



GALATIANS

VERSE-BY-VERSE



SESSION 27 | GALATIANS IN ONE SERMON

GALATIANS: THE FREEDOM OF THE NEW DISPENSATION

- Galatians was written somewhere in the late 50s, most likely. It was written sometime after the Jerusalem conference of Acts 15, and with enough time that Judaizers came from Jerusalem teaching against the conference outcome, but without direct reference to that conference.
- The direct message of the book: The Judaizers wanted the Galatians to live under a partial bondage to the Law (circumcision) in order to accommodate any offense from the Jews (Gal. 5:11). Paul challenged them with the truth that living under Torah is an “all or nothing” proposition.
- The indirect message of the book of Galatians for believers today: this new Pauline dispensation involves a total freedom from the law, even when the law is just performed for appearance sake. Mixing law-abiding with the Christian gospel perverts the Christian gospel and makes it something radically different.

THE FREEDOM GOSPEL

GALATIANS 1:1-12 | PAUL INTRODUCES HIS GOSPEL AND THE DILEMMA OF THE LETTER.

- Galatians 1:1-5 | Paul’s Introduction
 - Paul writes to local churches, as he always does (because there is no “universal” church).
 - Jesus our Savior **gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us.**
 - He accomplished this possibility by becoming **Lord both of the dead and the living** (Rom. 14:9).
 - Deliverance is now a *potential* that is *the will of God*. It is NOT a *reality* that is a *decree* of God.
- Galatians 1:6-10 | Another Gospel
 - Paul or one of his students is **him that called you** (lit, “the one that called you”).
 - The Galatians had accepted the Pauline presentation of the Gospel, but quickly abandoned it for **another gospel which is not another.**
 - A Gospel that is not 100% grace based is a *perverted Gospel*, thus one to be avoided.
 - Anyone who teaches such a Gospel needs to be *anathema* – which can be translated, “put back in their place.”
 - Paul is doing a work of *persuading men* (v. 10) to rely on grace, even though the *man-pleasing* message would be one of works and obedience.
- Galatians 1:11-12 | The Source of Paul’s Gospel
 - Paul claims that the Gospel he preaches did not come from man.
 - Either Paul is arrogant and self-serving (and thus should be rejected) or the Pauline gospel is *different* than that which was proclaimed prior to Paul.

GALATIANS 1:13-24 | PAUL'S THEOLOGICAL JOURNEY PRIOR TO THE MYSTERY

- Galatians 1:13-20 | Saul's Pre-Mystery Testimony
 - Prior to the Damascus road experience, Saul **persecuted the church of God** and was living **more exceedingly zealous** of Judaism than his contemporaries (vv. 13-14).
 - After the Damascus road experience Saul had a few short experiences with the Apostles, but was largely absent from the work of Peter and his flock.
- Galatians 1:21-24 | Saul's Early Ministry among the Jews before the Mystery
 - Sometime after the third-year meeting in Jerusalem (referred to in v. 18), Saul (as he is known at that time) was active in ministry, but not with Peter, and was **unknown by face to the churches of Judea** (v. 22). These churches were **in Christ** through the Gospel of repentance taught by Peter.
 - Saul's preaching at this time was according to **the faith which once he destroyed** (v. 23). This tells us that Saul was teaching (at this time) the *same message as Peter had been teaching after Acts 2*. Thus, Saul has not yet received the mystery at this point in his ministry.

GALATIANS 2:1-21 | PAUL'S THEOLOGICAL JOURNEY AFTER THE MYSTERY

- Galatians 2:1-14 | Paul forces a confrontation between Mystery and Status Quo
 - Fourteen years after the third-year visit (17 total) Paul went to Jerusalem, along with Barnabas and Titus, to have a confrontation between mystery and status quo (v. 1).
 - Paul's journey was **by revelation**. That is, *revelation of the mystery*. Thus by this meeting Paul is going forth to Jerusalem to speak about the Pauline gospel (and we can legitimately call him Paul the Apostle rather than Saul).
 - The second reason Paul went to Jerusalem was because of men who came from Jerusalem to **spy out our liberty** and, ultimately, to **bring us into bondage**.
 - These men were unaware of the mystery and thus we cannot blame them for desiring to "straighten out" Paul.
 - The problem is that they did not come for a discussion, but with an agenda: they worked **privily** (i.e.: deceptively) to bring the bondage of the law.
 - Paul recognized this for what it was: *an attack on the very gospel he taught*. Accordingly, he would not give in **no, not for an hour** (v. 5).
 - When Paul went to the leaders in Jerusalem, *they concurred that Paul had received a revelation* (v. 6).
 - From this point, there are *two gospels* being taught in the New Testament, that of Paul and that of Peter.
 - This was such a dramatic change that Peter had a hard time dealing with the realities.
- Galatians 2:15-21 | Paul explains Justification in the Age of Grace to the Jews
 - These verses are to a very specific group of people: Jews in the age of grace (Jews...knowing..., vv. 15-16).
 - Paul does not say that the law *never* justified, but that a man is not *now* justified by the law. Compare Romans 2:13 for what was true before the Pauline dispensation and Romans 3:28 to see this dispensational change.
 - In verse 17, Paul asks a question for this particular set of Jews: *are we sinners because we seek justification by faith rather than by law?* He answers: **God forbid**.

- Paul insists that these believing Jews cannot now revert to justification by law (v. 18).
- The main reason is that the law will not accept them back (v. 19).
- As believing Jews, they were now living **by the faith of the son of God** (v. 20) because they were **crucified with Christ** and, as such, they should not **frustrate the grace of God** (v. 21) by going back to the law.

GALATIANS 3:1- 5:12 | PAUL CONFRONTS THE JUDAIZERS AND THEIR THEOLOGY

- Galatians 3:1-5 | The Bewitched Galatians
 - Having spoken to believing Jews, now Paul speaks to believing Galatians, in very harsh words.
 - Paul speaks to them as foolish, asking if they are *really* switching from grace to law (v. 2).
 - Whatever suffering the Galatians had experienced due to their Christian faith was going to be **in vain** if they continued following the Judaizers.
- Galatians 3:6-4:7 | The Theology of Pauline Salvation
 - Galatians 3:6-9 | The Example of the Abrahamic Promise
 - Paul's gospel is one of *faith* and not *works*.
 - The Abrahamic covenant was also of *faith* and not *works*.
 - The Abrahamic covenant was not a *saving* covenant and this illustration should not be construed in such a way as to make it one.
 - However, in the same way that the Abrahamic covenant was *by faith* so is the Pauline Gospel. In this way (and only in this way) are those under the Pauline Gospel **children of Abraham** (v.7).
 - The mystery was not revealed until Paul. However, the Old Testament *always* spoke of a time when **God would justify the heathen through faith**. Two important issues:
 - If the scriptures were **forseeing** such a reality, then it *could not have been reality at the time it was spoken*. This goes against so much evangelical (and even dispensational) teaching that salvation has always been *for everyone and by faith*.
 - The justification of the nations by faith was not a mystery. The *timing* of such justification was the mystery.
 - Galatians 3:10-14 | The Works of the Law Are a Curse
 - The curse of the law is that the law demands obedience to the whole.
 - Jesus redeemed the Jewish people (**us**, v. 13) so that **the gentiles** (v. 14) might experience **the blessings of Abraham**.
 - In our dispensation, one can either choose the curse of the law OR the grace of Jesus Christ.
 - Galatians 3:15-18 | The Assurance of the Abrahamic Covenant
 - In any of man's courts of law, a covenant once ratified cannot be unilaterally changed or annulled (v. 15).
 - Just like law doesn't affect the Abrahamic covenant, so it does not stretch forward into grace. Law is a dispensation that stands alone and must remain alone.
 - Galatians 3:19-28 | The Purpose of the Law
 - The law had a *temporary purpose* – to keep the nation of Israel in-tact and not diluted into the nations **till the seed should come** (v. 19).
 - The law was given through the mediation of Moses (vv. 19-20). Moses stood between God and the nation.

- The law was not *against* the Abrahamic covenant (v. 21) but rather *alongside* the promises of that covenant.
- The law **concluded all under sin** (v. 22) because prior to the law, sin was not imputed (Rom. 5:13).
 - While **all** were **concluded...under sin**, the Jewish nation was **kept under the law** (v. 23).
 - There was no way that even the Jewish nation could be justified by faith during this time, because they were **shut up unto the faith** which would only **afterwards be revealed** (v. 23).
- The law, then, was the caretaker, or **schoolmaster** for the Jewish people (v. 24). Now that faith is come, a schoolmaster is no longer needed, and the *law serves no purpose today whatsoever*.
- In this current dispensation, there is no law, and thus **neither Jew nor Greek** (v. 25). Furthermore, justification is now given *by faith*, and thus believers today are all **heirs according to promise** (v. 26), in the same manner that Abraham was for his covenant.
- Galatians 4:1-7 | Sons of God
 - Since we are now **children of God** (3:26), we have the full rights of an heir who has come of age (v. 1).
 - We have no **tutors and governors** (v. 2), being **under bondage** (v. 3).
 - God sent Jesus **in the fulness of time** (v. 4), and He has done the work to allow us to have *no need of the law*.
- Galatians 4:8-20 | Paul's Personal Remarks to the Galatians
 - Galatians 4:8-11 | Paul's Concern for Judaized Galatians
 - The Galatians, being Gentiles, had never lived under the law. However, serving pagan gods, they were in bondage to **weak and beggarly elements** (v. 8-9).
 - Paul's concern was that by slowly going into things of the Jewish law (v. 10) they were being drawn back to bondage.
 - Galatians 4:12-20 | Paul Pleads with the Galatians
 - Paul lets the Galatians know that he has not been injured (emotionally) and wants the relationship restored.
 - The Judaizers were zealously targeting the Galatians, but not for good purpose.
 - Paul had the love of a worried mother to see the Galatians living in faith.
- Galatians 4:21-5:6 | Paul's Final Theological Remarks
 - Galatians 4:21-5:1 | The Illustration of Abraham's Two Sons
 - Paul creates an **allegory** of Abraham's two sons. One son is *of the flesh* while the other is *of promise*.
 - His encouragement: don't be *of the flesh*, but rather **as Isaac was...the children of promise** (v. 28).
 - He wants the Galatians to **cast out the bondwoman**, that is, to rid themselves of the Judaizers (v. 30).
 - The bottom line: **stand fast therefore in liberty** (5:1).
 - Galatians 5:2-6 | Law or Grace but Nothing In-between
 - In these verses, Paul makes perhaps the clearest and loudest proclamation of the entire letter.
 - Those who put their hope in the law cannot also put their hope in Christ. These are mutually exclusive options.

- Any “gospel” which mixes law with grace is simply *not the saving Gospel at all*.
- Now the *waiting room* for **the hope of righteousness** (v. 5) is a different place than it used to be. Now, **through the Spirit** the waiting is **by faith**. Why? Because *circumcision availeth nothing* (v 6).
- Galatians 5:7-12 | The Galatians Poisoned by an Outsider
 - Sadly, the Galatians had left Pauline teaching (vv. 7-8).
 - More sadly, it only took a little bit of persuasion (vv. 8-9).
 - Paul has confidence that the Galatians will return (v. 10). He also is convinced that there will be judgment on the one(s) who brought the Judaizing heresy.

GALATIANS 5:13-6:18 | A GRACE WAY OF LIFE

- Galatians 5:13-26 | The Spirit or The Flesh
 - The liberty of the “grace way of life” can be misused (like almost any good thing).
 - Just as **all the law is fulfilled** in love (v. 14), the same is true of grace-living.
 - **Fulfilled** does not mean “completed,” but “finished off,” like icing on the cake.
 - Living liberty without love has disastrous short-term consequences.
 - The grace-living requires walking in the Spirit to avoid **the lusts of the flesh** (vv. 16-17).
 - A Spirit-led walk is not a law-led walk (v. 18), but avoids the same things the law forbids.
 - As people who **live in the Spirit** we need to also **walk in the Spirit** (v. 25). We know we are walking in the Spirit if we are bearing the **fruit of the Spirit** (vv. 22-23).
- Galatians 6:1-10 | Practical Instruction
 - The grace way of life includes some beautiful instructions for everyday living, including:
 - When others mess up, help them! (vv. 1-2)
 - Live humbly (vv. 3-5)
 - Have an honest self-evaluation
 - Let your own work be your own standard (beat your personal best rather than beat up the other guy).
 - Don’t wait on others to carry your load, just pick it up and take a step forward.
 - Be a material blessing to those who are a spiritual blessing to you (v. 6).
 - Recognize the law of sowing and reaping, especially when it comes to lifestyle (vv. 7-8).
 - Find good things to do and do them as often as you have opportunity (vv. 9-10).
- Galatians 6:11-18 | Paul’s Closing Remarks
 - The bottom-line of the Judaizers way of life: *they wanted to look good among men* (v. 12-13).
 - The bottom-line for Paul, our example in living: *he wanted to glory in the cross alone* (v. 14-15).
 - Paul’s rule: *only recognize the new creature, never recognize by fleshly achievement* (vv. 15-16).
 - Paul’s benediction for those who walk after this rule: **peace be upon them** (v. 16).
 - Paul closes his letter in a prayer of peace, and in personal peace: *he has said his piece and is at peace and wishes peace* on his listeners (vv. 17-18).