac 9:39**
- **Those “led by the Spirit” will produce the fruit of GOODNESS in their lives**

B. GOODNESS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN...

1. Those led by the Spirit of God will produce the quality of “goodness” - cf. **Ep 5:8-9**
 2. We have been created in Christ for this very purpose! - **Ep 2:10**
 3. We should do good unto all men, especially their brethren - **Ga 6:10**
 4. The Scriptures furnish us completely for this task - **2 Ti 3:16-17**
- **Do we manifest that we “walk by the Spirit” in regards to GOODNESS?**

CONCLUSION

1. Again we note the contrast between the Spirit and the flesh...
 - a. Those who walk by the Spirit experience **longsuffering, kindness, and goodness**
 - b. Those who indulge fleshly lusts experience **contentions, envy, and selfish ambitions**
2. Which would you rather have...?
 - a. A life **developing** longsuffering, kindness, and goodness, with the help of the Holy Spirit?
 - b. A life **devastated** by contentions, envy, and selfish ambitions, due to your own fleshly lusts?

In the words of Paul (**Ga 5:16**): **“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”** Are you walking in the Spirit, allowing Him to produce His fruit in your life...?

The Fruit Of The Spirit - III

Galatians 5:22-23

INTRODUCTION

1. This is our third and final study on “**The Fruit Of The Spirit**”...
 - a. Fruit born by those who walk in the Spirit, who are led by the Spirit
 - b. As opposed to those who succumb to their carnal lusts, producing the works of the flesh
2. Our first study on the fruit of the Spirit focused on the first triad of graces...
 - a. **Love** - active good will, toward God and man, that passes knowledge
 - b. **Joy** - gladness, delight, which is inexpressible and full of glory
 - c. **Peace** - harmony, concord, that surpasses understanding
3. Our second study examined the second triad of graces...
 - a. **Longsuffering** - patience, self-restraint in the face of provocation
 - b. **Kindness** - sweetness of temper that places others at ease, born of mercy
 - c. **Goodness** - benevolence, kindness in action

[The third triad of graces include **faithfulness**, **gentleness** (meekness, KJV), and **self-control**. Thus we note that...]

VII. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS FAITHFULNESS

A. THE FAITHFULNESS THE SPIRIT PRODUCES...

1. Grk., **pistis** - often used in the NT of a conviction or belief in respect to God and Christ
 2. But it also is used to describe the quality of “**fidelity, faithfulness**”
 - a. “the character of one who can be relied on...” - **Thayer**
 - b. “faithful, to be trusted, reliable...” - **Vine**
 - c. William Barclay calls it “**the virtue of reliability**”
 3. This virtue, unfortunately, is not too common...
 - a. While many may claim it, the wise man declared it hard to find - **Pro 20:6**
 - b. The Psalmist decried the lack of “faithfulness” in his day, describing a condition that sounds much like our situation today - **Psa 12:1-2**
- **Those “led by the Spirit” will produce the fruit of FAITHFULNESS in their lives**

B. FAITHFULNESS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN...

1. Faithfulness is essential for those who would receive the crown of life - **Re 2:10**
 2. Some areas in which we need faithfulness:
 - a. The use of our ‘talents’ (i.e., abilities, opportunities) - **Mt 25:21,24-26**
 - b. Our duties to the church (e.g., its assemblies) - **He 10:24-25**
 - c. Our duties as parents, spouses, children - **Ep 6:4; Ti 2:3-5; Ep 5:22-23; 6:1-3**
 3. Those who are faithful will be blessed by the Lord - **Psa 31:23; Pro 28:20**
- **Do we manifest that we “walk by the Spirit” in regards to FAITHFULNESS?**

[Next we observe that...]

VIII. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS GENTLENESS

A. THE GENTLENESS (MEEKNESS, KJV) THE SPIRIT PRODUCES...

1. Grk., **prautes** - gentleness; by implication humility: - meekness - **Strong**
 2. “the ability to bear reproaches and slights with moderation, and not to embark on revenge quickly, and not to be easily provoked to anger, but to be free from bitterness and contentiousness, having tranquillity and stability in the spirit.” - **Aristotle**, On Virtues And Vices
 3. Gentleness (or meekness), then, is that virtuous quality by which “we treat all men with perfect courtesy, that we can rebuke without rancor, that we can argue without intolerance, that we can face the truth without resentment, that we can be angry and sin not, that we can be gentle and yet not weak.” - **Barclay**
 4. A virtue displayed by both Moses and Jesus - **Num 12:3; Mt 11:28-30**
- **Those “led by the Spirit” will produce the fruit of GENTLENESS in their lives**

B. GENTLENESS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN...

1. We are to receive the Word of God with meekness (prautes) - **Ja 1:21**
 2. We must approach brethren in error with a spirit of gentleness (prautes) - **Ga 6:1**
 3. We must correct those in opposition with humility (prautes) - **2 Ti 2:24-25**
 4. We are to answer inquiries concerning our hope with meekness (prautes) - **1 Pe 3:15**
 5. Meekness (prautes) is necessary for the Christian man who would be wise - cf. **Ja 3:13-18**
 6. Meekness (prautes) is necessary for the Christian woman who would be precious in the sight of God - **1 Pe 3:1-6**
- **Do we manifest that we “walk by the Spirit” in regards to GENTLENESS?**

[Finally, we consider that virtue which is most needed in dealing with fleshly lusts...]

IX. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS SELF-CONTROL

A. THE SELF-CONTROL THE SPIRIT PRODUCES...

1. Gr., **egkrateia** - it comes from the word “**kratos**” (**strength**), and means “one holding himself in” - **Robertson**
 2. **Thayer** defines it as: “the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites”
 3. **MacKnight** adds the thought: “Where this virtue subsists, temptation can have little influence.”
- **Those “led by the Spirit” will produce the fruit of SELF-CONTROL in their lives**

B. SELF-CONTROL IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN...

1. This virtue is necessary to overcoming the “works of the flesh” (such as fornication and outbursts of wrath) - cf. **Ga 5:19-20**
 2. The indwelling Spirit is given to the Christian to aid us in this regard - cf. **Ro 8:11-14**
 3. The Spirit’s aid comes in response to asking for it in prayer - cf. **Ep 3:16,20**
 4. We must be willing to stand strong in the power of God’s might - cf. **Ep 6:12-18**
- **Do we manifest that we “walk by the Spirit” in regards to SELF-CONTROL?**

CONCLUSION

1. In brief, the third triad of graces produced by the Spirit in the life of the Christian are...

- a. **Faithfulness** - the virtue of reliability, the character of one who can be depended upon
 - b. **Gentleness** - kind treatment of others, born of humility
 - c. **Self-control** - the ability to hold oneself in, mastering desires and passions
2. Previously we noted the following contrasts between the Spirit and the flesh...
- a. Those who walk by the Spirit experience **love, joy, and peace**
 - b. Those who indulge lusts of the flesh experience **hatred, jealousies, and outbursts of wrath**
 - c. Those who walk by the Spirit experience **longsuffering, kindness, and goodness**
 - d. Those who indulge fleshly lusts experience **contentions, envy, and selfish ambitions**
3. Once more we note the contrast between the Spirit and the flesh...
- a. Those who walk by the Spirit experience **faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control**
 - b. Those who indulge fleshly lusts experience **jealousies, contentions, and immorality**
4. Previously we asked: Which would you rather have...?
- a. A life **infused** with love, joy, and peace, by the Spirit of Almighty God?
 - b. A life **inflicted** by hatred, jealousies, and outbursts of wrath, due to fleshly lusts?
 - c. A life **developing** longsuffering, kindness, and goodness, with the help of the Holy Spirit?
 - d. A life **devastated** by contentions, envy, and selfish ambitions, due to your own fleshly lusts?
5. So again we ask: Which would you rather have...?
- a. A life **exuding** faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, with the aid of the Spirit?
 - b. A life **exhausted** by jealousies, contentions, and immorality, due to your own fleshly lusts?

Jesus gives us a choice. Through His blood He can cleanse us of sin; through the Spirit He can empower us to live holy and righteous lives. Are we willing to accept His gracious choice...?

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”
- Ga 5:16

Those Who Belong To Christ

Galatians 5:24-26

INTRODUCTION

1. In previous studies we have noted Paul contrasting the flesh and the Spirit...
 - a. How the works of the flesh:
 - 1) Oppose the Spirit - **Ga 5:16-17**
 - 2) Prevents one from inheriting the kingdom - **Ga 5:19-21**
 - b. How walking in the Spirit:
 - 1) Helps one to not fulfill the lust of the flesh - **Ga 5:16**
 - 2) Produces the fruit of the Spirit in one's life - **Ga 5:22-23**
 - 3) Frees one from the condemnation of any law - **Ga 5:18,23c**

2. In summarizing his discourse on the flesh and the Spirit, Paul reminds us of what is true of those who belong to Christ...
 - a. They have crucified the flesh with its passion and desires - **Ga 5:24**
 - b. They live in the Spirit - **Ga 5:25a**
 - c. They should therefore walk in the Spirit, not in conceit, provoking and envying one another - **Ga 5:25b-26**

[This passage (**Ga 5:24-26**) alludes to much that is revealed elsewhere as to what it means to be a Christian, a disciple of Christ. For example, those who truly belong to Christ are those who...]

I. HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH

A. IN PRINCIPLE...

1. When we died with Christ in baptism - **Ro 6:3-6**
 2. So that now Christ lives in us, and we live by faith - **Ga 2:20**
- **Have you crucified the flesh in 'principle', through baptism?**

B. IN PRACTICE...

1. As we seek to put off the old man, and put on the new - **Co 3:5-14**
 2. As we were taught by Christ - **Ep 4:20-24**
- **Are you crucifying the flesh in 'practice', by living a holy life?**

[Crucifying the flesh in both principle and practice cannot be done without divine help. And so those who truly belong to Christ are those blessed to...]

II. LIVE IN THE SPIRIT

A. IN THE BEGINNING...

1. It is the Spirit who gives life - **Jn 6:63; 2 Co 3:6**
 2. Which He does in the washing of regeneration (i.e., baptism) - **Ti 3:5**
 3. So that we are truly born again of both water and the Spirit - **Jn 3:5**
- **Have you been made alive in the Spirit, through baptism?**

B. IN THE PRESENT...

1. By virtue of His indwelling - **Ro 8:11**; cf. **1 Co 6:19**
2. Who empowers us to put to death the deeds of the body - **Ro 8:12-13**; cf. **Ep 3:16**
-- **Are you living in the Spirit, by utilizing His strength?**

[Because we live in the Spirit, there is great potential for spiritual growth. But that growth is not automatic. We can be guilty of grieving the Spirit (cf. **Ep 4:30**). Thus those who belong to Christ...]

III. SHOULD WALK IN THE SPIRIT

A. NOT CONCEITED...

1. Manifested by selfish ambitions, contrary to the mind of Christ - cf. **Ph 2:3-5**
2. Manifesting instead lowliness of mind that leads to gentleness (meekness) - cf. **Ga 5:23**
-- **Are you walking in the Spirit, free from conceit?**

B. NOT PROVOKING...

1. Manifested by conduct such as immorality, outbursts of wrath - cf. **Ga 5:19-20**
2. Manifesting instead joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness - **Ga 5:22-23**
-- **Are you walking in the Spirit, free from provoking others?**

C. NOT ENVYING...

1. Manifested by hatred, jealousies - cf. **Ga 5:20-21**
2. Manifesting instead love that does not envy, thinks no evil - cf. **1 Co 13:4-8a**
-- **Are you walking in the Spirit, free from envy?**

CONCLUSION

1. Those who belong to Christ are they who...
 - a. Crucify the flesh in both principle and practice
 - b. Live in the Spirit from their baptism to the present
 - c. Should walk in the Spirit, producing the fruit of the Spirit
2. Do we truly belong to Christ...?
 - a. It begins with baptism into Christ - **Ga 3:27**
 - b. It continues with a life of faith - **Ga 2:20**
 - c. It produces a whole new person - **Ga 6:15**

Such is the life that Christ offers: made alive in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, bearing fruit of the Spirit. Is this not the life you want...? - cf. **Jn 10:10**

Bearing Burdens

Galatians 6:1-5

INTRODUCTION

1. Justification by faith in Christ provides wonderful blessings...
 - a. We enjoy true liberty, freedom from the yoke of bondage - **Ga 5:1**
 - b. We live in the Spirit, producing the fruit of the Spirit as we walk in the Spirit - **Ga 5:16-26**
2. But such blessings do not come without responsibilities...
 - a. There are burdens to bear
 - b. There is good to be done

[In **Galatians 6**, Paul expounds on our responsibilities, beginning with “**Bearing Burdens**”...]

I. WE ARE TO BEAR ONE ANOTHER’S BURDENS (1-2)

A. THE DUTY OF THOSE WHO ARE SPIRITUAL...

1. Who are producing the fruit of the Spirit
 - a. That fruit delineated in the previous chapter - **Ga 5:22-23**
 - b. Which fruit (e.g., love, longsuffering, kindness) prepares one to be of service
 2. Fulfilling the law of Christ
 - a. Perhaps alluding to that ‘new commandment’ to love one another - cf. **Jn 13:34**
 - b. What Jesus described as ‘My commandment’ - **Jn 15:12**
 3. Bearing with the infirmities of the weak
 - a. The duty of those who are strong - **Ro 15:1-2**
 - b. Following the example of Jesus - **Ro 15:3**; cf. **1 Th 5:14**
- **The spiritually strong are to bear with the burdens of the weak**

B. TO RESTORE THOSE OVERTAKEN...

1. Those overtaken by their sins
 - a. Referring to cases of surprise, or of sudden temptation - **Barnes**
 - b. Not gone into sin as a result of sinful premeditation, but surprised by it - **B.W. Johnson**
 2. Restoring them in a spirit of gentleness
 - a. In the exercise of that grace which is a gift and fruit of the Spirit of God - **Gill**
 - b. As Paul charged Timothy - **2 Ti 2:24-26**
 3. Considering one’s own potential for temptation
 - a. Aware that we all stumble in many things - **Ja 3:2**
 - b. Remembering that we too can easily fall - **1 Co 10:12**
- **The spiritually strong are to graciously restore their weak brethren - cf. Ja 5:19-20**

C. ARE WE WILLING TO BEAR ONE ANOTHER’S BURDENS...?

1. It begins with getting to know one another
 - a. Enough **to know** when one is overtaken in a fault
 - b. Enough **to care** when one is overtaken in a fault
2. This is one reason we should attend every assembly of the church when possible
 - a. It provides a way to become better acquainted with one another

- b. It provides a way to know when something may be wrong with a brother
- **Are we willing to care enough to share one another's burdens? - cf. He 10:24-25**

[**"Bearing Burdens"** is not limited to the spiritually strong. Enjoined upon all Christians is this duty...]

II. WE ARE TO BEAR OUR OWN BURDENS (3-5)

A. THE DUTY OF ALL WHO FOLLOW CHRIST...

- 1. Otherwise we are nothing, no matter what we think
 - a. There is the temptation to think higher of ourselves than we ought - **Ro 12:3**
 - b. Yet we can easily deceive ourselves - e.g., **Ja 1:22**
- 2. Only then can we rejoice in ourselves, and not in another
 - a. Some trust in being part of a group, without really contributing to the work
 - b. But we will be judged as individuals, not as a group - **Ro 14:12; 2 Co 5:10**
- **Are we willing to bear our own load, or do we expect others to carry us?**

B. TO BEAR ONE'S OWN LOAD...

- 1. By first examining ourselves
 - a. Starting with the fundamentals: are we even in Christ? - cf. **2 Co 13:5**
 - b. Then examining our lives weekly, as we observe the Supper - cf. **1 Co 11:28**
- 2. And then carrying our own load
 - a. Doing our part as members; in kindness, with faithfulness - **Ep 4:16; Ga 5:22-23**
 - b. Understanding that we are needed just as much as anyone else - **1 Co 12:15-20**
- **Do we handicap the body of Christ by failing to do our part?**

C. ARE WE WILLING TO BEAR OUR OWN LOAD...?

- 1. It begins with accepting personal responsibility for our own spiritual growth
 - a. Willing **to learn** what the Lord would have me know
 - b. Willing **to do** what the Lord would have me do
- 2. This is another reason we should attend every assembly of the church when possible
 - a. It provides many opportunities to learn the Lord's will
 - b. It provides many opportunities to do what the Lord desires
- **Are we willing to do our fair share in bearing our own load? - cf. Ep 4:16**

CONCLUSION

- 1. The Lord saved us that we might be zealous for good works... - **Ti 2:14**
 - a. Redeeming us from every lawless deed
 - b. Purifying for Himself His special people
- 2. Are we not willing to accept the work of the Lord with zeal...?
 - a. To bear one another's burden, out of love for one another?
 - b. To bear our own burden, out of love for the Lord?

Sharing And Doing Good

Galatians 6:6,10

INTRODUCTION

1. You will recall that the fruit of the Spirit (**Ga 5:22-23**) includes...
 - a. Love and kindness
 - b. Goodness and gentleness
2. We saw in our previous study (**Ga 6:1-5**) that such graces enable us to...
 - a. Restore those overtaken in a fault
 - b. Doing so with a spirit of gentleness
 - c. Thus bearing one another's burdens, fulfilling the law of Christ

[Bearing the burdens of others extends beyond meeting their spiritual needs. As we continue in **Galatians 6**, we find that it also includes addressing physical needs. In **verse 6**, Paul enjoins us to...]

I. SHARE WITH THOSE WHO TEACH (6)

A. SHARING IN FINANCIAL SUPPORT...

1. This is the most common understanding of this passage
 2. Those who teach and preach may be supported for their work
 - a. As taught by Jesus - **Lk 10:7**
 - b. As explained by Paul - **1 Co 9:3-11,14; 1 Ti 5:17-18**
 - c. As practiced by various churches - **2 Co 11:8-9**
 - d. As commended by John - **3 Jn 5-8**
 3. We should not hesitate to support those worthy
 - a. Those near and far, as the Philippians did for Paul - **Ph 4:15-16**
 - b. Both now and in the future, as the Philippians did for Paul - **Ph 1:3-5; 4:14,18**
- **Whether as individuals or as a congregation, we can support those who teach**

B. SHARING IN SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS...

1. This is another understanding of this passage
 2. Those who preach share spiritual blessings
 - a. Just as those from Jerusalem shared spiritual things with the Gentiles - **Ro 15:26-27**
 - b. Just as Paul share spiritual blessings with the Corinthians - **1 Co 9:11**
 3. We should make sure that we share in those blessings
 - a. By full participation in the gospel of Christ - e.g., **1 Co 15:1-2**
 - b. By application of its truths and principles to our lives - e.g., **Ja 1:21; 1 Pe 2:1-3**
- **Certainly we should share fully in the blessings of the Word that is taught us**

[It matters little whether Paul meant supporting preachers or participating in what they taught. Both are true, and worthy of our consideration. Saving **verses 7-9** for a later study, let's go on to **verse 10**...]

II. DO GOOD TO ALL MEN (10)

A. TO ALL MEN...

1. We have a duty to do good to all
 - a. To those in need - cf. **1 Tim 6:17-18**
 - b. Even our enemies - cf. **Lk 6:27-35**
 2. As we have the opportunity
 - a. Opportunity is determined by circumstance and ability
 - b. The opportunity may be unforeseen - e.g., the good Samaritan, **Lk 10:33**
 - c. The opportunity may be sought out - cf. **1 Th 5:15; Ti 3:8; He 13:16**
 3. Today we have many opportunities
 - a. In our neighborhood, and around the world
 - b. Made much easier through the Internet (e.g., Network For Good, AlertNet)
 - c. There are many charities through which we can do much good
- **Are we being careful to maintain good works, or have we been forgetful?**

B. ESPECIALLY BRETHREN...

1. We have a special duty to our brethren in Christ ("the household of faith")
 - a. For they are our true family - cf. **Mt 12:46-50**
 - b. Kindness to them is kindness to Christ - cf. **Mt 25:34-40**
 - c. Loving them is indicative of true conversion - cf. **1 Jn 3:14-19**
 2. As we have the opportunity
 - a. Again, opportunity is determined by circumstance and ability
 - b. We are given the opportunity weekly, based on ability - cf. **1 Co 16:1-2; 2 Co 9:7**
 - c. Which prepares us for future opportunities as they arise - cf. **2 Co 9:5; Ro 15:25-26**
 3. Today we have many opportunities
 - a. To support preachers of the gospel, local and foreign
 - b. To help needy Christians, local and foreign
 - c. The local church is designed to help brethren in need, with some limitation - **1 Ti 5:16**
- **Are we being careful to remember the poor, especially our brethren in Christ?**

CONCLUSION

1. Certainly there is more to doing good than meeting physical needs...
 - a. The needs of the spirit should also be met
 - b. Which is where the gospel of Christ excels
 - c. Which is the primary work of the church - to seek and save the lost
2. Yet Christians who are materially blessed can easily be forgetful...
 - a. Especially when we live in a country with material abundance
 - b. Which is why Paul wrote Timothy to charge those who are rich, to be rich in good works
- **1 Ti 6:16-18**
 - c. And note that doing good is one way that we sow to the Spirit, and lay up treasure in heaven!
- **1 Ti 6:19; cf. Ga 6:7-9; Lk 12:33; 18:22**

As we therefore have the opportunity, let us be diligent to share and do good to all...!

We Reap What We Sow

Galatians 6:7-9

INTRODUCTION

1. While encouraging Christians to share and do good, Paul reminds them of the principle of sowing and reaping... - **Ga 6:7-9**
2. Related to sowing and reaping, **Madame Chiang Kai-shek** once wrote: “If the past has taught us anything it is that every cause brings its effect, every action has a consequence. We Chinese have a saying: “If a man plants melons he will reap melons; if he sows beans, he will reap beans.” And this is true of everyone’s life; good begets good, and evil leads to evil. True enough, the sun shines on the saint and the sinner alike, and too often it seems that the wicked prosper. But we can say with certainty that, with the individual as with the nation, the flourishing of the wicked is an illusion, for, unceasingly, life keeps books on us all. In the end, we are all the sum total of our actions. Character cannot be counterfeited, nor can it put on and cast off as if it were a garment to meet the whim of the moment. Like the markings on wood which are ingrained in the very heart of the tree, character requires time and nurturing for growth and development. Thus also, day by day, we write our own destiny; for inexorably...**we become what we do.**”

[The implications of this principle (we reap what we sow) are important, worthy of our consideration...]

I. IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRINCIPLE

A. WHAT WE ARE TODAY, IS DUE TO WHAT WE DID YESTERDAY...

1. Our position, attitude, character, etc., is the result of **our** actions in the past
 2. We cannot lay blame on heredity, environment, parents, society, etc.
 3. Such things influenced us only to the degree that **we** let them
 4. We must accept responsibility for our actions, for God will demand it of us one day!
- cf. **2 Co 5:10**
- **Truly, the present reveals much about our past!**

B. WHAT WE ARE TOMORROW, WILL BE DUE TO WHAT WE DO TODAY...

1. We can change, if we do not like what we are today! - cf. **2 Co 5:17**
 2. But such change comes slowly, not overnight - cf. **Ro 12:1-2; 1 Pe 2:1-2**
 3. We must begin sowing today, if we want to reap tomorrow!
 4. While true of everyone, especially true for the **young**
 - a. They are making choices which will affect the rest of their lives!
 - b. They cannot “sow wild oats” and not “reap the harvest”!
- **Just as true, the present portends much about our future!**

[And so, “**we become what we do.**” Now let’s consider the principle as applied by Paul in our text...]

II. APPLICATIONS OF THE PRINCIPLE

A. WE ARE GIVEN TWO OPTIONS...

1. Either we sow to the flesh - **Ga 6:8a**
 - a. This entails the works of the flesh described earlier - cf. **Ga 5:19-21**

- b. Those who sow to the flesh reap **corruption** (sorrow, disease, damnation)
 - c. They will not inherit the kingdom of God! - **Ga 5:21**
 - d. They will instead experience the wrath of God! - **Ep 5:5-7**
 - 2. Or we sow to the Spirit - **Ga 6:8b**
 - a. This entails walking in the Spirit (see more below) - **Ga 5:16-18**
 - b. Those who sow to the Spirit reap **everlasting life** (abundant life, salvation)
 - c. They will also reap the fruit of the Spirit - cf. **Ga 5:22-23**
- **We can't do both (cf. Ga 5:16-17); so which will it be?**

B. WE SHOULD SOW TO THE SPIRIT...

- 1. By doing good to all, especially brethren - cf. **Ga 6:10**
 - a. This is the context of Paul's remarks on sowing and reaping - cf. also **2 Co 9:6-7**
 - b. Paul writes of reaping everlasting life - **Ga 6:8**
 - c. Elsewhere he makes a similar connection - cf. **1 Ti 6:17-19**
 - d. Jesus makes a similar connection on several occasions
 - 1) In the sermon on the Mount - cf. **Lk 6:35**
 - 2) To His disciples, following a parable on covetousness - cf. **Lk 12:15,33-34**
 - 3) To the rich young ruler, who lacked one thing - cf. **Lk 18:22**
 - 2. By sharing in the good things taught in the Word - cf. **Ga 6:6**
 - a. As some understand Paul's comments in **verse 6**
 - b. Even if not Paul's original intent, the principle certainly remains true
 - c. We can so share in two ways:
 - 1) Obedience to the gospel, of course - cf. **He 5:9; Mk 16:16**
 - 2) Growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ - cf. **2 Pe 3:18**
 - d. Doing so will one day reap a wonderful harvest! - cf. **2 Pe 1:5-11**
- **We sow to the Spirit (and lay up treasure in heaven) as we do good to all!**

C. WE SHOULD NOT GROW WEARY...

- 1. There is the need for patience and perseverance - **Ga 6:9**
 - 2. The labor is not in vain - **1 Co 15:58**
 - 3. The reaping will come at the proper time (the coming of the Lord) - cf. **Ja 5:7**
 - 4. We shall reap if we don't lose heart and give up
- **Learn from the farmer...have faith like a farmer!**

CONCLUSION

- 1. Our character today may not be what it should be, but it can change
- 2. We have but two choices, which shall it be...
 - a. Sow to the Spirit, and reap eternal life?
 - b. Sow to the flesh, and reap corruption?

Eternal life awaits those who are willing to sow to the Spirit by patiently doing good... - cf. **Ro 2:7**

Two Very Different Boasts

Galatians 6:11-18

INTRODUCTION

1. In his epistle to the churches of Galatia, the apostle Paul...
 - a. Defends his apostleship (chapters **1-2**)
 - b. Argues vigorously that justification is by faith in Christ (chapters **3-4**)
 - c. Exhorts Christians to use their liberty to sow to the Spirit instead of the flesh (chapters **5-6**)

2. As he concludes his epistle, Paul intermingles **personal remarks** with **final admonitions**...
 - a. We note his reference to the size of his letters - **Ga 6:11**
 - 1) Which some take to refer to his actual handwriting
 - 2) While others think it refers the length of the epistle
 - b. But of particular interest to me is **the contrast** that Paul makes - **Ga 6:11-16**
 - 1) A contrast between others and himself
 - 2) A contrast in what they took pride

[There is something to glean from these “**Two Very Different Boasts**”, perhaps words of caution for us to consider. We note first that there was...]

I. BOASTING IN A SHOW OF THE FLESH

A. THIS WAS THE BOAST OF SOME...

1. Such was the case of those who sought to compel circumcision
 2. Their motive was twofold - **Ga 6:12-13**
 - a. To avoid persecution for the cross of Christ
 - b. To boast in the flesh of the Gentiles
 3. They were inconsistent - **Ga 6:13**
 - a. Those who stressed circumcision did not keep the whole Law
 - b. As mentioned earlier in the epistle - **Ga 2:11-14**
- **They focused on externals, for the purpose of show**

B. DO WE BOAST IN A SHOW OF THE FLESH...?

1. By being overly concerned of what others see and think?
 2. With a similar twofold motive?
 - a. To avoid ridicule in our service for Christ?
 - b. To take pride in what impresses others?
 3. How might we boast in a show of the flesh today? - cf. **Mt 23:5-11**
 - a. Through religious clothing (or costly clothing - cf. **1 Ti 2:9-10; 1 Pe 3:3-5**)
 - b. Through religious titles, or any title intended to impress others
 - c. Through building overly expensive, elaborate churches
 - d. Through an emphasis on numbers (attendance, conversions)
 - e. Through showcasing celebrities in evangelistic efforts
- **Might we be guilty of boasting in a show of the flesh, for the sake of popularity?**

[In contrast to boasting in a show of the flesh, we note that Paul writes about...]

II. BOASTING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST

A. THIS WAS THE BOAST OF PAUL...

1. In the crucified Messiah - **Ga 6:14**
 - a. To some, the message of the cross was foolishness - **1 Co 1:23**
 - b. Paul made it the focus of his ministry - **1 Co 2:2**
 - c. He was not ashamed of the gospel - **Ro 1:16-17**
 2. In having himself been crucified with Christ - **Ga 6:14b**
 - a. In Christ he had been crucified to the world
 - b. Of which he wrote about earlier in this epistle - **Ga 2:20a**
 - c. In which he now lived a life of faith in Jesus - **Ga 2:20b**
 3. Changing his priorities in life - **Ga 6:15-18**
 - a. Circumcision, once important to him, had become irrelevant - cf. **Ga 1:11-17**
 - b. The new creation in Christ was what now mattered - cf. **2 Co 5:17; Ep 4:20-24**
 - c. Blessing those with the same priorities (asking for understanding from them who had troubled him) - **Ga 6:16-18**
- **Paul's boast was in the transforming power of Jesus Christ**

B. DO WE BOAST IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST...?

1. Some prefer to boast in other things, which they should not - cf. **Jer 9:23**
 - a. Such as their wisdom - cf. **1 Co 1:19-21; 3:19-20**
 - b. Such as their own strength - cf. **Psa 33:16-19**
 - c. Such as their own wealth - cf. **Psa 49:6-9; Lk 12:15-21**
 2. Our boast should be in Christ and God
 - a. Certainly not in men - cf. **1 Co 3:21-23**
 - b. But in coming to know God as He really is - cf. **Jer 9:24**
 - c. And in what Christ does for us - cf. **1 Co 1:26-31**
 3. Prompting us to change our priorities in life
 - a. Seeking first the kingdom of God - **Mt 6:33**
 - b. Seeking to glorify God with all our hearts, for having saved us - cf. **Psa 86:12-13**
 - c. Seeking to glorify God with our bodies and spirits - **1 Co 6:19-20**
 - d. Seeking to glorify God with good works - **Mt 5:16; 1 Pe 2:11-12**
 - e. Seeking to glorify God when we suffer for Christ - **1 Pe 4:16**
- **We boast in Christ, by being what He created us for in Christ - cf. Ep 2:8-10**

CONCLUSION

1. In what do we boast today...?
 - a. Might we fall into the trap of boasting in a show of the flesh?
 - b. Should we not rather boast in the cross of Christ?
2. Paul's final words include a **plea** and a **prayer**...
 - a. A **plea** to no longer be troubled, perhaps by those who questioned his apostleship - **Ga 6:17**
 - b. A **prayer** bestowing grace, for those who read this epistle - **Ga 6:18**

Paul's **plea** was answered a long time ago, when he passed from this life to be with his Lord. His **prayer** will be answered for all those willing to give careful heed to things written in this epistle.

Will the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirits today? Only if we stand fast in the liberty in which Christ has made us free (**Ga 5:1**), and sow to the Spirit instead of the flesh (**Ga 6:8**)...!