

Gal 17 – A Final Contrast – Gal 6:11-18

We come **today** – to our *final msg* in the book of Galatians –
Great Book – I **personally** got a ton out of studying it (& *trust you have*)

We **end today** with Quite a *Bang* – So I want to get right to it

Gal 6:11

11 See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!

It seems **Paul finished** most (& poss all) of *his letters*
w/ a little something in **his own** handwriting –
generally as a *type of guarantee* this was his letter –

but **in Galatians** he writes *much more than* a final *salutation*, or *blessing* –
Paul writes the *final teaching* in his own hand - & that is **significant** –

There've been **various suggestions** re: the *interpretation* of the phrase
“with what large letters I have written”

- 1) **some scholars** believe he wrote the *entire letter* in his own hand –
interpreting this as *“what large a letter I have written w/ my own hand”*
- 2) **many assume** it's because of Paul's Probable **Eye Condition** –
which may've been his *“Thorn in the Flesh”* from **2Cor 12**
- 3) but **J.B. Phillips** says it is to make as *Strong an emphasis* as possible
of this last section – Paul wants to *close the letter* w/ a **“BANG”**

& he **does just that** – This letter closes w/ *one Final Contrast* of
the *“True Gospel”* of **Grace** - & the *“Perverted Gospel”* of **Works**

& that word **“perverted”** isn't mine – it's the *Holy Spirit's* thru Paul

back in **Gal 1:7** – speaking of the Judaizers Paul says:

*7 . . . there are some who trouble you and want to **pervert** the gospel of Christ.*

The **Judaizers** were *Perverting* the true Gospel that comes
BY Grace & THRU Faith alone –
& instead *were pushing* a Gospel of **Works based Religion**

& so - - - as **Paul makes** this *Final Contrast* – I would you to know –
it is just **as true** today – as it was when *Paul 1st wrote it*

Before we start – I think it's **very important** for us to ask ourselves . . . ;

Do we *interact with God* today;
Based on **Religion** - - - or Based on a genuine **Faith**

Do we *interact with God* today;
Based on our own **Works** - - - or Based solely on His **Grace**

Let's Pray

So – w/ the **strong emphasis** of Paul writing in *his own hand* –
we begin one *Final Contrast* of **Works V. Faith**

Gal 6:12

12 As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

Here **the Judaizers** are *described as* ;
“those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh”

This is the **same group** that caused such *dissention* in **Acts 15** –
they **brought on** the famous “*Council at Jerusalem*” –
where **the Apostles** had to *shut them down*

They **started** it in **Acts 15:1** by saying

1 . . . “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

& that (*in essence*) is what **Galatians** was *written to address* –

& for **17 straight messages** Paul's been *systematically* proving that Salvation comes **BY God's Grace** Alone - & **THRU our Faith** alone **w/ NO Works added**

So in this Final Contrast – *the question today is:*

Why would the Judaizers compel believers to be circumcised ?
& **the answer** – is in Paul's *description* of them

Gal 6:12

12 As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, [STOP THERE] only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

Pls Hear This:

The Foundation of *Religion* - is the **Outward signs** (good showing in the flesh)
The Foundation of *Christianity* – is the **Inward signs** (of genuine Faith)

Christianity was never intended by God to *be focused on* the **Outward signs** of Religion – *it's foundation* has always been the **Inward signs** of Faith (*All the way back to Abraham*)

we **handled that** subject back in **Msg #6** – “*Has it Always Been Thru Faith?*”

But that Contrast is just as *true today* – as it was the *day Paul wrote it* the Contrast of **Religion** V. **Relationship** – of - **Works** V. **Faith**

in the *Galatian churches* the Religionists decided a “*good showing in the flesh*” was circumcision . . . but **what is it today ?**

What are some “*good showings in the flesh*” – that some in the church *think are mandatory* for salvation ?

How about **Water Baptism** ? There are those who believe you **can't be saved** unless you've been **baptized**

but **is baptism** really *any different* than circumcision ? they're both “*good showings in the flesh*” aren't they ?

Now – **Is Baptism important** – **YES!** –

But it's important as an outward sign of an inward (spiritual) event

which is exactly what circumcision was given by God as –
an outward sign of an inward covenant relationship w/ God

John Stott – “. . . both baptism and circumcision, however great and spiritual the truths they signify, are themselves outward and bodily acts. And it is absurd to magnify such things as indispensable means of salvation and then to go on to boast about them”

Important – **Absolutely** . . . Required for Salvation – **Not a Chance**

only 2 things required for salvation;

- 1) **God's Grace** poured out on us thru Jesus Christ
- 2) **Our Faith** of putting our trust in His saving work

THAT is what the entire book of Galatians has been about

& yet – there are **those in the church** who would add their particular requirements to God's Divine Work of Salvation

(already mentioned) **Water Baptism**

Baptism in the Holy Spirit - evidenced by tongues

What **day of the week** you go to church on

What **specific church** or religion you belong to

Even a **woman cutting her hair** – Can be in danger of losing her Salvation

somehow those in the church – make these “Outward showings in the flesh”
an **additional requirement** for salvation –

Which is exactly what the Judaizers were doing 2000 years ago

When the **subject is Salvation** –

The answer is **BY God's Grace** - & **THRU our Faith** ALONE

w/ **NO Works** added – period (*what this series has been about*)

Guys - thru-out the history of God's people;

Our Flesh-Centered nature has **Debased** (reduced)
the **Supernatural**, *internal relationship* with God –
Into a **Superficial** *outward show* of Religion

we can start all the way back in **700 BC** – when *Isaiah wrote in*

Isa 29.13

13 . . . these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, . . .

Sounds like the *same struggle* the church is in *today* - doesn't it ?

700 yrs later **Jesus** applied the same scripture to the Religious elite of the day
1500 yrs after that God used **Martin Luther** to shake the church
300 yrs after that – God used **John Wesley** to do the same thing again

& every time God has brought Revival to the church - the Battle has been;

Outward Religion Vs. **Inward Relationship**

Outward Works Vs. **Inward Faith**

[VIDEO] It is in our **Fleshly** nature to **Degenerate**
from the **Supernatural Power** of an **Inward Relationship**
to the **Superficial Comfort** of an **Outward Religion**

[REPEAT]

& what **Paul uses** in Gal – to *show the Judaizers* have fallen into this -
is **two things** - - What they **AVOID** - - & what they **BOAST** in

the End of **Vs.12** - flows right into **Vs.13** (*so let's read them that way*)

Gal 6:12(b) - 13

*12 . . . these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they **may not suffer persecution** for the cross of Christ.*

*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.***

Paul **gets right down** to the *truest of the truths* – of why some would **compel others** to join them in their “**Works Based**” religion

Notice Paul kinda “*Calls their Bluff*” in the beginning of **V.13**

13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law,

Remember - circumcision *had become* a sign of a commitment to keep the **whole** law – (which is **NOT** what God intended it for)

& **Paul says** – “*Not even those who have been circumcised can keep the law*” in other words – “*They know better*”
“*They know they can’t even keep the law themselves*”

So **why compel others** to try to do what *they can’t do* themselves ?

Well - Paul **gives two reasons** why – *Let’s deal w/* the reason in **V.13** first

Gal 6:13(B)

*but they desire to have you circumcised that they **may boast in your flesh.***

One reason was so they could **Boast** in their convert’s *actions in the flesh*

The **NKJV** uses the word “**Boast**” – **KJV** uses the word “**Glory**”

The **word means LIT:** “*To rejoice in, or brag about*” –
& can be used **positively** or **negatively**

Paul says – they want you *to get circumcised*
so they can “*Boast in*” or “*Brag about*” **your actions in the flesh**

In other words – **they want** to “*keep score*”
they want to boast in *how many people* they’ve had circumcised –
so they can **feel successful** in their *actions for God*

& **THAT** is exactly what “*Works Based*” Religion – Leads to

The other reason for the Judaizers actions – is listed in **V.12(B)**
12 . . . these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer
persecution for the cross of Christ.

Paul says in **Gal 5:11** – his persecution was tied to “*The offense of the cross*”

[VIDEO – PICTURE OF THE CROSS]

The **Whole of Christianity** - is tied to the *Cross of Christ* –
there’s **No Part** of the Gospel – that *does not hinge* on the Cross

& **there is nothing** more offensive *to the flesh* –
than all that the *Cross symbolizes*

Jesus Christ – tho perfectly sinless – *suffered & died* on the cross -
as the **full & final sacrifice** to save all those *who would believe*

The entire work of our salvation was *accomplished on the cross*
w/ no place for human *pride or achievement*

Jesus Christ was made sin – our sin – *on that cross* – as the only way
we could receive the *righteousness of God* in Him –

The **cross represents** man’s *hatred at it’s worse* – & right **in the midst** of that
hatred – **the cross** represents God’s *unconditional love* for us - -
poured out right in the *midst of our hatred* toward Him

All of **God’s Saving Grace** comes thru the *Cross of Jesus Christ* –
to **Truly Embrace** the cross means you *embrace salvation* by **God’s**
Grace alone – w/ nothing you can do to *Earn it* - - or *Deserve it*

& for **all these reasons** (& more) the Cross of Jesus Christ *has always been* **an offense** to all works based religions –

1Cor 1:23 [VIDEO – vs. over the cross picture]

23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,

The cross has always been (& is today) an offense – to anyone who **desires to BOAST** in their Own Efforts – or their Own Works for God

& **that offense** brings persecution to any person who wholeheartedly, & exclusively – **relies on the work** of the cross ALONE **to make** them “Right” before God

& **the Judaizers** wanting nothing to do w/ all that . . .
they **liked their Religion** – but they didn't need any of that persecution

But **that doesn't** sound like Paul – does it?

In fact – it is **the exact opposite** of what Paul would do –
& it is the **exact opposite** of what Christians are called to do

In a **Striking & Dramatic** – Final Contrast – Paul says in **Gal 6:14**;

Gal 6:14 [VIDEO – vs. over cross pic]

14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

In **exact opposition** to the Religious Judaizers Paul says –

“The only thing I ever desire to boast about – is the very thing that is offensive to all works based-religions”

We **CANNOT boast** in ourselves & in the cross at the same time, can we?

If we boast in our *ability to earn* our own salvation –
then we **make Null & Void** the entire *message of the cross*

& **if we boast** in the *cross alone* – then we must **make Null & Void**
any thoughts of *Deserving* – or *Earning* - our righteousness before God

“God Forbid – that we should boast – except in the cross of Christ”

& **when that happens** to us – *the result is*;
We & the World – **become crucified** to one another

We no longer **think** - as the *World thinks*
We no longer **Boast** – in what the *World Boasts* in

We have **separated** (crucified) **ourselves** from that
Works-Based Self-Effort form of *of Righteousness* - -

We have **thrown ourselves** completely on the *Grace & Mercy*
of our **Lord & Savior** Jesus Christ - & *His Cross*

Just as we are – we come to him – *w/ nothing but our Faith* we trust in Christ
& we are **made Righteous** before God – *because of the cross* alone

& **when we** truly believe that – we have **nothing left** to boast in –
nothing left to brag about – *except how* ;

***God’s Amazing Grace saved a Wretch like me
A Wretch that once was lost – but now is found by God
A Wretch that once was blind – but now by God can see***

When we glory only in *the cross* – **THAT** is the *humble place* of salvation
we **are left in** - & **THAT** is exactly where *we should be*

The point is – **NOT** what *religious works* we’ve done –
but **are we** a “*New Creation*” thru faith in Christ –
which is *what Paul* says in **Gal 6:15**

Gal 6:15

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

the word “avails” means to be of use or advantage –

Paul’s saying - in and of itself – **Circumcision** is of No Use or Advantage

& **it’s the same** w/, Baptism, Unknown language, Day of the week,

What Church you go to - - or even Not cutting your hair,

ANY “good showing in the flesh” – in & of itself – is of **NO Use** or Advantage !

ONLY as our actions are a direct result (an outpouring)

of a Genuine, Internal Faith – do they have **any meaning** to God at all –

which is exactly what the end of **V.15** says;

. . . *but* [in contrast] *a new creation*.

The only thing that matters is – Have you been made a New Creation

BY God’s Grace & **THRU** Your Faith –

Because **THAT** is the **ONLY** thing that “Avails Anything” –

THAT is the only thing that is of any Eternal Use or Advantage

So - **IF** your actions are an outpouring of your faith in Christ –

THEN they **Represent** something good –

BECAUSE they’re evidence of you being a new creation –

but **even then** – the actions - in & of themselves - have **NO** value –

they’re an **Evidence** of the **only thing** that does have **true eternal value**

That is, you being a New Creation in Christ – Thru Faith in Him

This concept – in **Gal 6:15** - almost summarizes the entire book

(again) **Gal 6:15**

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

Have you been made a "New Creation" by putting your Faith in Jesus Christ
Have you been Born-Again by **Believing** Jesus Christ is Who He says He is

Because **in the end** – no Religious activity is going to do you any good –
but only whether you are a "New Creation" in Christ – **Or Not**

If you are Not – Today you can be

it doesn't take any **Religious Exercise** or Ritual –
it takes you **Believing** – Putting your Faith & Trust in Jesus Christ

In **just a second** – I'm going to give you a chance to do just that

We're **about to partake** of Communion –

Communion is a time of Remembrance –
that Jesus Christ **gave to All Believers** just before his sacrifice for us

It was **not** given only to members of any certain church –
but it was given to **All Believers**

Is **that you** today? – Do you Believe?

Have you been made a New Creation in Christ
by putting your Faith & Trust in Him to save you ?

If you haven't – Would you – Right now – Right where you sit ?
Would you put all your own efforts aside –
& **trust fully** in the Work of the Cross

Are you willing to Receive your Salvation
BY God's Grace – & **THRU** your Faith alone ?

Let's Pray