

"The Application of Grace"

Galatians 5-6

Part 1

Introduction: To begin with this evening I want us to consider a short review of what we have looked at in chapters 3-4 of Galatians. Let us keep in mind the purpose of this letter is to correct the false teaching of the legalists who had come into the churches of Galatia. They were teaching that the believers in Galatia had to be under the Law in order to restrain sin in their lives. Paul writes this letter to explain to them that they were saved by grace through faith and they would be sanctified in the very same way.

Paul started chapter 3 with a series of questions to get his readers to think about their salvation. He then moved on to the example of Abraham. Abraham was saved 400 years before the Law was ever given and approximately 14 years before he was circumcised. He then went on to explain that Jesus came to redeem man from the Law and that no man could keep the Law. This then raised the question, "What then was the purpose of the Law?" Paul answered that by explaining that the Law was given to show man his need of a Savior. The Law was the "schoolmaster" that would lead the sinner to Jesus Christ. The Law has no power to redeem or sanctify it can only show us our problem but it offers no remedy. In chapter 4 Paul then used the illustration of a Roman child who was to be heir of his father's estate. He explained that the child was under a tutor until the time appointed by the father. Then the child was free from the tutor and was free to enjoy the possessions of his father. In the same way sinful man was under the Law until the Father sent the Son in the fulness of time to redeem us and set us free from bondage to enjoy the blessings of our Heavenly Father. Paul went on to relate to them personally as he reflected back on their acceptance of him and their care for him. But now they had seemed to turn on him and view him as an enemy because he taught them the Truth. Paul finished the doctrinal section by point to an allegory. He used Hagar, Sarah, Ishmael, and Isaac to show that believers are the children of promise. Ishmael came about by the works of the flesh and God rejected him. Isaac came about by promise. His birth was brought about by the power of God not the power of Abraham. Paul then concluded that we who are believers are also children of promise and we are saved and sanctified by the power of God not by our own works. We then are children of Sarah (spiritually speaking).

Now we come to Galatians 5 and 6 and in these chapters, Paul will apply what he has already taught to our everyday lives. Before we get to chapter 5, I want to give you a thought that will help us better understand Paul's teaching. Salvation has three stages.

The 3 Stages of Salvation

PastPresentFuture**I have been justified.****I am being sanctified.****I will be glorified.**

I want you to understand that salvation is a package deal. When we talk about being saved it includes all 3 of these stages. In Romans 8 there is a verse that we must consider.

Romans 8:30

³⁰ *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

Here in this verse, we see that we are justified and glorified, Buty there is no mention of being sanctified. Why? Because God justifies us and He will glorify us but the sanctification part is up to us. We must walk by faith in what the Bible says about us as believers and it is then that we are sanctified. All believers are justified and all will be glorified but not all are sanctified because they spend their entire life living in the power of the flesh. Each of the stages is accomplished by the power of God. God justifies us by His power and He will glorify us by His power. He also sanctifies us by His power but we must be surrendered over to the Holy Spirit. You see many people get saved and after salvation they believe that they must live a holy life by their own power. Do you think that God saved us by His power and then left us to ourselves to live holy lives? NO! We still have these sinful bodies and therefore we cannot live holy lives on our own. We cannot keep the Law and we cannot live under a set of rules drawn up by a church. We do not have the power on our own to overcome temptation and sin. We need God's power and that comes by exercising faith in His Word. Just as we exercised faith in His Word when we were justified. Now let us get to chapter 5.

➤ **Avoiding Legalism****Notice Galatians 5:1**

Here in this verse Paul gives 2 commands to the believers. The word "therefore" is here to connect this thought to what we have just come through. It looks back over the review we just did. Paul then explains that we are to stand fast in the liberty that we have in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has set us free from the bondage we were once in. Now let me just point out something here. Paul is writing to Gentiles who were never under the Mosaic Law and we were never under the Mosaic Law. So, from what did Jesus set us free from? We all lived by some set of rules that we had in our minds and we must keep in mind that God's law is written in our hearts.

Romans 2:14-15

¹⁴ *For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:*

¹⁵ *Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)*

So, each of us had some kind of standard we tried to live up to but deep inside we never knew if it was enough. We hoped it was, but we never knew so we tried our best to live up to what we believed God would require so as to be accepted. When we were saved, we were freed from the struggles of trying to please God in our own efforts. We came to realize that we had no power to save ourselves and we trusted in the finished work of Jesus Christ to save us. So, to now turn to the Law or a set of rules that man has demanded we live for holiness, is to go right back to the bondage that we were in before.

In 1865 in the US slavery was officially abolished. But many of the slaves made the choice to remain in slavery for many reasons. Freedom was theirs if they desired it. In the same way many believers remain slaves to the Law because they believe it is the way of holiness. Freedom in grace is available for them if they would just accept it and live by faith.

Paul will now go on and list the repercussions of legalism.

✓ **Legalism hinders the power of Jesus Christ in our lives.**

Notice Galatians 5:2

To be circumcised here is to turn to the Law. For the believer who looks to the Law for sanctification he or she can be sure that the power of Jesus Christ will not be evident in their lives. Jesus is of no profit in this person's life. Why? Because we are to live by faith and when a person lives by the Law then they are living in the power of the flesh and the power of Jesus Christ is hindered in their lives. This person lives the frustrated defeated Christian life. They are saved but they struggle with besetting sin and just cannot find a way to get free. Legalism pushes Jesus Christ aside. These people had trusted Jesus for justification but they then push Him to the side for sanctification. This is what happens when a person gets caught up in legalism. Let us understand that Jesus came to pay our sin debt and also to give us power over sin. Not power in the flesh but power in the Spirit.

1 John 3:5

⁵ *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

2 Peter 1:3-4

³ According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

⁴ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

✓ **Legalism makes us a debtor to the entire Law.**

Notice Galatians 5:3

We have considered this many times in our studies. The point is for someone to turn to the Law for sanctification they are then required to keep the entire Law. God requires perfection.

James 2:10

¹⁰ For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

✓ **Legalism causes the believer to fall from grace.**

Notice Galatians 5:4-6

Let us first of all correct the teaching which many get from this verse as they teach that to fall from grace is to lose your salvation. We know that cannot be the meaning here because it would then contradict many other Scriptures.

John 10:27-30

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

²⁸ And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

²⁹ My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

³⁰ I and my Father are one.

To fall from grace is not to lose one's salvation. It is to turn to works for sanctification and when that happens, we have turned from God's grace that is given to give us victory in our Christian life. We have fallen from grace. Let us notice a verse in Romans that may help.

Romans 5:21

²¹ That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is grace that will keep us saved and will see that we will reach the point of glorification. It is also grace that gives us victory in this stage between justification and glorification. But when we turn to our own ability to overcome sin then we have fallen from the grace that gives us victory in our everyday lives.

Notice Galatians 5:5-6 again.

The righteousness that we desire for our everyday lives is attained by faith in what the Bible says about us as believers.

Romans 6:1-5

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

² God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

³ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

⁴ Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

✓ **Legalism hinders our spiritual growth.**

Notice Galatians 5:7-10

The Galatians had started out great but when they turned to legalism their spiritual growth was hindered. The bottom line was that they had stopped growing. That is what legalism does. It will keep you from moving forward in spiritual maturity.

Notice Galatians 5:8-10

This method of sanctification that they were turning to had not been given to them by God or by Paul. The legalism that had come in was like leaven in the church. It would spread and it would hinder the work of the Holy Spirit. It would eventually produce a critical, cold,

and unfriendly congregation. Legalism is false teaching and when any false teaching comes in it changes the church from what God has called it to be.

Matthew 13:31-32

³¹ *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:*

³² *Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.*

Here we see that Jesus warned about what would happen in this interim age that we live in. False teaching would come in and the church would change into something that Satan and his demons would be comfortable in.

Those who teach any false doctrine will be held accountable on judgment day.

✓ **Legalism takes away the offense of the cross.**

Notice Galatians 5:11

Here in verse 11 Paul makes it clear that legalism takes away the offence of the cross. But what does this mean? The cross is offensive because it strips man of his pride and tells him that he cannot save himself and that he cannot produce holiness in his own power. It was the cross that has taken power from the flesh. The cross is offensive because man wants to do something that he gets the glory for. Legalism takes the offensive away because it makes man believe that he can save himself or that he can produce holiness in his power.

Notice Galatians 5:12

There are two thoughts for this verse.

One is seen in the words of Ryrie.

"Paul suggests, sarcastically that if the Judaizers are so interested in circumcision they should go the whole way and castrate (cut off) themselves as some Pagan priests of the day did."

The other is that Paul desired that the Galatians cut off all contact with the Judaizers.

Conclusion:

From this study we can clearly see why the proper path of sanctification is so important.