

STUDYING GALATIANS

BIBLE STUDY OUTREACH @ 1984, 1993

LESSON 16
Galatians 6: 1 - 18

The Cross And Christian Maturity

It is my prayer that as you finish this series of lessons on Galatians you will allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to your mind and heart the greatness of your position in Christ; that you will be deeply aware, as never before, of what your possessions are through Christ; that you will have great freedom in the liberty Christ has bought for you.

Paul has taken us through the experiences of a people who had left the truth and purity of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They had slipped back into the bondage of law. This was disastrous because they had, in the beginning, experienced the grace and joy of being totally free in Christ Who is the Deliverer from the law and its externalism, observances, and ceremonies. Christ is every generation's freedom FROM SIN AND DEATH!

A key question Paul asked the Galatians was, "...did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?" (Gal. 3:2.) I ask you this same question, "Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? Your honest answer will reveal to you how much work the Spirit has done in your heart to firm up the knowledge of your position in Christ Jesus.

Now, as a person of today, ask yourself this question: "What can I do to continue Paul's teachings?" The answers are:

- 1) Remember the purity of the gospel for which Christ died.
- 2) Reach out, teach, preach and live the message of the cross.
- 3) Renew the vision for evangelism, Christ's salvation to all.
- 4) Restore concern for the great commission to go into all the world.
- 5) Rebuild your family's faith and daily walk in Christ.

J.C. Philpot, in "Through Baca's Vale" commented upon the Holy Spirit's tender care of the regenerate soul. Mr. Philpot said the Holy Spirit had done the work of regeneration. The regenerated soul is the Holy Spirit's offspring. This is a wonderful fact. It stands to reason that once the Holy Spirit has brought spiritual life into being, He will guard it with the sovereignty of His position as God in the Trinity. Why would He do this? Because the Spirit is part of the believer! Oh! Glorious thought! It will be the Spirit in the child of God that will be raised up to be with God. It is the actual birth within a sinner that places him in the right relationship with God. This meets every requirement of God's law. Out of God's great love for us the law is fulfilled. The Galatians knew all this. They had known the freedom of being in Christ and the freedom from the law. It had been a blessed fact in their lives. They had been fruitful and had shared the gospel. Thus they had won countless souls to Christ and had glorified God. Paul wanted them to continue in this freedom. Out of it flowed love to fulfill Christ's commandment to love. The law required love, but it could not produce it. There just wasn't any way the law could produce a spirit of love toward God or a person. The law only revealed the lack of love in the Judaizers by their neglect to keep it. Had this spirit of love been in them, it would have been demonstrated in their behavior.

Galatians 6 finds Paul occupied with a principle test which had a powerful appeal to those who had known the blessedness of the wonderful gospel of Christ. Paul tells the readers who were spiritual to restore an evil-doing brother. He said do this in a spirit of meekness. Here we see a danger, because those who are spiritual, that is, those who are trying hard to live a Christian life, are apt to judge the sins of a fellow Christian in a harsh manner, not in love. Meekness is required; it is a quality of character in a believer that shows a lowly, humble attitude. If the erring brother is corrected in this manner there is good possibility that he will accept being restored in grace. It is very easy to be proud when someone else is at fault. Why? Because we look good in comparison. We just naturally compare ourselves with the other person in the sin-issue. Paul reminds us “consider ourselves,” for we, too, might get caught in the same trap.

The Spirit of love initiates helping one another. When Jesus’ Spirit is in control of our lives, His ministering Spirit is in action and both love and service are in operation. The church body is obligated to support its teachers because this is a basic principle of giving and receiving. The believer has a responsibility to those who give out the Word to others. Yet believers who receive do not always listen and respond to the Spirit. When that happens, they may be deceived by another spirit and displease God. God will not be mocked!

The law is fulfilled in Christ, so although God is Sovereign, He has committed all judgment to Christ because He is the Son of Man. If man doesn’t live a Christ-like life he is sowing bad seed and he will reap a bad harvest. An ungodly life is a mockery to God. How can we abuse our liberty, which the Savior has purchased with His own blood, by lack of love and unclean living? We do it out of lack of love for Christ. If we sow to the Spirit, we reap an eternal harvest. If we sow to the flesh we reap moral and physical destruction. Our harvest in life will not be known by how much we know, but by the kind of seeds we sow. This is why it is important to stay in God’s Word. We sow seed-thoughts in word and deed. Here is a proven truth; “God’s Word always brings forth holy, good fruit; the flesh brings only deterioration, distress and evil.” Oh! Reader, do not be deceived! Don’t say, “It doesn’t matter what I sow, just so I am sincere.” It does matter! If you sow a self-life you will never produce eternal fruit in heaven! You must CHOOSE! Choose to live by the Spirit of God and let the self-life die with Christ at the cross. Out of this experience you will be able to take every opportunity to do good to all men, but especially to God’s people. They will be so precious to you; you will be thrilled to belong to Christ’s body.

Paul sent this letter written “with mine own hand.” He wraps up his letter with a final warning by saying, “Those who are trying to compel you to be circumcised are those who want to make a fair show in the flesh, so that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ” (Gal. 6:12). Those people shamed Christ by adding something to his finished work at Calvary. They were Judaizers, proud of teaching the law yet not keeping it themselves. They asked the Galatians to be circumcised so they could take bows for what they had accomplished. Paul called it “glory in your flesh.” Then he added the key words, “God forbid that I should glory in anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, upon which the world has been crucified to me and I have been crucified to the world.” The cross which connects us to God separates us from the world, Paul’s scars for Christ were the marks of a personal dedication and commitment. All were to the glory of the cross! If our glorying is in belonging to a crucified Lord and being crucified with Him, then the effects will be noticeable in us. Others will see how we bear the marks of Jesus.

In closing there is a deep tenderness in Paul’s word, “May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit,” _____ Amen.

Your name and date.

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SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE UPON:

“...but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Gal. 6:8b RSV)

SUGGESTION: Read all of v. 8. Memorize this verse during the week. Think about how God always has a balance in everything, how “eternal life” is balanced against “eternal death” for you. If your choice is to not receive eternal life through Jesus Christ, your separation from God would be sealed for eternity. Remember also, you may be saved, may say you are, but no one really knows you are a Christian because of your attraction for the things of the world and your walk in it. Will you, because of this be ashamed before the Lord at His appearing? 1 John 2:28 speaks of being ashamed before Him. Pray that God will help you. Begin to pray today! Ask God for the fruit of the Spirit in your life; then as you grow in love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, you will not be in bondage to the flesh and the wiles of the devil, and you will begin to bear fruit/ Evaluate your life; do you sow to the Spirit so that you glorify God now? How important is it to you that when you see Jesus, He will say, “Well done, good and faithful servant...” Pray for insights in what you study as you do your questions. God will give you answers out of His love for you. Let this study be a life-changing experience for you!

QUESTIONS: Make your answers personal wherever possible. Remember God’s Word is for You! He wants you to apply it to your life!

1. a. How can you continue to follow Paul’s teachings? Give the key thoughts in each of the 5 answers in the notes.

b. With God’s help, which one needs the most work in your life?
2. What practical advice did Paul give to the Galatian Christians in v. 1?
3. Tell what the warning was and the reason for giving it.
4. a. Verses 2 and 5 look contradictory. However, the emphasis is a little different in each. Tell what the difference is.

b. Is either of these a strong or weak point in your life? Tell how.
5. a. How can a person deceive himself?

b. Has this ever happened to you?

c. What is Paul’s admonition to you in Rom. 12:3.
6. Verse 5 speaks of carrying a burden. Tell how this could relate to sin and what it means to you.
7. a. What basic spiritual gift is implied in v. 6?

- b. How could you explain this verse in twenty words or less to a Christian who feels he doesn't have to give support his pastor?
 - c. What does 1 Cor. 9:11 say that shows Paul is consistent in his message?
8. a. Give the profound statement found in v. 7 and explain how the sowing in our lives influences the reaping. (Make your answer in the first person.)
- b. Name some things you have planted, or perhaps things you have reaped, something you wish you could change (uproot), or something you are very glad you planted as it relates to what v. 8 says.
9. Give the promise in v. 9 and what it can mean to you if applied.
10. What is the "household of faith"?
11. Why do you think Paul mentions writing in his own handwriting?
12. What is the very important truth in v. 12b which every Christian must face and deal with?
13. a. What did the Judaizers want to boast about?
- b. What did Paul say about the Judaizers keeping the law?
14. a. What was the one thing in which Paul boasted?
- b. What result in Paul's life was brought about by that fact?
- c. Can you say the same thing as Paul does in v 14? _____ Tell what this means to you.
15. What does 2 Cor. 5:17 tell you that confirms Gal. 6:15, and what is the commission found in verse 18?
16. a. What "rule" is Paul talking about in v. 16?
- b. What are the benefits to obeying this rule?
- c. Challenge question: Why did Paul say "and upon the Israel of God"?
17. a. What were the "marks of Jesus" which Paul speaks of in contrast to the ritual marks of circumcision" (See 2 Cor. 11:23 - 26).
- b. Can we have any glory other than "in Jesus" and still glorify God? Explain your answer.