

Galations #8

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Date: 12 December 2014

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Okay, if you will take your scripture sheet, we are in chapter 2 of Galatians. We have referred to this as the name by which it often goes, that is the Charter of Christian Liberty.

And we are going to find truths here in the Galatian epistle that is capable of setting a lot of Christian prisoners free.

Well, why would they need to be set free if they are already Christians? Well, simply because even though we are saved by grace through faith, and it is for freedom that Christ has made us free, people do tend to be entangled with that old yoke of bondage once again.

And that is legalism. Legalism takes two venues. The first is, there are certain things you have to do in order to become a believer.

Certain hoops you have to jump through. Not only must you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but you must also live the right kind of life.

[1 : 12] You must stop sinning. You must overcome your weaknesses. You must do this. You must do that. You must be baptized. You must be a member of a church.

You must tithe. All of these additional things men tend to add to the finished work of Christ. That is an attempt to attain salvation through what you do.

The works of the flesh. Be good enough. Try hard enough. Pray enough. Give enough. And all the rest. And on and on it goes. That is legalism in an effort to gain salvation.

Then, there are those who have gained salvation. They have become believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. And they are in Christ and Christ is in them.

But, what must they do to maintain their salvation? What do they have to do to stay saved? And that very often is reduced to more hoops to jump through.

[2 : 18] And, of course, there is no assurance. There is no confidence. Because you never know whether you've been spiritual enough or done enough or whether you've pleased the Lord enough or so on.

And these legalistic bindings tie people in knots. They keep people from the freedom wherewith Christ has set them free. And they simply do not understand that being free from sin and being in Christ puts you in a position whereby you are as accepted before God as His own dear Son is.

How accepted is that? That is, we are made accepted in the Beloved. And this is what Paul wrote to the Ephesians. And this being made accepted means, it means literally, God approves of you.

He doesn't approve of you because you're good enough. And He doesn't approve of you because you go to church every Sunday. He doesn't approve of you because you do these things.

He approves of you because He approves of His Son and you are in Him. Therefore, He is your righteousness. He is your acceptance and your approval before God.

[3 : 38] That's what it means to be in Christ. So we are set free from all kinds of things. And we are free to serve one another and free to serve the Lord and free to love Him as we ought.

But this legalistic thing is, it is a curse. It is a curse and it is part of our fallenness. And the Apostle Paul is going to be addressing this in no uncertain terms here in Galatians.

In fact, what I just shared with you, this is the burden of the epistle. This is the essence of it. This is what he is trying to get across to these Galatians.

Because after Paul has been in and preached the gospel of the grace of God, left the area, went on to be a missionary to other areas, then there were those who came in after Paul.

And they are the Judaizers, the legalistic Judaizers, who want to place burdens of the law upon these people who have been...

[4 : 42] Well, you haven't been circumcised. Well, you can't be justified if you... I mean, it's all well and good that you believed on Christ as your Savior, but you also have to be circumcised in order to

be accepted of God.

Where did they get that? Well, they got that from the Mosaic Covenant. They got that from what it means to be a Jew. But these Gentiles, pagans, heathen, to which Paul had preached the gospel, he delivered a message that was completely devoid of all of these add-ons that are in keeping with Judaism.

Because Paul preached a different gospel. And the gospel he preached was the gospel of the grace of God justified by grace through faith plus nothing.

And that was very, very difficult for these Judaizers to swallow. You see, part of the reason was, they were under the impression that the law of Moses was eternal.

The commandments, of which there are 633, never go out of style. They are always in force. And they base that on the idea that God is eternal.

[6 : 04] God's law is eternal. It's never going to be done away with. But Jeremiah 31 made it very clear that the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Christ is the end of the law for everyone who believes. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. So, the apostle Paul is raised up to be the apostle, not to the Jews, because they already had 12, but to the Gentiles.

Well, how are you going to convert the Gentiles so that they will come into a relationship with God? Well, you have to teach the Gentiles that they have to adopt the law of Moses, circumcision and everything else.

No! No! No! Not at all. The gospel he preached to the Gentiles was devoid of the law of Moses. It was simply, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

Now, guys, we've got two different modes of operation or of belief here operating side by side.

[7 : 25] One for the Jews, one for the Gentiles. Can you see the confusion that this brings? Well, it's tremendous. And we're going to address that right now.

Let us look at chapter 2 and verse... Well, let's just start with verse 1. Fourteen years after, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas and took Titus with me also.

And I went up by revelation and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles. Now, why would he even have to do that if there was just one gospel and it was the same and everybody was preaching the same thing?

But they weren't. And this is why he is going to brief the apostles on the gospel that he was preaching. It is the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles.

But privately... Now, we don't know, but one kind of gets the impression that Paul requested a special meeting with the apostles and maybe they were the limits.

[8 : 37] Maybe there were only 12 or 15 or 20 people there altogether with Paul, but it's not a public forum. He's not doing this in the synagogue. He's doing it privately at a special meeting to them which were of reputation, that is, those who had already established themselves as leaders among those who were followers of Christ.

And I think we can reasonably say here that these were consisted of the 12 apostles. And then he says, lest by means I should run or had run in vain.

Now, this running... Excuse me. The running that he is talking about is the ministry that he had been performing. These are the deeds, the acts, the things that he had been teaching.

This was his running, his communicating the gospel. And he says, I don't want to have done this for nothing. In vain. He'd been going all over the area preaching this gospel.

He doesn't want it to be for nothing. How could it be? If he communicated the gospel of the grace of God to these people and they believed it, they were saved, justified by faith, how could it be for nothing?

[9 : 53] Well, Paul recognizes that among these first century believers, he does not have nearly the clout and influence that the 12 do.

Why is that? Because the 12 were on board early with Christ when he first began his public ministry, he chose these 12 apostles and they were with him for three to three and a half years of his ministry.

They were well established and well known. What about Saul of Tarsus? Well, the only thing he was known for was to be a persecutor of those who had believed in Jesus.

So he was clearly identified by virtually everyone as being one of the enemy on the other side. And when he came to faith in Christ on the Damascus road, there was the risen Christ who

communicated this new truth and new gospel to him.

But who else knew that? Nobody. Except just a handful of people who happened to be with Paul. But, we are told in Acts 9, they did not. They heard a noise, but they did not hear the message.

[11:14] Paul was the only one on the Damascus road who actually heard what Christ said. The others heard somebody speaking but they did not get the message. Paul was blinded by the light.

The others were not. So this was an intensely personal thing for Saul of Tarsus. And who else knew about this commission and call? Nobody.

What is the greatest evidence of the truthfulness of this call? His radical turnabout. His radical about-face so that he is now preaching the faith that he once sought to destroy.

That was the most compelling thing about his ministry. That was his credential more than anything else. And when he said the risen Christ appeared to him and gave him this abundance of revelations, who are you going to believe about that?

Who else is there to know that? Only Paul. Well, is he believable? Can you take him at his word?

Now, we of course look at the scriptures and we say, that's our authority.

[12:27] But back then, they didn't have that. So you can see the tremendous tension that is created between this new information that Paul is going to begin preaching to the Gentiles and nobody had preached anything to the Gentiles.

Nothing. Nothing. And now God is raising up this man to go to everyone who is not a Jew.

Wow. So, he's going to, he gets these shakers and movers together, twelve apostles, and he wants to bring them up to speed. And it is this.

Listen guys, I've been going all over Asia Minor and I have been communicating the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ to those people who have previously been excluded.

They had no message. And this is what I've been preaching to them. And I want to get all of you fellows together and bring you up to speed as to what I have been telling these Gentiles about what they need to do to connect with God.

[13:46] And, by the way, he inserts here in verse 3, but neither Titus who was with me being a Greek was compelled to be circumcised.

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who are these false brethren? these are the Jewish legalizers who came in privately or secretly to spy out our liberty.

They come in and say, what is it that this guy has been teaching? He, Paul, he's been teaching what? What? That's against the law of Moses.

We can't let him get away with that. You can't believe what this guy says. He's not teaching according to the law. And you know what? He wasn't.

He wasn't. Because there was a whole new message on board. And it was all predicated upon the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. They came in secretly, privately, to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus that they might bring us into bondage.

[15:06] What's the bondage? The law! Bring them back under the law. You've got to keep the command. You've got to observe the Sabbath. You've got to be circumcised. You've got to... And on and on and on. And Paul says, to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour that the truth of the gospel might continue with us.

Listen, this is militant stuff. Paul was saying, they insisted that we teach and communicate the law, and Paul says, we wouldn't give them the time of day.

We rejected that and their message. Because, and we did so, so that the truth of the gospel, which is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, might be saved, rescued for you.

we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But of these who seem to be somewhat, whatever they were, it makes no matter to me, God accepts no man's person, for they who seem to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me.

I think these who seem to be somewhat were the leaders, shakers and movers, including the apostles. And he says, but contrarywise, contrarywise, when they saw, understood, recognized, that the gospel of the uncircumcision, which is just another way of saying the gospel of the Gentiles, was committed unto me, Paul, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.

[17:12] For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, or the Jews, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.

In other words, both Peter and I were appointed to our positions by the same authority. So, fellas, if you can really get a handle on these two messages with these two different clientele existing at the same time, running along two different tracks at the same time, you can begin then to get a real appreciation of the confusion and difficulty that these people are undergoing.

And listen, this is the only generation that will be subjected to this kind of confusion. Thereafter, it should be clear. But do you know something?

It isn't. The confusion exists to this day, based on what we remarked about earlier, about the hoops to jump through, the legalism and all the rest.

Many today, believers, still haven't gotten the message. And I've asked Don if he'd read a passage of Scripture. I left my Bible in the car. So, Don, would you begin reading that?

[18:30] Listen carefully. This is from Acts 21, and they are talking to the Apostle Paul when he comes back to Jerusalem. Go ahead, Don. When we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

On the following day, Paul went in with us two kings, and all the elders were present. After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministers.

And when they had heard it, they glorified God, and they said to him, You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed.

they are all zealous to the law. And they have been told about you that you will teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to save Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or observe their customs.

What then is to be done? Okay, thank you. That's great. So, the text says, you see, brethren, now they're talking to Paul. They say, you see, Paul, how many brethren there are Jews who believe.

[19:43] These are Jewish believers. These are Jews who have come to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. And he says, they are Jews who have believed and they are all zealous for the law.

That means eager to keep the law. That means they maintain themselves under the law. It means they wouldn't think of abandoning the law.

And they are really concerned about what you have been preaching. You see, bottom line is this.

Many of the Jews of this day, in fact, I think it would be safe to say most of the Jews of this day, thought what should be taught to Gentiles is, look, if you really want to connect with God.

Bottom line is, you have to become a Jew. You have to be circumcised. You have to submit yourself to the law of Moses.

You have to keep the Sabbath. You have to do all of those things that we Jews have to do. So, in essence, you come to faith in God through the experience of Judaism.

[21:02] And that is a complete departure from the gospel of the grace of God. Now, this confusion still exists today, insofar as the add-ons to one's salvation or personal experience.

Faith in Christ is not viewed as sufficient. But, fellas, I hope you get this. this is the bottom line of everything. If there is one single solitary thing that anyone has to do, in addition to believing on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, you immediately depreciate the finished work of Christ and what he accomplished on that cross.

It is tantamount to saying Jesus didn't pay at all. He paid most of it, but there's something you have to pay too.

And you do that through your circumcision, your baptism, your tithing, your church attendance, your membership, all of these things people want to add to it.

Fellas, there is no room for your good works to be placed alongside the work of Christ.

[22:29] There's nothing in the Bible that says we should observe Easter or Christmas either. Well, that's true. That's true. These are just minor, but relatively insignificant. They are pagan.

They are pagan, and insisting upon them is infringing upon one's liberty in Christ. But there are those who are willing to do that.

There are always people who are willing to be someone else's Holy Spirit and tell them how they ought to live and what they ought to do in their list of do's and don'ts and whatnot. And these people exist in abundance.

And you know what? They are in our churches. They are in all of our churches. So that in most assemblies there is a commingling of people who know that they are safe and secure in Christ and they are rejoicing in their salvation.

And then there are those to whom if you speak about their salvation the best they can muster is I hope so. I try to be. I want to be.

[23 : 34] I pray a lot and I hope I'll make it by and by. And churches are filled with these guys. Who wants to preach a gospel like that?

Where is the assurance? Where is the confidence? Where is the comfort in that? There isn't any. There isn't any. Well we're drawing to a conclusion here on our scripture sheet and I want to open it for any other comments or questions that you might have.

So I want you to see the distinction between these gospels and fellas this is undeniable and I know it's a popular thing and I've heard it said before. I've heard it said by big name preachers and that is hey there's only one gospel.

There's only one gospel. Well that's true for today. That's true. There is only one good news and that is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

That's the gospel for now. That's the gospel of the grace of God and there is only one gospel. But don't make the mistake of saying there's only one gospel in the Bible. Oh no there isn't.

[24 : 37] There's the gospel of the circumcision, the good news of the circumcision, message that was preached to the Jews. There's the gospel of the grace of God preached by Paul the apostle and fellas these are on two different tracks running simultaneously side by side.

That is one reason why there is so much confusion among Christendom today is because this distinction is not recognized and what is what is more is what is going to happen with the arrival of the gospel of the grace of God through the information that was given to Paul.

The gospel of the circumcision and what was preached to the Jews is going to be faded out. It is going to get thinner and thinner and thinner as time goes by and the gospel of the grace of God is going to get larger and larger and larger.

So one is phasing out, the other is phasing in. And to refuse to see that distinction I can promise you will drop you into a vat of confusion that you cannot swim out of.