

27 GEMS – A Survey of Galatians

Pastor Jason Dennett's Notes

The MESSAGE of Galatians:

- Galatians is the **16th shortest** book in the New Testament with 2,230 Greek words.
- Galatians was probably **the earliest** New Testament letter written by Paul the apostle.
- Galatians contains a beautiful and famous description of the "**Fruit of the Spirit**".
- Galatians contains the words "**law**" 32x and "**faith**" 21x, highlighting the doctrinal tension.
- Galatians emphasizes "**Justification by Faith**" more than any other NT book, including Romans.
- Galatians is easily Paul's **most emotionally charged** and aggressive letter.

"The book of Galatians is my letter, I am betrothed to it, it is my wife!!" - Martin Luther

The MEGA-THEME of Galatians:

"Don't be enslaved by LAW; stay free in God's GRACE!"

The MEGA-STRUCTURE of Galatians:

Ch. 1,2: Paul's experience of Grace **PERSONALLY**.

Ch. 3,4: Paul's instruction of Grace **DOCTRINALLY**.

Ch. 5,6: Paul's application of Grace **PRACTICALLY**.

I. Paul's experience of Grace PERSONALLY.

- **Grace in Paul's Message** (1:1–10) - *"Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), 2 and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: ... 6 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 the Apostle was a champion of the Gospel of

Grace! Grace can be described as the goodness and kindness of God, which we don't deserve, but is poured upon us through Christ Jesus. (*Romans 5:1; 6:23*)

Paul is willing to take off his "theological boxing gloves" over this issue, due to its seriousness. Paul clearly says that there were those who were perverting the true Gospel of Grace in the area of Galatia. He pronounces a severe curse of "anathema" upon any man or even angel that would bring a false gospel. (*Read John 8:44*)

- **Grace in Paul's Life** (1:11–24) - *"..But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called [me] through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those [who were] apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. 18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. 19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. 20 (Now [concerning] the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)"*

Paul could look back upon his life and clearly see God's Grace in effect. He clearly understood that he had been separated to know and serve Christ from birth..only by God's amazing grace. He was an amazing tool in God's hands, especially prepared to preach and teach the Gospel and expand the Kingdom in amazing ways. (*Read Acts 9:15,16*)

God's Grace enabled Paul to spend 3 years in further preparation in Arabia and Syria. Even the great apostle need in-depth training and ministry preparation! (*Read Ecc 3:11*)

God's Grace was obvious in that when Paul came to Jerusalem 3 years after he was saved, Peter and James both agreed that he was called and anointed of God and approved of his Gospel and ministry. (*Read Eph 2:10*)

- **Grace in Paul's Ministry** (2:1–21) **A. Regarding Titus:** *"Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with [me]. 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. 3 Yet not even Titus who [was] with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. 4 And [this occurred] because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), 5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. ... 9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we [should go] to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised."

When Paul returned to Jerusalem 14 years later, Titus was now with him. Paul defended the Grace of God by not allowing the Jewish Legalists to push Titus to be circumcised, according to the Mosaic Law. Paul refused to allow the Gospel to be perverted, and for Christianity to simply become small subset of Judaism.

The "Inner Circle" of Jesus, Peter, James and John, all perceived and saw the calling of God upon Paul's ministry, and recognized that the Lord had indeed anointed him to be the Apostle to the Gentiles. They approved and blessed his ministry of Grace!

- **B. Regarding Peter:** 11 *"Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before [them] all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? 15 "We [who are] Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."*

Not all of Paul's experiences with the other Apostles were calm and peaceful. Here he details how he had to confront even Peter, who fell into back into Legalism, when visitors from the Jerusalem church visited the Gentile church in

Antioch. Paul boldly confronted Peter's hypocrisy, and declared the all-important truth that a person cannot be saved by works of the law, but only by faith in Christ's work on the cross for us. He loved the Lord and his flock enough, to rebuke a leader who had fallen into error and was confusing others in the process. (Read Prov 27:5,6)

II. Paul's instruction of Grace **DOCTRINALLY.**

- A **Personal Argument** (3:1–5) - "This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? ... 5 Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, [does He do it] by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"
 - Paul simply asks the Galatians to reflect on their personal experience in the Lord. If they did, they would clearly see that they received the Spirit by faith, and witnessed miracles in their midst by simply believing...not by works or deserving it! (Read Ephesians 2:8,9)
- A **Historical Argument** (3:6–14) - "..just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 7 Therefore know that [only] those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, [saying], "In you all the nations shall be blessed." 9 So then those who [are] of faith are blessed with believing Abraham."
 - Paul reaches back into Scriptural history to Abraham, and used the "Father of Faith" as an example. It's obvious that Abraham was saved by simply believing God by faith (Gen 15:6), and so all who relate the Lord thru faith are truly his true descendants and offspring. Paul clearly teaches that the Lord has always saved people in one way....through simple faith!
- A **Chronological Argument** (3:15–29) - "Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though [it is] only a man's covenant, yet [if it is] confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. 16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. 17 And this I say, [that] the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God

in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect."

- Here Paul argues that the first and initial covenant that was made was the Abrahamic Covenant, which was based on faith, and focused on Christ (v.16). The Law which came over 430 years later cannot annul this previous covenant of Faith, established with Abraham in Genesis. The covenant of Abraham (*Faith*) supersedes the covenant of Moses (*Law*).
(Read John 1:17)
- **A *Relational* Argument** (4:1–11) - "*Now I say [that] the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, 2 but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. 3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*"
Here Paul tells them that while they related to the Lord through Law, they were like children under the guardianship of a tutor (the Law), who could discipline and instruct them. But not, in Christ, they are mature sons and daughters who've been adopted into God's family. As sons and daughters, they are no longer bound to the "tutor" of the Law, and are actually superior over it in relationship. (*Romans 8:16-18*)
- **An *Emotional* Argument** (4:12–18) - "*Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I [became] like you. You have not injured me at all. 13 You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. 14 And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, [even] as Christ Jesus. 15 What then was the blessing you [enjoyed]? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"*
Paul here appeals emotionally to the Galatian Christians, to remember the love and care that they used to have for him when he first came. He seeks to remind them of the fondness they once had for him, and remember the sweet times of

closeness they enjoyed before they were drawn away by the Law and embittered against him.

- **An *Allegorical Argument*** (4:19–31) - "Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he [who was] of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar-- 25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children-- 26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. ... 30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free."

Lastly, Paul uses the picture of Sarah and Hagar (Gen 21) as an allegory of the Faith and Law. Sarah and her son Isaac, represent Faith and the children of faith, while Hagar and Ishmael, represent the Law and the legalistic Judaizers. Just as Abraham and Sarah cast out Hagar and her son Ishmael, so the believer need to cast out the Law and legalistic tendencies in their life...and by faith, be free in God's amazing Grace!!

III. Paul's application of Grace ***PRACTICALLY.***

- ***Grace and our Liberty*** (5:1–15) - "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...13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not [use] liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, [even] in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Grace should allow us to fully enjoy our Liberty in Christ. We should not go back to the Law and a "performance based" relationship with Christ, since that why He saved us...we can't be "good enough" by ourselves. Instead, we should use our liberty to lovingly serve each other.

- **Grace and the Spirit** (5:16–26) - *"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 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. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told [you] in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those [who are] Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another."*
 - **Grace should allow us to fully enjoy the Spirit of Christ.** We should endeavor to be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, and allow Him to produce His Fruit in our lives, to lead us daily, and empower us against the sinful inclinations of our fleshly appetites. Mature believers in Christ are Spirit-filled and Spirit-led in their daily living.

- **Grace and the Saints** (6:1–10) - *"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who [are] spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ... 6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ... 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."*
 - **Grace should allow us to fully enjoy the Saints of Christ.** Having been set free by God's Grace we should seek to restore the retentive, carry each other's burdens, share with those bless us, and do good to all...but especially to Christians - the "household of faith"!!

- **Grace and the Glory** (6:11–18) - *"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. 15 For in Christ Jesus
neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new
creation."*

Grace should allow us to fully give all glory to Christ alone! Having understood that we are saved only by the Cross of Christ and His amazing Grace towards us, we cannot take any glory in our salvation at all. All the glory to God for the great things HE has done! *(Read Rev 5:9-14)*