



**SONS & DAUGHTERS**  
**Three Ways of Life**  
**Week 8**

## **Opening prayer**

### **Prayer for the persecuted church:**

### **Prayer for a local church:**

This morning we pray for our brother Kasey Crawford and Elevation Church.

## **Closing prayer**

## **Introduction:**

What's the secret to doing great things for God? This is the question churches that believe the Bible ask themselves at every

church meeting. What if we did this or that or the other thing? Maybe that would be an effective strategy. And there's nothing wrong with planning and strategizing... as long as we keep it in context. Because when we're asking those kind of questions we're really asking, "What's the secret to doing great things for God?"

This is how the Apostle John answered it in his gospel about Jesus:

## **John 6:28-29**

**28 Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” 29 Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”**

This morning we're going to look at three different ways Christians attempt to do great works of God. Two of them are examples of how not to attempt this. The final one is the way to do great works of God.

**Big Idea: Faith is the only way to really accomplish anything.**

If faith is really the only way to accomplish anything, then what other ways are we trying to do works of God?

## **Galatians 5:6**

**<sup>6</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.**

**This verse gives us three ways to live. So, let's break it down and examine them.**

**First, it says in Christ Jesus. So, it's talking about the Christian life. It's talking about how people who believe in Jesus live.**

## **1. The Circumcision Mindset**

**And it goes on to say the circumcision mindset is not the way to live the Christian life. What exactly is the circumcision mindset? Circumcision in Paul's day referred to the**

entirety of the system of the law and the people who through the law tried to obtain righteousness. In other words, the circumcision mindset is a wrong use of the law.

So, living the Christian life in this way means you're striving to be holy through a wrong use of the law... and you compel others to do the same. It's the kind of Christian life that leads to boasting because of how well we're doing or how many we've convinced to live the same way we do.

- JW's and Mormons as examples

## **Galatians 5:6**

**<sup>6</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.**

## **2. The Uncircumcision Mindset**

This is the other mindset, people who are striving to be happy by avoiding the law. This group of people don't stress holiness, but



indulgence. They brag about how they can indulge in this or that or the other thing with a clear conscience.

So, the circumcision mindset is the legalistic way of living and the uncircumcision mindset is the licentious way of living.

Both ways of living lack love and both ways of living enslave those who practice them. The circumcision mindset is enslaved by self-righteousness. The uncircumcision mindset is enslaved by various lusts.

**The good news is that the gospel has saved us from both of these ways of living.**

**Most of us overemphasize being saved from the uncircumcision mindset, license-living. We overemphasize that because of the death of Jesus in our place we're saved from the penalty of our licentious living, our disobedience.**

**But just as the gospel saves us from the uncircumcision mindset, it also saves us from**

the circumcision mindset. In other words, the gospel also saves us from our obedience. That's good news because, if you haven't noticed, our obedience is less than perfect. Our obedience is inadequate to save us. You can't live your life in perfect obedience, so why would you want to trust in your obedience to save you? Being enslaved to self-righteousness leads to a very proud person (if he's successful at it) or a very condemned person (if he fails at it).

The gospel saves us from both our disobedience and our obedience. It's saves us from our unrighteousness and our righteousness.

If we try to live the Christian life from either perspective it will keep us in bondage and we won't really be free to love other people the way we should.

We could really paraphrase Galatians 5:6 like this: “neither legalism or license is of any value.”

So, how do we live the Christian life?

## **Galatians 5:6**

**<sup>6</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.**

Faith working through love. In other words, we live the Christian life by believing the gospel.

## **John 6:28-29**

**28 Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” 29 Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”**

The only thing that has value is believing the gospel and then loving others out of that belief. In other words, faith that expresses itself through love. But what does that look like in daily life?

# Galatians 5:6

**6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.**

## 3. The Mindset of Faith

- Example: Watching our two-year old.

# Galatians 5:6

**6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.**

a.) For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision - legalistic way of thinking. Rex grabbed the shell of a cracked egg from the countertop. My response was to yell, “No, no, no, no!” And I knew this response was because of my perfectionistic personality. Messes are the opposite of perfect. They are the epitome of imperfect. Sticky egg slime on the floor is unrighteous. Perfection becomes my source of righteousness. It all stems from a false view of the gospel: “The more perfect things in my life feel, the more righteous I feel.” That’s the



**circumcision mindset. Do you have one or two of those in your life? Ask yourself: How do you get righteousness from this way of living?**

**b.) nor uncircumcision counts for anything - licentiousness. What's the opposite of the above response? Now, the opposite response is the person who doesn't care about kitchen cleanliness. They have the attitude of "whatever — you're too hard to please, so why even try."**

c.) but only faith - I don't need to establish my own righteousness, which I what I'm trying to do when I revert to perfectionism. Perfectionism had become my source of righteousness, my "good news," which is bad news for everyone else. So, the question we need to ask ourselves when we find ourselves thinking with the circumcision mindset is: What void are you trying to establish by this behavior? Acceptance? Love? Power? Joy? Peace?

d.) working through love - believing the gospel frees me from the idol of control and self-righteousness. What would genuine love look like in this situation?

So, if faith is the only way to accomplish anything, what exactly do I mean by faith?

Gospel faith is always about what has been done for you. Gospel faith is always about receiving. So, if faith works through love, it is the love received in the gospel. To exercise faith you finally come to that place in the day

where it's obvious that your own weak will is not going to get the job done, so you look to the power of the Spirit. That's the only power that can really accomplish anything.

J. Gresham Machen: "The Christian then comes before the world with a great alternative. Shall we continue to depend upon our own efforts, or shall we receive by faith the power of God? Shall we content ourselves with the materials which this world affords, seeking by endlessly new combinations to produce a building that shall endure; or shall

we build with the materials that have no flaw? Shall we give men new motives, or ask God to give them a new power? Shall we improve the world, or pray God to create a new world? The former alternatives have been tried and found wanting: the best of architects can produce no enduring building when all the materials are faulty; good motives are powerless when the heart is evil. Struggle as we may, we remain just a part of this evil world until, by faith, we cry: ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by Thy Spirit, O Lord of Hosts.’”