



World Christian Fellowship

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Galatians

Lesson 46-Corrupters of the Gospel

Galatians 5:7-12, *You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?* ⁸*This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.* ⁹*A little leaven leavens the whole lump.* ¹⁰*I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.* ¹¹*And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.* ¹²*I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!*

Last lesson we saw the corruption of the Gospel, this lesson we will look at the corrupters of the Gospel.

Galatians 1:6-9, *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,* ⁷*which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.* ⁸*But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.* ⁹*As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any*

other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Paul is writing Galatians in a state of righteous anger which is missing in our pulpits!

Though we certainly preach all that the Scripture declares, grace, faith, love and compassion of God, there is a place for righteous anger over the false doctrines that have found their way into Christianity and seduced people as they were attempting to seduce the Galatians.

The letter to Galatians is defending the gospel of salvation by faith alone.

The first two chapters he defended it by his own apostolic testimony.

The next two chapters, 3 and 4 Paul defended it from Old Testament Scripture, because it was always the way of salvation – by faith alone.

Now in chapters 5 and 6 Paul defends the true gospel by the experience of the believers in Galatia and the work of the Holy Spirit which they had always seen manifest in their life.

Paul wrote about the work of the Spirit in their life. Once they were saved it was proven by the manifestation on their life.

They have genuinely been saved by faith, but now the Gospel is been corrupted by the corrupters, so Paul is on assault on them.

Gospel corruption leads people down the wrong path.

- It makes Christ useless.
- It makes you obligated to the law,
- It cuts you off from the only Saviour.

You step out of the category of grace, which is the only way of salvation.

You have no hope of the righteousness to pursue.

Any kind of works system ends up being a yoke of slavery. This freedom is not freedom to sin, it is freedom to do right, to do good.

This freedom is tied to a new life principle, eternal life from God. A new power which comes through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

You are now free from external constraints which you could not keep up, because now you have an internal power in the Holy Spirit.

- All the law did was put rules on the outside which you couldn't keep.
- Grace puts the Holy Spirit on the inside and gives you the power and the freedom to do what is right.

These Galatians had not had any experience with Judaism. They didn't live under the Mosaic law.

There was no reason for them to go back to something that was never a part of their lives.

The Jews wanted them to do that because they wanted to be the only door into the kingdom of God. But that was long gone. Now in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile. The way is the way of faith and the way of grace.

Please do remember we are not talking about an atheist or God-denier, or God hater, or Christ hater or Christ denier but about a Christian who put this/her faith in Lord Jesus Christ and began their journey. But they were lured into adding some works for their salvation.

As on today, 2020 if you take the number people who have been deceived into this kind of corrupt Gospel, they are the leading and biggest group. If you add Orthodox Christians and Roman Catholic system, then you have the majority who believes that salvation is by faith plus works.

1. Gospel Corrupters obstruct the truth.

V 7, *You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?*

This is one of the stronger statements by Paul against false teachers.

Jude has strong statements.

Peter has strong statements in his 2nd Epistle.

But of all of Paul's writings, this is the most devastating assault on false forms of Christianity. This is against those who say they believe in the true God, the Word of God, the Christ of God, but add works to salvation. He shows the evil of their works in several statements.

V7, *You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?*

False teachers hinder from the truth. Paul liked to use the metaphor of a race, very popular form of activity in the ancient world.

Paul also used it Chapter 2.

Galatians 2:2, *And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.*

This was a very common metaphor!

Galatians 3:3, *Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?*

Collectively Paul is looking at the church and seeing everything seemed to be going in the right direction.

Galatians 4:10-12, *You observe days and months and seasons and years. ¹¹I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.¹² Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all.*

They were posing themselves as scholars of the Old Testament. They were very likely connected to the Pharisees.

They are the kind of people who would let you think that they came from Jerusalem, that they have the authority of James, who was the leader of the Jerusalem church.

These Judaizers had stepped into the race that the Galatians were running well and put up obstacles.

What does it mean to obey the truth?
It means “to believe the gospel.”

The gospel is a command not a suggestion. God is not sharing with you, but God commanding you.

When we go out to present the gospel would do well not to talk about sharing the gospel, but talk about commanding people to believe, because that’s what the gospel does.

The Gospel calls for obedience.

Acts 6:7, *Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.*

An act of confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is an act of obedience to the gospel, which is a command.

Romans 2:8, *but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath,*

They do not obey the truth, but rather obey unrighteousness.

Romans 6:17-18, *But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.¹⁸ And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

It is a call to obedience, and we can term that as a call to slavery. You are called to be a slave of Christ and a slave of righteousness.

Romans 15:18, *For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—*

Romans 16:26, *but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—*

The gospel is a command.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9, *in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,*

Destruction on those who do not obey the gospel.

- It is the obedience of faith.
- It is the obedience to the truth.
- It is the obedience to the gospel.

Trusting in Christ is a command!

2 Corinthians 10:4-6, *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.*

Essentially when we come to preach the gospel to those that are held captive by Satan the goal is to set them free from all that and bring every thought captive to Christ.

1 Peter 1:22, *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,*

The gospel is not an option, but it is a command.

When you reject the Gospel, then you will face the everlasting judgment.

Some of these Galatians were coming into full faith in Christ, but they were hesitant. Now these legalists had come along, push them into legalism and away from the gospel.

Why would they ever do this?

Answer: Galatians 6:12, *“They desire to make a good showing in the flesh, and so they try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.”*

They didn't want the persecution that came on them when they said they believed in the cross of Christ.

They were trying to hold on to their Jewish community by making this good showing in the flesh in addition to saying they believed in the cross.

Galatians 6:13, *For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.*

They wanted to create an impression that either they are supporting the Judaism by adhering the circumcision or to say this just yet another branch of Judaism. It is because of their own personal benefits.

Paul term that as False Gospel and if you do that then Christ is no benefit to you. Obviously, you become under the law. If you are under the law, then you must keep whole law.

Sequence is like the following.

- Believing the false Gospel.
- You are cut off from Christ.
- You ought to observe the Law
- Observe whole law.
- You have fallen from grace.
- You are trying to pursue righteousness through the law.
- You will never achieve the righteousness through keeping the law.
- So, Gospel Corrupters become the stumbling block for you.

2 Peter 2:1-3, *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who*

bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. ² And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

1. Gospel Corrupters not from God

They neither come from God nor they represent the true God. They will claim divine rights, divine authority, divine power. They may even say they speak for God. They speak as if the mouthpiece of God.

V 8, *This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.*

This is an effectual call, the call of God to salvation, the God who called you into salvation.

These legalistic lies are not from God. It is impossible to deviate from the true gospel and come from God, because God has pronounced curse, (anathema) on any deviation.

2. Gospel Corrupters corrupt the Church

V 9, *A little leaven leavens the whole lump.*

We all know what yeast does. Yeast is a picture in Scripture of permeation. It's usually used of permeating evil influence.

The Jews before the days of unleavened bread would remove every particle of leaven from their homes. Part of that feast was to recognize that they needed to get rid of the permeating influence of sin, and so this was a symbol of that.

Leaven operated on the principle of fermentation, so it was a good illustration of moral and spiritual corruption. These false teachers contaminate the church by corrupting.

Paul used it in **1 Corinthians 5:6**.

Paul writing to Corinthians about the same again, the influence of sin, the influence of evil and the evil of false doctrine in the church.

But this was told by Lord Jesus Himself.

Matthew 16:6, *Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."*

The disciples didn't understand fully so Jesus explained to them later.

Matthew 16:12, *Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the [fi](#) doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

2 Timothy 2:17, *And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,*

Paul says that the teaching of false doctrine eats like gangrene.

Modern day we would have simply mentioned as cancer.

Jude 1:11-15, *Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. ¹² These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; ¹³ raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. ¹⁴ Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, ¹⁵ to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."*

V 15, Says ungodly 4 times in one single verse but in Tamil verse 14 3 times and in verse 15 one time.

These people do not come from God, they permeate and contaminate the church.

3. Gospel Corrupters will face divine judgement

V10, *I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.*

Jude said in his Epistle and Peter also wrote about this 2nd Epistle.

Paul is saying whoever it maybe they will bear judgement from God.

When someone gets inside a church and tampers with the church the punishment is severe. When someone says they are a true believer, and they introduce their error and their corruption to the church, the Lord is very serious in His response.

Church at Pergamum

Revelation 2:13-14, *“I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. ¹⁴ But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.*

The teaching of Balaam is being in the religious business for money, which is what false teachers do.

The church at Pergamum who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, commit acts of immorality.

Revelation 2:15, *Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

Nicolaitans is another false doctrine system had gone into the church at Pergamum.

Revelation 2:16, *Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.*

He will make war against false teachers in the church.

Church at Thyatira.

Revelation 2:19-20, *“I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. ²⁰ Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.*

In this church even believers were captive to this corruption, at least for a time.

Revelation 2:21-23, *And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. ²² Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. ²³ I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.*

The Lord looks at His church and He see false doctrine and false teachers, and He takes serious action.

4. Gospel corrupters persecute True preachers

V11, *And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.*

Background.

Paul once persecuted the church.

After his conversion he was persecuted, and the primary source of persecution of Paul came from the Jews.

The Gentiles also persecuted him, but particularly the Jews persecuted Paul.

They followed his journeys. The Judaizers were preaching against what Paul had proclaimed. They didn't have the authority to inflict wounds on his body or make him a captive. They wouldn't be able to do that unless he was back in Jerusalem in their country. But they were persecuting him by following his steps with false doctrine, trying to undermine everything he did.

Acts 16:

Paul came to meet a young man namely, Timothy. Paul was impressed by Timothy's righteous life and godliness. His father was a Gentile, but his mother was Jewish. Timothy had never been circumcised, but he was a believer in Christ.

Paul had him circumcised.

Somebody probably told the Judaizers about that and said, "Look, Paul also preach circumcision."

Paul is saying, "If you think I preach circumcision, why are you persecuting me, if that's what you want, and you think I'm doing it?" They persecuted him because he didn't preach it.

Why did Paul circumcise Timothy?

Very simple reason.

Timothy was already a believer and it had nothing to do with salvation.

But Timothy would not be able to enter any synagogue. It would have been the natural thought of Jews that he had a Gentile father and he had a Jewish mother. Since he wasn't circumcised, he must be a pagan. This would have made it difficult for Timothy to minister along with Paul.

So, Paul accommodates the Jewish expectation by having Timothy go through this surgery so that he will be accepted as one who has embraced Judaism like Paul, and together they can minister to the Jews.

It was obvious he didn't preach that or do it any other time, or they wouldn't persecute him for not preaching it.

The Jews had two problems with apostolic preaching.

Problem number one was a crucified Messiah. That was a problem. That was a stumbling block to them, because they thought Messiah was going to come be a king, not a crucified victim of pagans, Romans.

Greater problem.

We had no obligation as believers to adhere to the Mosaic ordinances. Those Judaizers knew it.

Paul would have been accepted if he had believed in a crucified Messiah, Jesus Christ, but held onto the trappings of Judaism if his message had been, "You have to believe in Jesus Christ

crucified and adhere to the Mosaic law, and then you will be saved.”

But Paul didn't preach circumcision, he didn't preach Mosaic law, and that's why they were persecuting him.

The story of Stephen.: **Acts 6.**

The Jewish Sanhedrin at Jerusalem put Stephen on trial.

The charge was not about worshipping the crucified Jesus. The charge was that he is blaspheming the Jewish temple and the law of Moses.

Acts 6:13-14, *They also set up false witnesses who said, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; ¹⁴for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.”*

When they attacked Stephen, they said not that he was worshipping the crucified, but that he was speaking against the laws and the Holy Place.

Saul had persecuted the church for the same reason, not because they acknowledged Christ, but because they were against Judaism.

False teachers will persecute true teachers. You can avoid that if you don't tell the truth.

Conclusion

V 12, *I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!*

Galatia was adjacent to Phrygia. Phrygia was known for the worship of Cybele, a pagan goddess. This was a dominate worship in the area and the priests of Cybele had themselves castrated. They became eunuchs, eunuchs for the purpose of the worship of Cybele.

Why would Paul ever say this to these Jewish teachers?

If you accept circumcision and the Mosaic rituals and rules, you might as well go ahead and castrate yourself and become a full-blown pagan, because that's what you are.

This shows you how extreme any deviation from the gospel.

You can't imagine what happened when they read that verse. They would be devastated.

The Judaizers when they heard it must have been infuriated. They saw themselves as God's representatives whereas they have been called by Paul as full-fledged pagans.

There is no room for any alteration of the gospel of salvation by faith.

Any deviation and you might as well become a eunuch in a pagan religion, because that's what you are.

My brothers and sisters let us hold on to the truth without any compromise.