

## Paul's Letter to the Galatian Churches – Part 2 (late 48)

Galatians 4:8–6:18

### Paul's Own Life and Ministry Confirms Justification Apart from Circumcision

4:8 However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods.  
 9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?  
 10 You observe days and months and seasons and years.  
 11 I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.  
 12 I beg of you, brethren, become as I *am*, for I also *have become* as you *are*. You have done me no wrong;  
 13 but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time;  
 14 and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus *Himself*.  
 15 Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.  
 16 So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?  
 17 They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them.  
 18 But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you.  
 19 My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you—  
 20 but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

### An Allegory to Illustrate Justification Apart from Circumcision

21 Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?  
 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. [cf. [Gen 16, 21](#)]  
 23 But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.  
 24 This is allegorically speaking, for these *women* are two covenants: one *proceeding* from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar.  
 25 Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.  
 26 But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.  
 27 For it is written,

“REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR;  
 BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR;  
 FOR MORE NUMEROUS ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE  
 THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND.” [\[Isa 54:1\]](#)

28 And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.  
 29 But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, so it is now also.  
 30 But what does the Scripture say?

“CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON,  
 FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN.” [\[Gen 21:10\]](#)

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

### Stand Firm in Your Freedom

5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.  
 2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you.  
 3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.  
 4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.  
 5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.  
 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.  
 7 You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?  
 8 This persuasion *did not come* from Him who calls you.  
 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump *of dough*.  
 10 I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.  
 11 But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.  
 12 I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.

**Don't Allow Your Freedom to Become a License for the Flesh**

13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do* not *turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." [[Lev 19:18](#)]

15 But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

**Spiritual Responsibilities**

6:1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. [cf. [1 Cor 9:19–23](#)]

3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

4 But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have *reason for* boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.

5 For each one will bear his own load.

6 The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches *him*.

7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

**Closing Remarks**

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

12 Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

13 For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh.

14 But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. [cf. [1 Cor 7:19](#)]

16 And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

17 From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

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