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Galatians

Lesson 45-Corruption of the Gospel

Galatians 5:1-6, *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*Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.* ³*And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.* ⁴*You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.* ⁵*For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.* ⁶*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*

When someone is justified by God then there will be transformation of that person in their experience.

There will be a moral transformation and also in desires, drives, and in their longings. The transformation on the inside of that person gives them new desires, all new longings, and a new love.

Apostle Paul shows here the evidence of justification by faith in the actual transformed lives of believers.

First, Paul shares his own testimony, secondly it was the testimony of the Old Testament Scripture, and finally, the testimony of the believers themselves.

So, in effect Paul says that if someone comes and says that you need to be circumcised to stay in the new experience. They should not listen to such heresy rather they must focus on the experience they have had namely, the power of God, the Spirit of God in them.

Because some of them were being led astray in spite of their experience, Paul looks to that experience and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

We through the Spirit.

Galatians 5:5, *For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*

Walk by the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16, *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

Flesh setting its desire against the Spirit, the Spirit against the flesh.

Galatians 5:17, *For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.*

Led by the Spirit

Galatians 5:18, *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22, *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

Live by the Spirit.

Galatians 5:25, *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

So, we could comfortably say the chapter 5 is the Spirit chapter.

Why does Paul say this way?

The evidence of a justified soul is the work of the Spirit.

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

If you go back, essentially you are turning your back on the Spirit and pursuing the flesh.

It is evidenced by the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers.

V1, *Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.*

For brief moment let me remind you about the antinomianism.

This is a view of antinomianism about the Christian life. They say that you don't have to pay any attention to the law of God. Now that you are a saved person all your sins are forgiven. So, what you do is already cared for and covered. Christ lived a sinless life that has been basically attributed to your account. It has been imputed to you. Christ's perfect life has been credited to you as if you lived it. You are forgiven of all your sins, and His life is now in place of your life. So, don't worry about what you do. We are free, we are under grace. You don't need to live under some kind of burden of duty and responsibility and obedience. This is not our view but the view of antinomianism.

That antinomianism view is far from what Scripture teaches.

Galatians 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.*

The first statement: "It was for freedom that Christ set us free;" – follows immediately is a very strong command – "therefore

keep standing firm; do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”

Immediately after saying “for freedom Christ set us free” he gives them a strong command.

No believer is out from under the commands that are laid out for us in the Word of God.

Yes, for freedom Christ has set us free but that does not mean we have no obligation to God to honour Him and obey His moral and spiritual commands.

Our former life as Gentiles was under the slavery of sin. Even though we didn't know the law of God as pagans that Galatians could say it was God's law.

God's moral law was in action, and it would be based on that law that we would all be damned. Jesus Christ was our deliverer came as an act of freedom set us free from our bondage to sin, the law and death.

Now we are free. Paul says, “You need to remain free.”

What kind of freedom?

It's freedom

- from the burden of sin,
- freedom from relentless guilt,

- freedom from an accusing conscience,
- freedom from the oppression of our transgressions,
- freedom from the terrible pressure, and
- freedom from sin's dominance.

Now you don't go back into some bondage.

Titus 2:11-15, *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹²teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. ¹⁵Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.*

V 12, starts with “teaching us.” “instructing us”

1. The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men.
2. The grace of God is instructing us to do what?

Negatives

- deny ungodliness,
- worldly desires,

Positively

- live sensibly,

- righteously,
- zealous for go godly in the present age,
- looking and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, and
- od works.

Yes, salvation by grace. But at that point, grace doesn't disappear, it takes over.

When people are under the law, the law is external, the law is instructing them externally from outside of them to conform to something they have not the ability to do.

Grace comes and saves us, and now the grace of God begins to instruct us, because the grace of God in the form of the Holy Spirit has moved inside and begins to instruct us.

Grace has become our instructor.

The word "instructing" or "teaching" the Greek verb *'paideuō'*.

It means "to instruct," "to reprimand," "correct" "to discipline," and "to punish."

If you think that because you are under grace you are free to do whatever you want, then you are way off from God and His word.

Hebrews 12:5-11, *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; ⁶For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." ⁷If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

V 5, it's discipline with reproof.

V 6, It's discipline with punishment.

V 8, no discipline you are not His own

V 9, Father disciplines his children

V10, disciplined for the purpose of holiness.

V11, it's discipline for righteousness.

It's the grace of God that instructs us, that is the same grace that sets us free in Galatians.

There is no excuse for anyone to come up with the idea that now that you are a Christian you are not responsible for anything and you are free to do whatever you want, free to sin.

Not at all.

For the first time you are free to do the right thing!

You are empowered to do the right thing!!

You are taught to do the right thing!!!

So, freedom is not just deliverance from the oppression of legalism or the law or sin, it is the endowment of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit so that you can do the right thing. Since you have been transformed you desire to do the right thing.

If somebody comes along and says to you that,

“I’m free to do whatever I want,”

“I’m a Christian, but I’m not under law, I’m not under any obligation, I’m not going to live my life by law and duty and responsibility, I’m free,”

Then you have every right to question their Christianity.

Because sanctification is not an option, it is a work of God.

God is sanctifying us. All sanctifying instruction, discipline, correction and punishment is going on internally by the Holy Spirit.

Freedom then is now an enabling,

- To walk in the Spirit,
- to live in the Spirit,
- to see the fruit of the Spirit produced,
- to live with joy and gratitude,
- doing the will of God from the heart.

Not a freedom to sin, it's a freedom to do what is right.

Let us come back to Galatians 5:1,

It was for freedom that Christ set us free.

God did it, and He set us free, not on our merits, not on our accomplishments or our works but God who did it for us.

How did God do it?

Galatians 3:13, *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),*

He did it by taking our place and receiving the divine curse that we deserved. By becoming a curse, He set us free. The price was that high.

Christ had to become a curse to set us free.

Please, don't go back into what He died to deliver you from. For freedom, Christ set us free.

It is ridiculous to imagine that you walked out of the prison, the Lord having opened the gate only to make a right turn and go back into another one.

John 8:36, *Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*

You are really free,

- no longer under the penalty of the law,
- no longer under the full oppression of the law, and
- one day free from even the presence of sin.

The Galatians are already sons, not slaves.

They are already free.

They don't need to go back into bondage.

Gentiles going back to Mosaic law they never even knew about, because they needed to work some part of their salvation on their own.

The law of Moses they would be nullifying the work of God.

Galatians 5:2-3,

Acts 15:1, *And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."*

A lot of effort going on by Jews who claim to be Christians who are going around to Gentile congregations and telling them they had to become Jews first, they had to become proselytes. They had to affirm circumcision and the keeping of all the restrictions and rituals of the Mosaic law that God gave to Israel. It went to the extent of having a council meeting in Jerusalem among the leaders of the church.

Acts 15:5, *But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."*

There was a debate.

Acts 15:10-11, *Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."*

It's grace and it's faith.

They had been saved out of paganism; they didn't need external Judaism to qualify for justification.

In Galatians 5, notice something carefully. You will see the word "you" a couple of times in verse 2 and verse 4.

Paul is talking to someone, “you,” someone is a group that he’s not a part of, because in verse 5, he begins, “For we.” It’s very important that you see that distinction.

What is happening?

There are people in this Gentile congregation who on the surface have become a part of, have come to understand the gospel, but they are in danger of coming to the brink of salvation and turning away in the direction of law. Some of them had already made some moves.

Galatians 4:10, *You observe days and months and seasons and years.*

Some of you are already caught up in the Mosaic feasts and the Mosaic sabbaths. This is a warning passage!

The section what we are seeing today is the warning from Apostle Paul. He warns them about the danger of corruption of the Gospel.

In verses 7 to 12 he warns them about the danger of corrupters of the Gospel.

The Gospel is corrupted by saying that you have to be circumcised or you can’t be saved.

It's a small thing. Just acknowledge a minor surgical operation. This will open the door to the kingdom of God for you. Faith is not enough. Mosaic ritual, circumcision has righteous merit.

So, Paul says this: "If you do this" or you who are contemplating it.

If you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no profit/benefit to you.

Paul, I am an apostle, a circumcised Jew, proud of my heritage, proud of my Judaism, living my entire life under the Mosaic restrictions. I, Paul, this Jewish patriot, I am telling you, if you receive circumcision, Christ is of no benefit to you.

- It is Christ or works,
- It is all Christ or no Christ
- It is all faith or no salvation.

This is a severe danger.

Somebody might say, "I believe in Christ, but I also think works are a part of it." You have just canceled Christ. Christ is no benefit to you.

If you accept circumcision, thinking it necessary for your salvation, you just forfeited Christ.

Romans 11:6, *And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.*

It's either grace or works – all of Christ or none of Christ.

If anyone claims that their works contribute to their salvation, then they have no connection to Christ.

Faith and works cannot go together. This is basic to the doctrine of salvation.

It is impossible to say, "I want to receive Christ, thereby acknowledging that I cannot do anything to save myself," and then go do something that I think helps to save myself. If you add anything to Christ, you lose Christ.

If you are depending on anything other than Christ, you have no benefit from Christ.

If you submit to circumcision, or anything like your infant baptism/ any ritual/ you have canceled Christ. Christ is everything. Christ is all an in all.

Many Jews were disqualified for this very reason. They actually came to believe some things about Christ.

Romans 9:30-32, *What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;³¹ but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.³² Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.*

Many Jews had some affirmation of Christ, but it was Christ plus their religion, Christ plus their circumcision, their Mosaic obedience, and they rendered Christ useless.

V3, “And I testify again,”

And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.

Paul was saying that I protest further, every one of you who lets himself be circumcised, you have just placed yourself under the law.

If you are going to be saved by law, then you are responsible to keep all of it.

What does it say?

Galatians 3:10, *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does*

not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”

James 2:10, *For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.*

So, if you are going back under the law you must keep the law perfectly.

Corrupt, false doctrine renders Christ profitless, and puts you under the bondage to the whole legal system.

V 4, *You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.*

If you are counting on any works for your salvation, then you are severed from Christ. That is a violent word, you are cut off from Him.

The book Hebrews repeats this message many times.

This is an illustration. There are people apparently in the Galatian churches who said they believed, and they had come to be a part of the church, but they hadn't come all the way to Christ. They are standing on the brink and being seduced by these Judaizers to go the way of works.

Hebrews 6:4-6, *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*

These are people in a congregation that had been ministered to by the apostles. They had seen apostolic power, and miracles. They tasted the goodness of the Word of God, the divine revelation. They saw the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away.

If you have come all the way to understanding Christ, understanding the gospel of grace and faith, and you turn to go back to works, then you are severed from Christ in a fatal way. Because you knew the truth and when you knew it in its fullness, you turned your back and walked away. You are severed from Christ.

Hebrews 10:38-39, *Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.” ³⁹ But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.*

Consider this:

are you going to believe and receive Christ by faith?
or are you going to trust in your works?

If you turn your back on Christ and you are cut off from Him.

There's no middle ground.
It is all of Christ or none of Christ!
All of Christ, none of self.

There is another effect.
If you go the way of corrupt Gospel, Christ has no benefit to you.

You are a debtor to the whole law.
You are fallen from grace.
You are cut off from Christ.

You have fallen from grace; you have fallen out of the category of grace.

You stood on the platform called grace when you looked at salvation by grace. When you turned your back to the other way that means you have fallen from that platform which is grace.

V 5, *For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*

You are excluded from righteousness.

The very thing you seek will never be yours.

Notice the change in pronouns: “For we.”

Now Paul is speaking to believers, which includes him.

We have to wait for the hope of righteousness, because it’s a gift from God. It is through the Spirit, by faith, that we eagerly await the hope for righteousness.

We are not trying to earn it but waiting for it. In our sanctification the Lord gives it to us as a grace gift. One day in our glorification He will give it to us perfectly.

The verb “waiting.”

This is something God has to do for us and in us and is doing it by His Holy Spirit. If you follow the path of any works, you have lost the very thing you hoped for: righteousness. It comes only by waiting, in faith, on the work of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

V6, For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

The whole law is fulfilled by faith and love. Believing God is loving God. It’s all gone internal.

Its faith working through love.

Our hearts are drawn to God in trust, that's faith.

We live trusting God, and loving God, and as a result, loving those around us!

- It's a working faith.
- It's a living faith.
- It's a growing faith.
- It's an increasing faith.
- It's a growing love.
- It's an increasing love.
- It's a multiplying love.

As we wait and the Spirit in grace does His work in us.

This passage in the New Testament which is more terrifying to people who are in some form of corrupt Gospel.

If you think your works are part of your salvation,
Christ profits you nothing,
You are in debt to the whole law to keep it perfectly.
You are severed from Christ.
You are fallen from grace.
You are excluded forever from righteousness.

We all come with empty hands to receive the gift of salvation.
None of us can boast.
God You have done it all.

By grace You have even given us the faith to believe, to reach out and take the gift.