**GALATIANS**

Author: Paul

Audience: Christians in Galatia churches. It doesn’t seem clear if the letters were to the churches in Southern Galatia (churches founded during Paul’s 1st missionary journey) or Northern Galatia (churches founded during Paul’s 2nd missionary journey.) Galatia was located in north-central Asia Minor.

Date Written: 49 A.D. if written to the Southern churches from Antioch OR 55 A.D. on the 3rd missionary journey from Ephesus (53 A.D.) or Macedonia (55 A.D.)

Question to be answered: Answer the question of how can a sinful human, approach a holy God?

* Paul’s response: accept the salvation of God’s grace made available through His death, burial and resurrection.
* No place for merit salvation through obedience to the Law of Moses.

Content of the Gospel:

Paul was being attacked by the Judiazers (Jewish Christians) that were stating works were necessary, that Paul was wrong, and that Paul wasn’t an authentic apostle.

Paul emphasizes justification by faith! No human works required! Sanctification by the Hoy Ghost, no Mosaic Law needed.

**Authenticity of the Gospel**

**Chapter 1**

* Paul opens with salutations to all brothers and pays tribute to Jesus Christ to set the tone for the authority in which he is writing. His entire message is contained in verses 3 – 5.
* Paul writes to the churches in Galatia (Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe)
* Paul challenges his readers with owning the responsibility of walking away from the grace shown by Christ to save them in favor of the law.
* Paul then makes it clear that diluting the gospel with man’s perspective was a threat to the gospel.
  + Paul takes it a step further, saying it twice, if we preach a gospel that is not in alignment with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we should expect eternal condemnation!
  + God pleaser or a man pleaser? Which one are you?
* Paul states he received revelation from Jesus Christ in regard to receiving the gospel.
* Paul takes time to remind his audience of his devotion to Judaism and how he persecuted the church of God.
* When God calls him, Paul doesn’t run to the apostles in Jerusalem, he went to Arabia and spent time there. Paul doesn’t consult the apostles in Jerusalem for 3 years. Then Paul goes to Jerusalem to speak with Peter and stays 15 days, but doesn’t see any of the apostles.
* Paul goes to Syria and Cilicia.
  + As Paul goes to Syria and Cilicia, they accept him only knowing of his conversion from being a persecutor of the church. (NOTE: in contrast to the Galatian churches who heard is teaching and preaching firsthand and are still trying to infuse legalism.)

Life Application

* Paul recognizes that his call came from God! Man may question your calling but know who called you!
* Don’t be a man pleaser! Don’t even try, you may hurt yourself!
* Be careful who you consult when God speaks! Consulting a religious person is the wrong answer!
* When was your Arabian moment? Have you had one?

Questions for your walk

What will you walk away with?

How will you implement it in your day to day living?

**Chapter 2**

*Apostles Accept Paul*

* Paul spent time preparing before starting his official ministry – wait on God’s timing.
* After 14 years Paul (along with Barnabas and Titus) goes back to Jerusalem to communicate with the Apostles about the message he was delivering to the Gentiles. Paul did this based on a revelation from the Lord.
* Paul and those with him felt free in Christ (Titus [Greek Christian] was not circumcised.) Yet, this legalistic requirement raises it’s head as an issue once again.
  + Paul speaks of the spies amongst them that watch he and his team’s freedom in Christ.
  + Paul takes a firm stand against those aligning man-made legalistic qualifications with salvation
* Paul and Barnabas receive *the right hand of fellowship* from Peter, James, John to continue preaching to the Gentiles, while they keep preaching to the Jews.
* Remembering the poor was everyone’s job. (feeding the Jewish Christians who were suffering from the effects of a famine.)

Paul vs. Peter

* Paul seems to lose the decorum and publicly challenges Peter on living like a Gentile, but tries to hold Gentiles to Jewish customs = hypocrisy
  + The core question at hand, Is salvation in Christ sufficient? Or must you do more to earn salvation?
* Paul reminds Peter of their conversion to Christianity. It was not according to the Law, but they were justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ!
* Paul then reminds us that we are all sinners, but that doesn’t make God a supporter of sin.

Life Application

* It is interesting to hear Paul speak of the spies amongst them that want to simply watch he and his team’s freedom in Christ. Are you missing out on life, monitoring others?
* How effective would Paul have been witnessing to the Gentiles if he were trying to hold them to the tenants of the Judaism?
* What do you do to tend to the needs of the poor? Are you even moved by the needs of the poor?
* Do you ever think your service, good deeds, charitable giving, or other efforts are a substitute for faith?
* Has your old/fleshly self been crucified with Christ? Make sure….
* As much as we have to die to self, our Christian life is about living, where we are supposed to be living to look more like Christ.
* Paul is warning us not to replace Jewish legalism with Christian legalism. **You can’t earn God’s favor!** Do you think you can do something to earn salvation? **Christ is the only way to salvation!**

**Superiority of the Gospel**

**Chapter 3**

Faith or Law

* Paul starts off this chapter asking questions of the Galatians. He basically wants to know, do they believe their walk with God has been based on following the Mosaic law or because they believed in Christ?
  + It’s as if the Galatians had become mesmerized by the false teachers; Magicians were a common experience of the day using optical illusions and Satan’s powers.
* Some of the Christians in Galatia may have been at Pentecost, so they were fully aware that they didn’t receive the Holy Ghost by following Jewish rules…
* Paul reminds them that God worked miracles based off of their belief, not following Jewish rules.
* Paul references Abraham as a man that believed God.
* Cursed by trying to live by the Law
* The righteous live by faith!
* Christ became a curse for us!
* By faith we receive the promise of the Spirit.

Law & Promise

* The promises were spoken to Abraham and his seed (Christ)
* Abraham believed God for his promises
* The inheritance doesn’t depend on the law, by grace it depends on the promise Abraham received.
* Functions of the Law
  + Reveals the nature and will of God and is a guide for Godly living
  + It also condemns people of their sin. It reminds us that we can’t fulfill the law 100% of the time.
* The law was put in place in order to point us to Christ.

Sons of God

* Sons of God = faith in Christ Jesus, baptized into Christ and clothed yourself with Christ
  + Jewish youth coming of age received a new toga representing adulthood and accepted all rights of citizenship and the mantle of responsibility – Paul wanted Galilean believers to lay aside the clothes of the law and take up righteousness in Christ.
* All other diversity has been removed in Christ Jesus
  + By nature we gravitate to those that are similar to us and avoid those that are different. God’s Word appears to provide different direction. We potentially shortchange ourselves when we don’t engage with the different believers.
  + Challenge yourself to appreciate something/someone different? [LA]

**Galatians 4**

* Continuation of the Sons of God.
* When the time came for Jesus arrival, he provided an avenue for those under the law to receive the full rights of sons.
  + God’s timing is perfect – we must learn to trust him (His timing and judgement)
  + God sent the spirit of His son into our hearts.
  + No longer slave, but a son, and now a joint heir.
* Under Roman law, adopted children were eligible to all rights just as biological heirs.

Galatians – What Happened?

* Paul reflects on the situation from the Galatians state without and with Christ. (know God and known by God)
* Paul is asking, why would they want to go back to how they used to live under the law? They enslave people, they do not set them free.
* Paul questions if he wasted his time even bringing them the truth of the gospel.
* Paul reflects on how he came to sharing the gospel with them
  + When they first met Paul, he was hurting
  + Paul recognizes that they were willing to share in his suffering and they poured out love on him. They would have been willing to give their eyes if they could have.
  + Paul wants to know - - what happened to that love?
  + Does the truth make you an enemy?
* Paul wants to know have the Galatians lost their joy because of legalism? Legalism does the following:
  + It makes you feel guilty verses loved.
  + It can cause low self-esteem verses humility.
  + It highlights performance verses relationship.
  + It highlights how short we are verses what God has done in our lives.
* There were false teachers that were influencing the Galatians for their own agenda.
  + False teachers do this today to gain your support – The test: Does it align with the word of God?
* Paul is perplexed…. His reference to childbirth, as he wants to see their growth. The same patience Christ has in your growth process.

Believer’s Perspective: Hagar and Sarah

* Paul starts out wanting to know do you still want to be under the law? We should take the word and apply it to our lives. Thinking through matters.
* Paul recounts Abraham’s story with Hagar and Sarah.
  + Hagar was a slave and Sarah was free
  + Ishmael was born of the flesh and Isaac [he laughs/will laugh] was born of God’s promise
  + Ishmael was born of works and Isaac was born of promise
* We were born as children of promise, like Isaac.
* The slave mentality of works can’t get it done!
* **You can’t mix legalism and grace!** The inheritance comes by God’s promise!
* We are children of the free woman – the promised grace of God, through faith.
* Do you know how to live your life in Christ outside of rules? [LA]

**Galatians 5**

* We start a new section that focuses on Freedom of the gospel.
* Galatians epitomizes Christian Freedom. We are not under Jewish laws and traditions. Faith in Christ yields freedom from sin and failed attempts at trying to be right with God by keeping the law.
  + We are free in Christ and it’s a privilege. We are not free to sin blatantly, but we are free to serve Christ. Choose to live in your freedom to love and serve as Christ would.
* Do we fully recognize our Christian freedom? Or has it been shaped by the views of others?

Christ Made Us Free [1-15]

* Christ set us free for FREEDOM sake. He died to set us free from sin and laws and regulations.
  + We weren’t set free to do whatever we want or that would be selfish and lead us back into slavery
  + It not good for us to try to impose law keeping on other Christians. Any man-made rules, conditions or methods for salvation or growth in Christ should not be practiced.
* We can’t try to be saved by grace and by trying to keep the law. This is how Christ becomes of none effect, because we can’t walk in His grace and try to save ourselves through our actions.
* Trying to save ourselves by keeping all of God’s laws only separates us from God.
* Faith in God through love is all that matters. (i.e. It’s not about circumcision it’s about faith through love.) We must stop focusing on the law.
* Our hope should be anchored in our faith in Christ.
* A little yeast causes all of the dough to rise.
  + Infection of total can start with one [think COVID infection]
* Paul receives persecution because he teaches/preaches the truth. [John 15:18, 19 – The world hated Jesus, don’t be surprised when they hate you.]
* We were called to be free not for selfish reasons, but to serve one another in love.
* The law was summed up = love your neighbor as yourself.
  + With no love, we become critical of one another.
  + Unity dissolves when this happens.
  + Have you focused on other’s shortcomings verses their strengths?
  + When you feel critical of someone, make a list of that person’s positive qualities. [LA]
  + Confront in love, not admonishment.

Walk By the Spirit [13-16]

* You have been **called** to liberty! We are **called** to be free. Do you see yourself as free? [John 8:36]
* We can’t use our liberty to sin like we want.
  + - Paul was accused of being a libertine (Libertinism - one devoid of most moral principles, a sense of responsibility, or sexual restraints, which are seen as unnecessary or undesirable, especially one who ignores or even spurns accepted morals and forms of behavior sanctified by the larger society.
    - The people felt that if you take the law away, then how will people know how to live. (i.e. law = right & wrong)
* The condition of our liberty is to love and serve one another
  + Who have you served lately? Do you choose who you serve, or do you let the Lord lead you? [LA]
* The law which was unachievable was fulfilled because of love [Jesus’ love]
* Freedom from the law yields freedom
* Legalism (legalistic environment) is manifested in verse 15. Legalism doesn’t generate love, it generates a critical eye, where people judge one another – thus they feed on each other.
* In verse 16 Paul finally stops responding to the attacks and starts to lay out how we are to live.
* Led by the Spirit generates love. Being led of the Spirit fulfills the law.
* Those that are saved are now under the Law of the Spirit [Romans 8:1-2]
* External Law versus Internal Law [ Prophecy of the New Covenant Jeremiah 31:31 – 34]
* Through the Spirit of God we have a desire to obey the will of God [Phil. 2:13]
  + The OT laws couldn’t do this. It only set a standard.
* If we have the mindset of the flesh, we are disregarding the Life of the Spirit, thus this leads to death. The mindset of the Spirit leads to life and peace. [Romans 8:5-6]”
  + How do you “set your mind”? Can you set your mind on things you don’t desire? [Phil. 2:13] [LA]
* We need to listen to God, more!

Life in the Holy Spirit [16-26]

* Live by the Spirit of God and you will not fulfill the desires of the flesh.
* Don’t confuse your subjective feelings with the leading of the Spirit of God.
* Being led of the spirit requires:
  + We need a desire to hear
  + We need to obey God’s word
  + Discernment between your feelings and the leading of the Spirit of God.
* The Spirit of God and our flesh will forever be in conflict. (we have two natures)
  + The desires of the flesh and spirit are in conflict
  + If we rely on our wisdom, experience and understanding we will be in error.
  + The works of the flesh are manifest or evident = clear to see.
* The passage covers what will not permit us to inherit the Kingdom of God [19-21]. Big & Little/Seen and Unseen sins as we define them.
  + If we choose not to deal with these issues in our own lives, then we don’t want to live the transformed life.
  + These are works of the flesh, they require our participation
  + These are the issues that will prevent us from inheriting the kingdom of God!
    - Adultery - voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than his or her lawful spouse
    - Fornication - is generally consensual sexual intercourse between two people not married to each other
    - Uncleanness – moral filthiness
    - Lasciviousness - lustful, lewdness, wantonness
    - Idolatry - the worship of an idol or cult image, being a physical image, such as a statue, or a person in place of God. (i.e. money, power, pleasure, etc.)
    - Witchcraft - the use of **sorcery** or magic; drugs heightened spiritual perception
    - Hatred - extreme dislike or disgust
    - Variance - depicts a bitterly **mean** spirit that is so consumed with its own self-interests and self-ambitions that it would rather split
    - Emulations - ambition or endeavor to equal or excel others (as in achievement)
    - Wrath – unbridled anger; fits of rage
    - Strife – drama; picking a fight
    - Seditions - incitement of resistance to or insurrection against lawful authority
    - Heresies - denote the formal denial or doubt of a core doctrine of the Christian faith
    - Envying - a feeling of grudging or somewhat admiring discontent aroused by the possessions, achievements, or qualities of another
    - Murders – killing someone literally or figuratively
    - Drunkenness
    - Reveling -  participation in a noisy, often drunken celebration
    - Such Like – just in case I missed anything
* The Fruit of the Spirit
  + The fruit happens naturally when we walk in the Spirit of God
  + These are the fruit (singular)
  + Love
  + Joy
  + Peace
  + Longsuffering - Patience
  + Gentleness
  + Goodness
  + Faith
  + Meekness
  + Temperance -  It means being able to master your own desires and passions – to not be puppeteer by
* The Holy Spirit is never an excuse to do what I want to do
* We must believe that we are dead to sin in order to overcome [Rom. 6:11]
  + Faith activates our deliverance

**Galatians 6**

* Paul instructs us to live by the Spirit, not fulfill the lusts of the flesh and watch the fruit of the Spirit grow.
* Practical application on how to live by the Spirit
* Closing on be cautious of legalistic thought, conversation and treatment of others.

Do the Right Thing to Everyone [1-10]

* If anyone is caught in transgression (violate a known boundary) the spiritually mature must make themselves available to minister.
* Mature in the faith do the restoration in the spirit of gentleness (this is how the Lord restores us – gently)
  + Restore to the state God ordains, not where we want them to be.
  + Gentleness - Kind tender, mild mannered.
* When helping someone else, we must be wise – be led of the spirit!
  + Reach out for assistance if you feel you are over your head.
* We fulfill the law of Christ by bearing one another’s burdens, because this is what Christ does for us!
* Love like Jesus [John 13:34-35]
* When we are ministering to someone, do not assess their life based on your life, but point them to Christ – don’t compare yourself with others.
* All of us should be fed and taught by someone - - we all need to be taught.
* Paul also instructs us to take care of those that teach us! Show appreciation. (I Tim. 5:17-18)
* If I sow to my flesh, expect to reap the flesh – it’s a law! However, sowing to the Spirit, will reap spiritual blessing (joy and ever lasting life)
  + What kind of seeds are you planting? [LA]
* DON’T GIVE UP doing GOOD [The right thing]!
  + Regardless of what you are going through, God didn’t intend for what He permitted you to experience to kill you…. **DON’T** **QUIT SERVING GOD**!
  + Trust God and you will reap a harvest if you keep serving Him.
* Don’t get weary, keep going, do good to everyone, especially believers (they are family)
  + Pray for God’s heart for people. (people are hurting)
  + Love and server others.
  + This will take us out of our comfort zone – don’t get caught up in your convenience and stop caring about people! [LA]

Don’t Fall Back into Old Behavior [11-18]

* Paul called attention to his penmanship to demonstrate the authenticity of the letter.
* The Judaizers selectively jump on circumcision again as the measure of holiness.
* Don’t boast in your own doings, as the legalists would do, but only boast in the cross of Christ!
  + Gal. 2:20 reference – The Christian life!
  + Paul says it doesn’t matter if you have been circumcised or not, what matters is if you have been born again?
  + Following the law or not following the law is not doing anything!
  + Let Spirit give birth to Spirit! – Receive Him as savior!
* The desire to please people or follow the world’s enticements, is dead to Paul.
  + This is where we need to be striving to get too. [14-15]
  + We must ask God to crucify our interest in the things of the world. [LA]
  + Don’t just focus on the externals…. Focusing on internals only is false relationship with Christ. Christ wants the heart! [II Cor. 5:17]
* Don’t let anyone cause you any trouble, as Paul bore the marks of Jesus! These marks showed his ownership of Jesus Christ.
* Paul may be astonished in his writing, but he’s patient with them and blesses them in his closing.