

# Galatians #13

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, our plan is to terminate the Q&A; that we've been entertaining for the past few weeks. And we have interrupted our exposition of Galatians in chapters 2 and 3, and we will plan to return to that for our first Thursday in July, unless, of course, there's a host of other questions that we haven't been able to get to.

And one of the reasons that we provide this opportunity for Q&A; is because it's really the only way that we can be sure sometimes that we are scratching where people itch.

And when you have a particular question, something that is of concern to you, or something that is of curiosity to you and you'd like it addressed, we will do our best to treat those.

And we encourage you to write on any questions that you may have on the sheets that's been going around, and feel free to submit them. And we insist on keeping these anonymous because some questions that plague people can be a question that could be somewhat embarrassing.

And yet we're not embarrassed to treat the question and try to provide an answer, but it may not be something that one would want to be identified with publicly, and I can understand that.

[ 1 : 20 ] So we want to respect people's privacy, and yet we want to address questions if there's a burden or an issue in your heart that you'd like to talk about. This question, knowledge of the Word of God is paramount to achieving maturity as a Christian.

Again, too often we depend on the clergy to teach and spread the Word of God. Are we not challenged as believers of Christ to go beyond hearing the Word of God to communicate the teachings of the Bible and the love of Christ to the unchurched and to the lost?

How do we reach those who are hurting and project ourselves to their pain and lack of knowledge of Jesus Christ? We touched on this a little bit last week, but we didn't give it a very full treatment. That's a very good question.

The only thing that I can suggest is the pattern that the Scriptures have provided, and that is for a believer in Christ, the most important thing in your life is your spiritual growth and development.

And that is largely affected by the diet to which your human spirit is subjected. And this is why it is so important to take in the Word of God, because that is our spiritual diet, and through that we grow and mature.

[ 2 : 33 ] And then there is principle that Paul talks about in Romans, where he enjoins believers, and also in Galatians, which will be coming up, where he enjoins believers to walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the desires of the flesh.

And in my way of thinking, and the way I see the Scriptures, is that if we are walking in the Spirit, that simply means we are sensitive to and committed to the Word of God and the will of God.

And walking in the Spirit also means that we will be alert and sensitive to the needs of others and opportunities to communicate the Gospel to them. And that will result in our being able to speak freely to people about the person of Christ.

I've often said that the greatest asset that God has on this earth is a believer who knows and loves the Lord Jesus and is walking in the Spirit.

The greatest liability that God has on this earth is a believer who is walking in the flesh, because they often come across as a non-believer, sometimes labeled a hypocrite, and sometimes rightly so.

[ 3 : 51 ] So, as we are committed to and submitted to the Spirit of God, then there is a natural burden to communicate that to others.

And there are a lot of people out there that really need to hear the Gospel. And I would just remind you that it isn't essential that we communicate the Gospel to someone and that we lead them to Christ right then and there.

That very often does not happen. But what we are called upon to do is plant the seed. Someone else comes along, waters the seed. God gives the increase.

And in the lives of some individuals, it may take a long time for that spiritual gestation to be realized in a birth, a spiritual birth. But that's the way it seems to happen.

And very few people, very few people respond to the Gospel the first time they hear it. Very few. Usually it takes line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little.

[ 4 : 56 ] They get a little exposure here, a little exposure there. This may be a process that spans years before they actually connect all the dots and put it together and commit themselves to Christ.

So it's a very good question. And it's something that believers are supposed to be alert and sensitive to. And I think what we ought to do, each and every one of us, is just pray and ask the Lord, is there somebody you want me to talk to today?

And if there is, I'm looking forward to you bringing them across my path. And I'm looking forward to you giving me the entree and the words to say to communicate to them.

And that's what God will do. When someone has said, God is a lot more interested in your availability than he is in your ability. That's good.

And so many times we Christians feel inadequate and ill-prepared to communicate the Gospel to anyone. I talked to one dear brother one time, and he said, I'm reluctant to talk to people about the Lord.

[ 6 : 00 ] I'm afraid I'd mess it up. I'm afraid I wouldn't communicate the truth. And that's a legitimate fear. But, you know, we're supposed to equip ourselves with the Word of God so we will be able to communicate the Gospel to someone.

And you don't have to be a preacher. You don't have to be a missionary. You just have to be just an ordinary, regular guy who loves the Lord and is concerned that others come to know him too. Joe? Yeah. You actually can even set your minister straight sometime. Oh, yeah. Well, no, really, I'm serious. In the Bible, what was it?

Priscilla's and I can't think of her name. It was either an axe or a room. This very intelligent preacher fellow was preaching about Jesus. And he had it wrong.

You know, they didn't have the resurrection part of it. The Paulus, yeah. Yeah, Paul. Paul had spoken to them, though, and given them the truth and the Word. So he didn't have the full truth.

[ 7 : 02 ] That's right. It was just two people that made tents, common people that made tents to set him straight. And then he went on to preach it later on. Absolutely. So they set him straight.

They did. And, guys, you need to keep this in mind. There is a tendency among the laity to think, well, the preachers, the pastors, they're the professionals. Leave it to them because you'll just mess it up.

Leave it to them. They're the experts. They can do it. It doesn't work that way, guys. It's someone who said sharing the gospel is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. And this is something, a very important concept, and I really want you to keep this in mind.

Because when I, as a pastor, talk to someone about the gospel, so what? They figure, well, that's what I'm supposed to do. That's my job.

They expect that coming from me. But you, you have a kind of credibility and experience that I don't have because you're not a pastor or a preacher.

[ 8 : 06 ] You're an ordinary, regular guy. And when you communicate the gospel, that carries some impact that it doesn't when it comes from someone from whom they would expect it.

So you keep that in mind. In a very real sense, you are in a position to more effectively communicate the gospel to people than what I am. Because they hear it from me and they think, well, that's just his profession.

That's what he's supposed to say. That's what he's supposed to say. But you're not in that position. So you've got a degree of credibility that no pastor has. And you need to bear that in mind. Any other thoughts about that?

Dan. I had an experience like that in Palmyra, New York, at a Mormon museum, when a lady backed me into the corner. And I found out how ill-prepared I was to, you know, to really, and I started to get jittery and everything else because she was very, very, and I said, that is never going to happen to me again.

Yeah. Because she was very well-versed in her spiritual... Made you aware of how ill-prepared you were. Yes. And I felt, you know, when I got, what I should have said, is said, look, lady, if Joseph

Smith had found those doggone tablets out there, there should have been some archaeological evidence where the heck they're at.

[ 9 : 27 ] And there are, but I didn't. I mean, but I did find out how really, I just really at that time I realized. Yeah, well, you know, this is what Peter's talking about in that classic passage that is so often used as the basis for apologetics.

And that is, sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every person who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.

And, fellas, all that means is, all that means is you ought to be able to tell someone, in your own words, why it is that you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

Right. And what he's done for you. Yeah. That's your testimony. And you'd be surprised how powerful that is because it gets people's attention and it is something that you can communicate because each and every one of us has a story.

And the tendency is to think, well, my story is nothing special. Listen, if you have put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ and he saved you from your sin, you've got a whale of a story.

[ 10 : 44 ] That's an enormous story. And don't deny the simplicity of it or the power of it because that's something that people need to hear. Okay. Since God is the supreme entity overall and is above all other gods, in what perspective do we as Christians approach the Muslim movement?

Do we pray for our enemies? What does God ask of us? What is the Christian perspective on this? What should it be? Well, as I've often said, Muslim, Islam is not our enemy.

Islam is the captive of our enemies. Muslims are the captives of the enemy. The true enemy, of course, is the adversary.

And someone who embraces Islam is just as lost as someone who embraces anything else other than Jesus Christ. And we have an obligation not only to, I guess we would say, not only to just your ordinary unbeliever, but we have an obligation to the Muslims as well.

We have an obligation to the Jehovah's Witnesses. We have an obligation to the Hindus. We have, Paul said, I'm a debtor. I'm a debtor to all men. I owe the gospel to everyone to communicate it to everyone.

[ 12 : 18 ] And sometimes we get intimidated by people like Muslims when we hear about some of their fierceness and the radicals and so on. But I can assure you the vast majority of Muslims are not like that.

The vast majority of Muslims are a live and let live people, just like the vast majority that makes up any other great religion. So people have, people in their heart have a hunger for God and a hunger for truth.

And I think it was Augustine said, Thou hast made us for thyself, O God, and our hearts cannot rest until they rest in thee. And that's true for Muslims. It's true for Buddhists.

It's true for anybody. And that's the gospel that we need to communicate. So I was talking to a fellow one time. We were talking, actually, after a morning message, and we were talking about Islam and some of the atrocities that's going on.

And he said, you take, he said, the World Trade Center thing. He said, the people who crashed those planes into that. He said, are you telling me that I'm supposed to forgive those people?

[ 13 : 30 ] Well, yeah, yeah. But we are not to just throw a blanket forgiveness on people. Forgiveness is always preceded by repentance.

We forgive because people have repented of their sin. And while we may think that, well, there are certain people that you shouldn't forgive and couldn't forgive.

Well, you don't forgive them without repentance. You don't. Someone has said, Christ will save people from their sin, but he will not save them in their sin.

And the key, the key to God's forgiveness is human repentance. And this is exactly what Saul of Tarsus experienced on the road to Damascus.

Scoundrel though he was. Hailing men and women, dragging him off into prison, persecuting him. Did God forgive him? Absolutely he did. But Saul was a repentant man.

[ 14 : 33 ] He realized the error of his way, what he had done, and he repented of his sin.

Repentance is God's silver bullet. And it is that which opens the door for forgiveness.

But repentance has to include our acknowledgement of our sin. And no one can come to God and say, actually, I think I'm pretty well off the way I am, and I really don't need anything because I'm such a good person, but I just want God to save me anyway.

Well, God will not save you. God cannot. And God will not save you apart from your acknowledging and admitting your need for his salvation.

Well, why do you need it? It's because of sin. Christ died for our sin. So it always comes back to that. And if someone comes to God and says, well, I guess I'm not exactly a paragon of virtue. And yeah, I'm a sinner. Matter of fact, I'm kind of proud of it. But I'd like your salvation anyway. God says nothing doing. He saves on the basis of our repenting of our sin, acknowledging our sin, and looking to him for forgiveness.

[ 15 : 43 ] So that's a big item. And this is, as I've said before, this is what makes communicating the gospel difficult. And this is why more of us do not do it.

Because you have to give people an understanding of what the disease is before you can provide the remedy.

It's like a doctor prescribing a medication for you to take, and he hasn't even diagnosed your illness. How can he prescribe the right medication when he doesn't even know what the illness is? He can't. So he has to begin with diagnosis. And that's where we come in with the gospel.

You have to reveal to people the need, the reality of their sin. And fellas, this is where it gets sticky. Because nobody wants to tell somebody else, you know what?

[ 16 : 42 ] You're a sinner. So we try to find nice, delicate, diplomatic ways of telling them. And it's difficult to do. And very often we'll come back with this. So, you're saying I'm not a nice person?

That's kind of the way it sounds, doesn't it? So, you're saying that I'm not okay the way I am? Yeah, that's what we're saying. Because that's what God is saying. We're not okay as we are.

That's why we need Christ. But you have to be able to give people the bad news before the good news makes any sense. Otherwise, you're providing a remedy when they don't even know what the need is.

And the need is our sin has separated us from God. And Jesus Christ is the remedy. But you've got to have the bad news before the good news makes any sense.

The bad news is you're lost. You're undone. You cannot make it. You are not acceptable to God. We've got to find delicate ways to tell people that. And this is what Paul meant when he talked about the offense of the gospel.

[ 17 : 48 ] The gospel has an element of offense to it. Because it brings people up short. And it tells them, you're not okay and I'm not okay. We both need Christ. And what we need to do is make sure that if someone is offended by the gospel we preach, just make sure that it's the message of the cross that offends them and not the way we communicate it.

Because we certainly don't need to add offensiveness of our own to what the gospel actually is.

Okay. Any other thoughts about that? Roy?

Roy? I can relate to what he was saying. I was with a brother-in-law. Yeah. And talking to him about salvation. And I come up woefully short of being able to do that.

One other thing I wanted to add. I've come across and read two books recently. And it gave me a sense of urgency.

With the time period we're in and the direction that Obama has taken us in with that downhill slide speeding up and getting worse. Yeah.

[ 19 : 01 ] That we're getting closer and closer to being raptured out. So time, the clock is ticking down. So it got me.

And I haven't been talking to people over the years to my chain about salvation. But this urgency from reading these two books has got me out there just putting out simple statements.

Yeah. Like I told somebody recently, one of the most important things that you can do while you're alive on this earth is to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.

Yeah. Well, you can tell right away from a statement like that, if they're interested in hearing anything else, well, this guy, he disappeared real fast. Yeah. He wasn't interested. Yeah.

But I've learned to not take that as a personal rejection. It's their rejecting God, not me. And not only that, but this is something that I'd really encourage you to keep in mind.

[ 20 : 02 ] And we tend to sell this short. And that's like the statement that Roy made. Sometimes, guys, all that needs to be done is a simple statement like that that just gives them something to think about.

Because they've probably never thought about that before. And the question that I've used a number of times, and I'm sure I've shared it with you, is you can ask people something like, you

know, these are really difficult times we're living in.

I don't think the world has ever been where it is right now. And most people would agree with that. I'd say, yeah. And in the midst of all of this, do you have any interest or do you give any thought to spiritual matters?

And very often people think you're talking about church, you know. Do you go to church or something? That's not, of course, what we're talking about. And sometimes people say, well, no, I don't give it much thought or I don't believe or I do believe or whatever.

Or I'm a good person or I believe in God. But all you have to do is pique their interest a little bit. You just give people something to think. And what you're doing is creating, you're creating a mental dot.

[ 21 : 13 ] And somebody else can create another mental dot. And someone else can create another mental dot. And it's a question of their getting information that enables them to connect the dots.

And that's what brings someone ultimately to Christ. So you don't have to have a big, long spiel. You just have to give them something to think about. And like that question, if you were to stand before God, you know, somebody, you could phrase it like this.

You know, I heard a question one time that was really quite fascinating. And most people never think, oh, yeah, what's that? Well, this fellow said, what would happen?

Suppose you were to die today, quite unexpectedly, traffic accident, whatever. And you were to stand before your maker.

And God were to say to you, John Doe, why should I let you come into my heaven? What would you tell him?

[ 22 : 16 ] And you know, probably 90% of the people that I've asked that question to kind of scratch their head and say, yeah, I never thought of that before. I never heard of that before.

I never thought of that before. But it gives them something to think about. And then if you can add something to it. And this guy went on to say, you know, there are probably a thousand wrong answers to that question.

But there's only one right one. And even if you don't tell them what that one right one is, they are not going to be able to get that out of their mind.

This guy said there's one right one. What would that be? You get people to thinking. That stimulates their interest. And most never think in this vein at all.

And all you're doing, you're not making any statements. You're not making any demands. You're not making any accusation. You're just asking a question. And people are not turned off when you ask them a question.

[ 23 : 20 ] Because you're really respecting their opinion in asking a question. And it's amazing how that gives people something to think about. And most of them have never thought about it before.

So that's something to keep in mind. Pat. If you witness to somebody and you explain to them about what salvation is and they buy into it and say yes, you know, and they say the prayer of salvation. And the Holy Spirit comes to them immediately. They walk out of that situation and they've never been told about repentance or sanctification or any of these other things.

And maybe they get out and they don't attend the church or take it any further. Does the Holy Spirit just continue to work in them and bring people and things into their life that will eventually get them there?

Because if I'm thinking wrong, if they said that prayer and were sincere, they're saved. Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. You're right. I remember hearing a fellow say one time, he said, well, he said, when someone makes a profession of faith in Christ, it would be wonderful if they had some kind of a new Christian, a new believer's class where they could get grounded and get the basics under their belt and everything.

[ 24 : 42 ] And that would be ideal and it would accelerate their learning curve and enable them to enjoy a lot of truth that would otherwise take them longer time to find out.

But if worse comes to worse, you can always just trust him to the Holy Spirit. That's wow. If worse comes to worse, you can just trust him to the Holy Spirit. Well, really, that's the ultimate anyway.

And when you put your faith and trust in Christ, it is true that you are baptized without water. You are baptized by the Spirit of God into the body of Christ.

And you become in union with him. And you are in a position then to receive spiritual truth. And we would encourage anyone who is a new Christian, the first thing you really need to do is start taking

in nourishment.

Get into the Bible. And don't tell them to start with Genesis. Because that's a good way for them to get bogged down, you know. I recommend people start with the Gospel of John.

[ 25 : 51 ] And as you read through the Gospel of John, pray and ask God to reveal to you the true character and person of Jesus Christ in that Gospel.

And it is amazing what they will learn about the person and work of Christ as they just read through the Gospel of John. Great place to start. And then they can go from there to the Book of Romans. Dan.

You don't want them to start in Revelations either. No. Not a good idea. Not a good idea. Okay. Any other thoughts about that? Here's a question.

When my mother died, I was by her side and close to her face. When she slipped away, I saw a wave come from her open mouth, like the wave you see from the road on a steamy hot day.

I say that to ask this. Since our soul leaves us when we physically die and goes directly to heaven. And the writer of this is equating the soul and the spirit.

[ 26 : 58 ] Personally, I make a distinction between the soul and the spirit. But they are both involved, of course. So, since our soul leaves us when we physically die and goes directly to heaven, how can we recognize our loved ones when there is no body form?

Or do we? Are there souls just floating around in heaven waiting on the rapture when our bodies meet our souls? A spirit has no form. We don't see the Holy Spirit when it enters our hearts at salvation, when we receive the Holy Spirit and ask forgiveness for our sins.

What scripture do you base your answer on? And it says, I heard a song that said, we will see our family and friends when we get to the celestial shore in heaven. What a great day that will be.

Got me thinking and questioning. Well, there are all kinds of songs and hymns written about this. But, and you know, it's a shame, but probably more Christians get more of their theology from songs and the hymnal than they do from the Bible.

And this person has a very valid question here about seeing the wave come from her open mouth. This would have probably been her final breath.

[ 28 : 14 ] When someone expires, and even that word expire literally means to breathe out, without taking another breath, inspire.

So there is a final exhale, and that's it. And that exhale might very well be visible in the same sense that you can see someone's breath like on a cold day.

There are some remarkable things that take place in the human body at the point of death. And I well remember my wife Barbara's last breath.

And I held her in my arms in that intensive care room at Riverside Methodist Hospital, March the 10th, 2006.

And each breath was a little bit further apart. And I actually knew that her next breath will be her last one.

[ 29 : 29 ] And it was. Now, I didn't see anything, any evidence of that. But it was very obvious to me that she did not inhale again.

That was it. And she was gone. And the scriptures make it quite clear that the real essence of your being, and this is hard for us to get our brain around, but I'm convinced that it's true.

The real essence of your being is not your body. Your body is the housing of the real essence of your being.

The real essence of your being is your spirit, your human spirit. That's where the real you lives. And that human spirit is not physical.

It is intangible. And when you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, it was that human spirit that God regenerated and made new.

[ 30 : 34 ] That's what was born anew. Your body wasn't changed at all physically. But you were changed on the inside in a way we don't understand.

And we can't really fully appreciate. But God does a work on the inside of you where the real you is. And then when that regenerated spirit exits the body, that's at the point of death.

And there is a connection that I wish I had a better handle on between wind, air, breath, and spirit. All four of those terms are translated with the very same Greek word, pneuma, or pneumos, from which we get the word pneumatic, as in a pneumatic drill.

And it has to do with air. A pneumatic drill is one that is run by air power. And when Jesus breathes His last, we are told that He said, Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.

[ 31 : 54 ] And He breathes His last. He didn't commit His body. He committed the real essence of His being, that internal thing that we call the real person.

He committed that to the Father. And that's what exited His body. And that's what will leave our bodies at the point of death. So what I'm saying is, the real personality, and that which really makes the person who and what they are, is not their exterior being.

That's what enables us to identify them, and to distinguish one person from another, because they've got a different body. But that inward person is what the real you is all about.

And as I said, that's what's regenerated, and that's what leaves the body at death. So, when it comes to being able to recognize people, now I realize this is going to be a stretch. It is for me, and I know it will be for you.

But when we leave this body, I'm not able to really understand exactly when we get that glorified body.

[ 33 : 10 ] We've got the passage in Thessalonians, and in 1 Corinthians, it talks about this corruptible putting on incorruption, this mortal putting on immortality.

But we don't know exactly when that's going to take place. The graves will be opened. The dead in Christ shall rise first. This involves the physical resurrection.

And we know that our physical bodies are going to be fashioned, like under Christ's physical body. He had a glorified body. And that glorified body does not have the limitations that these bodies have.

So, exactly when we get that, I'm not sure. And what complicates the mix further is the concept of eternity.

Because when we die, we go to be with the Lord, and the Lord dwells in eternity. The psalmist talks about God inhabiting eternity.

[ 34 : 14 ] But eternity, and the being and presence of God, involves a non-physicality mode.

And what I am suggesting, and I realize this is pretty far afield, and no, I can't give you a chapter and verse for it, but I am suggesting that in our spirit being, apart from these bodies, we may well be able to recognize other spirit beings, even without an introduction.

So, if that's the case, it will not matter whether someone is six months old when they departed this life, or whether they were 60 years old, or whether they were a teenager, and we talk about what will people look like, and what age will they be in heaven, if this spirit thing is the real essence of our being and personality, that will be the defining factor, and not the physical body.

And yet, we will have physical bodies, and they will be glorified physical bodies. And I realize that I don't really know what I'm talking about. And probably none of us do.

But this is all involved in the mix. This is... Well, is there anybody that can straighten that out? Go ahead. I'm working on it, but I've got a lot of loose ends that I'm trying to put together.

[ 35 : 52 ] And anyway, breakfast is here. Thank you for your kind attention. As I mentioned, we're going to try to get through these before the month of June is up.

Then we'll return to Galatians first Thursday in July. Thank you. Thank you.