

Galatians ch 5 vs 3-6

Galatians ch 5 begins with an exhortation by Paul the apostle, that in the light of all of the things that he's just previously brought to their attention, the fact that they were children of God not through legalism and law but through promise. The promise of sonship through faith in Jesus Christ that they were children not of the spiritual lineage of the bondwoman Hagar but rather they were sons of the free woman Sarah, Hagar representing law and Sarah representing grace. Hagar representing the Old covenant, through the Mosaic Law, Sarah representing the new covenant through Jesus Christ the old covenant leading to slavery and bondage, and bankruptcy, the new covenant leading to freedom, sonship and riches in Christ.

Paul says in light of these facts "*stand fast*" or firm, be perpetually not moved concerning the liberty by which Christ has made us free. I don't have to relate to God any more on the basis of what I do or what I don't do, of what I wear or what I don't wear, Christ has set me free from bondage and given me liberty, now we took note of the fact that the liberty that Christ has died to give us is not a liberty to sin and do whatever we want because where sin abounds grace abounds more. That would be a misunderstanding of the scriptures and an abuse of the grace of God and I would have to question the position of the heart of the individual who had that concept concerning God's grace. Because that is not the liberty by which Christ has made us free.

It's not a liberty to sin, it's freedom from sin because the law keeps us in check showing us in our sin until such time as we're given over to Christ, and we're given over to Christ old things pass away, behold all things are made new, including my nature. That's why I took the time to take you to Romans ch 6 last week, because when we're baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit we're baptized into His death, and Paul tells us in Romans 6:4 "*Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" and He goes on in vs 6-7 to say "*knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.*" and So we are to "*reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

This is the liberty by which Christ has made you free, free from the bondage of legalism, free from the snare and slavery to sin, and so when a person uses the grace of God as a covering to do what they want to do, they lead lives of worldliness. Doing whatever they want, whenever they want and you can't see anything different in their lives then you can in the non-believer and they issue a cliché to justify themselves like thank God we're under grace or who are you to judge me. I'm not judging anybody I'm just simply stating the facts and that person's heart is out of line because they have not so learned Christ.

Now I'm talking about people who claim to be Christians here, if it's someone who doesn't even claim to be a Christian nor express a desire to be so, then it's a totally different ball game, they need to be shown the love of God, it doesn't matter where you've been or what you've done God loves you and desires to fill the void and the emptiness and pain in your life and give you hope and a new life that's everlasting. But if you tell me you know Jesus and you're out there blowing life and have no desire to repent, then I would be very scared if I were you, because you have not so learned Christ. That is not the liberty that you have in Christ and you are in gross misunderstanding at the least or in total rebellion and the bible tells us that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

Leave Gal and turn with me quickly over to Eph ch 4 vs 17-24 Notice vs 20 when you claim to be a Christian and you're out there partying or not really leading a life that's any different then you would any other time whether you were a Christian or not and you know if this applies to you in your own heart. Then you need to repent and get right with God because you have not so learned Christ. Jesus died to give you a new life and expects that you walk in it, rather than wallowing around in the old one. Put your hand to the plow and don't look back. Maybe you've blown it, if you desire to repent Grace is available, don't leave here this morning with out making it right before God in your heart, allow God to wash you and cleanse you and renew your soul this morning.

Now the Galatian believers hadn't slipped into the flesh in that direction, but they were slipping into the flesh through legalism, they began in the Spirit, receiving Jesus Christ by faith, but now they were trying to improve on that by the keeping of the law, rules and regulations, do's and don'ts. and Paul says hey don't get all tangled up in those things, stand fast in the grace, why (vs 2)

If we begin to seek to relate to God on the basis of what we do or maybe what we don't do, then you're no longer relating to God on the basis of what Christ has done for you, and standing in His imputed righteousness to you. and In taking that position you forfeit the profit of Christ's righteousness our your behalf seeking now to stand in your own. We lose out on all that we have been given in Christ, all the abundant riches and perfect righteousness.

You see as I stated a minute ago, the law makes us spiritually bankrupt before God, it places on us a debt that we can't pay, but in Christ we're spiritually rich and blessed to overflowing. and That's what we desire to be beneficiaries of, and drawing from, the riches that are in Christ, the riches of His Grace Eph 1:7. *Rom 2:4 "the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering"* Rom 11:33 *"the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"* *"The riches of His glory"* Rom 9:23, Eph 3:8 *"the unsearchable riches of Christ."* and Here's just a few more, Phil 4:19 *"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."* Col 2:2-3 the *"riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."* Last one Rom 10:12 *"For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, (or religious or irreligious) for the same Lord over all is rich to all who (have their religious regimen down perfect, especially one that someone else laid on them, no (repeat)) call upon Him."*

It's all about relationship, not about ritual, how is it that you interact with those you love, by routine and ritual, or by a loving relationship? God desires that you interact with Him on the same basis, through His Son on the basis of love not legalism. These are the treasures of heaven upon which we can draw from they are to live by and to grow in by which we are to be transformed from glory to glory into the image of Christ.

But if you desire to relate to God by means of your own actions and you desire to spit on the work of the cross by saying in your heart I'm not a bad guy and so I know I'm going to heaven. If all God required was some form of descent moral fiber then Jesus never had to die and in that position you make God out to be a fool, because He let His only Son die the most grueling death known to man and it was completely unnecessary because "good guys" make it. Good guys don't make it, God requires perfection, holiness and love (not on a human scale, but with Him as the standard) from the cradle to the grave and so you need to consider that when you take your stand. Because to trust in your own self-effort is to forfeit the covering of Christ, Christ will profit you nothing. and Yet the scripture is clear that it's only through Christ that we're accepted before God.

Vs3

You've seen those commercials where the person is showing you all that you get for the low, low price and then as if to say you're already as good as stealing from them as it is they say but wait there's more. That's basically what Paul just did, he's saying if you want to relate to God on the basis of your own works, then Christ is of no benefit to you and as if that's not bad enough, but wait, there's more. To submit to one aspect of the law is to submit to the whole law. You can't approach the law like a buffet for righteousness; hmmm I'll take circumcision, the keeping of the Sabbath, a little feast days on the side. But I'll pass on the whole sacrifice thing, the giving of a tenth of all I own, and definitely that whole death penalty for the disrespect to my parents thing.

You can't do that, because the same holy God that stated the law concerning the Sabbath, uttered the laws on sacrifice and the death penalty for certain crimes and tithing. So who are you to decide which laws apply and which ones don't, when God says they all apply. So if you want the law, fine, but you're indebted to the whole law, not just part of it. It would appear that they had just been pressured to observe the Sabbath and circumcision and an occasional feast according to ch 4 vs 10, but Paul is quick to point out that that's not the way it works, it's all or nothing.

To violate the law in any one point is to be guilty of sin and the moment you sin, you're eternally damned, separated from God through out all eternity. James 2:10 "*For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.*" In other words no amount of obedience can make up for or cover over 1 act of disobedience.

Can you imagine driving down the road and getting pulled over for speeding and as the officer comes up to your window you begin to defend yourself, "officer I know I was speeding but come on I've never killed anyone or robbed anyone and I pay my taxes." He'd say that's neat as he wrote you out a ticket because you violated the law, you're guilty of breaking the law and now you suffer the penalty. Now with God it's much more serious because to miss the mark concerning His law is sin, and the wages of sin is death. Not only physical but spiritual as well so to violate the law of God in any point is to fall under the curse of the law, which is death. Deut 27:26 "*Cursed is the one who does not confirm (or continue in) all the words of this law.*" So again we don't have the liberty to decide which laws we want to apply to us and which ones we don't, if you submit to even one aspect of the law to obtain a special standing or higher righteousness in the sight of God, you're indebted to keep the entire law, which is an impossibility.

Vs4

Mark this vs in your bible and know it well, Paul is basically restating what he just said, by desiring to be made acceptable before God based upon your own good ethics or legal code is to become estranged or alienated from Christ. Or as your OKJV would put it "*Christ is become of no effect unto you*" and when you come to the point that Christ is of no effect unto you before God, you're in bad shape. Where the translators have given us this word "estranged" or "of no effect" it comes from a combination of 2 words in the Greek basically meaning that Christ's presence in your life has been made void and so a severance or a separation has been made. That's what happens when you impose upon yourself some legal code by where you seek to be made acceptable in God's sight.

The only thing that makes us acceptable in God's sight is Jesus Christ having shed His blood for the remission of our sin and our believing Him for that work, and when we place our faith (not from our heads, but from our hearts) in Christ, then God imputes His righteousness to your account. But to get all caught up in legalism is to fall from grace, that word fallen means to be driven off course, things were going well and then you took a wrong turn. This same word is used of the flower that withers as the sun scorches down on it. It was once vibrant and full of life and beauty and now having received the influence of an outside source it's dying.

That's what legalism does to you and me, it beats down on us like the blistering sun until eventually we just wither up and die. But the grace of God in Christ makes on full of life, vibrant and beautiful. One way is full of riches untold, the other is weak and beggarly, one results in slavery and bankruptcy before God, the other results in liberty and a love relationship with God. One is law, the other is grace, as for me because I sure can't fulfill or live up to the law, I'll take grace.

Vs5

That's our position as believers, the word "we" here is emphatic, we Christians (as opposed to some others who hold to some position of legalism.) A couple of different points here to emphasize concerning our salvation, our position in Christ, #1 it's through the Spirit. It's not something we bring about through human striving, regardless of what that might entail be it the keeping of the law, or a dress code or anything else. It's something that is sheer, or an absolute miracle. It's something that takes place only in the sphere of the Holy Spirit; it's an activity or a result of the work of the Spirit.

You recall when Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus in John ch 3 and Nicodemus came to Jesus kind of by stealth at night, not wanting anyone to see him and he kind of began beating around the bush with Jesus. and He said "*Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.*" Jesus answered and said to him, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" Nicodemus said to Him, "*How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?*" Jesus answered, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.* (Jesus is making a contrast, a physical birth and a spiritual birth, everyone who is born physically is born of water, that's what happens when you're born the water breaks and next comes the baby or shortly thereafter. But birth into the earthly scene doesn't automatically grant you access into the heavenly scene you must be born of the Spirit as well, so Jesus went on to say.) *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*"

Legalism is born out of the flesh and that which is flesh is flesh, it doesn't get you into the kingdom, that's why we "through the Spirit" eagerly wait. Which is an interesting term isn't it "eagerly wait" there is that sense of eagerness, tired of the struggles that go along with this tent, but he's not speaking of impatience or anxiousness, but rather an expectancy, we wait expectantly. For the "hope" and again it's not a hope like, "gee, I hope this all pans out but I'm really not sure." It's a confident expectation and an assured anticipation. For what? The righteousness, which is by legalism and law? No, by faith, not that we're not righteous in the sight of God now by faith, but we're speaking here of that completed work, we're a work in progress.

Maybe you've seen a T-shirt or a bumper sticker that says be patient God isn't finished with me yet. *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" (Repeat vs 5)*

Not by law, not by legalism, but by faith in the only begotten Son of God. You could cross reference this to Phil 3:9 being *"found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith."* That's what Paul is speaking about right here. and Not to belabor this vs but that's what we wait upon that completed ness, that fulfillment of righteousness by faith. and We patiently wait; waiting just seems to be apart of the life of the child of God. Waiting upon the Lord Ps 25:5

David exemplifying this eager waiting upon the Lord, *"Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day."* Again Ps 62:5 *My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him."* One more (Actually there are many more but for times sake I'll give you one more.) Lam 3:25-26 *"The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should hope and wait quietly For the salvation of the LORD."* Well it probably wouldn't be right if I didn't mention this one, Isa 40:31 *"But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint."*

Such is the life of the believer eagerly waiting, for the hope of righteousness by faith. But that's ok the Lord Jesus Himself eagerly waits to return for His bride, when you get to Rev ch 6 you find an eager awaiting on the behalf of the martyred saints we read there in vs10 *"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"* Eagerly waiting for the Lord to vindicate His own and to satisfy His justice, so as we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith, we can know that we're in good company.

Vs6

In other words regardless of where you've been or what you've done, if you had a highly religious back round or totally heathenistic back round it doesn't matter because in Christ old things pass away and behold all things become new. He's speaking here of total equality in Christ, there are no standards or various levels of righteousness in Christ, he's kind of reiterating what he said in ch 3:28 where we read, *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*

The point being that in Christ we're all the same, so either His righteousness has been imputed to you or it hasn't. and No amount of doing this or not doing that makes a person anymore righteous or holy in the sight of God. So then why do anything, it's kind of the flip side of works righteousness if I'm under grace then I'll sit around and do nothing, well if that's your position then I'd have to question the position of your heart. What do you mean Jeff, are we to work or not, you remember last week I said that there was plenty of work to be done.

The bible tells us that *"we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."* No doubt you're familiar with James 2:14-18 where we read, *"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works."*

So where does the balance lie, well we happen to be there this morning notice with me vs 6 last portion, underline this in your bible; but faith working through *legalism, law, in order to obtain a higher standing in the sight of God?* No, through love, love for God and love for others as a result of the work of God in your life.

Grace doesn't produce lazy Christians, the Christian under grace probably does more than he ever has before, but the motive or the intention of his or her heart is the difference. and That's always going to be the difference, God searches the heart, Faith works, but it's through love, and love is birthed and developed in our hearts through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ Every other type of love is a self-centered kind of love, I do this because of what's in it for me. But the love of God is a giving kind of love, not looking to what I can get but rather what I can give, faith works through love. A saving faith always produces love,.

What did Jesus say *“by this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”* That's the mark of the true child of God, the agape love of God, which we'll see more specifically defined for us as we study the rest of this ch. But faith and love are almost interwoven and inseparable I'll give you just a couple of scriptures in Col 1:4 Paul speaks of praying and giving thanks for the believers there, *“since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints.”* 1 Thess 1:2-3 again *“making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”* and Finally 2 Thess 1:3 he says, *“your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other.”*

For times sake I didn't take you to 1st Cor ch 13 but I'd encourage you to read over it in conjunction with this study and there you'll learn more of this type of love that I'm speaking of, what it is and what it isn't and how no matter what you do as far as works go, if it's done out of any other motivation than this type of love filling you up and spilling out over you and through you to others it's all a wash, it profits nothing.

In Christ it's not a list of got to's it's an opportunity to get to, I don't got to come to church and fellowship with all the people that God gathers here, I get to, it's a privilege. I get to start out my morning with a devotion time, I get to free myself from greed as I give, I get to share Jesus Christ with those that don't know Him outside of these 4 walls. You see that's the difference I don't got to, I get to, it's all about the position of the heart, the reason faith works, isn't out of obligation to the law, but out of opportunity through love, it's not a requirement of the law that I'm bound by. It's the love of Christ that I'm responding to, that constrains me and compels me, sure faith works, but not through legalism, through love.