

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 Formerly when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods at all.

9 But now that you have come to know God (or rather to be known by God), how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless basic forces? Do you want to be enslaved to them all over again?

10 You are observing religious days and months and seasons and years.

11 I fear for you that my work for you may have been in vain.

12 I beg you, brothers and sisters, become like me, because I have become like you. You have done me no wrong!

13 But you know it was because of a physical illness that I first proclaimed the gospel to you,

14 and though my physical condition put you to the test, you did not despise or reject me. Instead, you welcomed me as though I were an angel of God, as though I were Christ Jesus himself!

15 Where then is your sense of happiness now? For I testify about you that if it were possible, you would have pulled out your eyes and given them to me!

16 So then, have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?

17 They court you eagerly, but for no good purpose; they want to exclude you, so that you would seek them eagerly.

18 However, it is good to be sought eagerly for a good purpose at all times, and not only when I am present with you.

19 My children—I am again undergoing birth pains until Christ is formed in you!

20 I wish I could be with you now and change my tone of voice, because I am perplexed about you.

An Allegory to Illustrate Justification Apart from Circumcision

21 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, do you not understand the law?

22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. [cf. [Gen 16, 21](#)]

23 But one, the son by the slave woman, was born by natural descent, while the other, the son by the free woman, was born through the promise.

24 These things may be treated as an allegory, for these women represent two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai bearing children for slavery; this is Hagar.

25 Now Hagar represents 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, and she is our mother.

27 For it is written:

*“Rejoice, O barren woman who does not bear children;
break forth and shout, you who have no birth pains,
because the children of the desolate woman are more numerous
than those of the woman who has a husband.”* [[Isa 54:1](#)]

28 But you, brothers and sisters, are children of the promise like Isaac.

29 But just as at that time the one born by natural descent persecuted the one born according to the Spirit, so it is now.

30 But what does the scripture say? *“Throw out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman will not share the inheritance with the son”* of the free woman. [[Gen 21:10](#)]

31 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman but of the free woman.

Stand Firm in Your Freedom

5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not be subject again to the yoke of slavery.

2 Listen! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you at all!

3 And I testify again to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law.

4 You who are trying to be declared righteous by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace!

5 For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait expectantly for the hope of righteousness.

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision carries any weight—the only thing that matters is faith working through love.

7 You were running well; who prevented you from obeying the truth?

8 This persuasion does not come from the one who calls you!

9 A little yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise!

10 I am confident in the Lord that you will accept no other view. But the one who is confusing you will pay the penalty, whoever he may be.

11 Now, brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed.

12 I wish those agitators would go so far as to castrate themselves!

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

13 For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity to indulge your flesh, but through love serve one another.

14 For the whole law can be summed up in a single commandment, namely, *"You must love your neighbor as yourself."* [[Lev 19:18](#)]

15 However, if you continually bite and devour one another, beware that you are not consumed by one another.

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

17 For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want.

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

19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity,

20 idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions,

21 envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: 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, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

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

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit.

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another.

Spiritual Responsibilities

6:1 Brothers and sisters, if a person is discovered in some sin, you who are spiritual restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness. Pay close attention to yourselves, so that you are not tempted too.

2 Carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will 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 Let each one examine his own work. Then he can take pride in himself and not compare himself with someone else.

5 For each one will carry his own load.

6 Now the one who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with the one who teaches it.

7 Do not be deceived. God will not be made a fool. For a person will reap what he sows,

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

9 So we must not grow weary in doing good, for in due time we will reap, if we do not give up.

10 So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who belong to the family of faith.

Closing Remarks

11 See what big letters I make as I write to you with my own hand!

12 Those who want to make a good showing in external matters are trying to force you to be circumcised. They do so only to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.

13 For those who are circumcised do not obey the law themselves, but they want you to be circumcised so that they can boast about your flesh.

14 But may I never 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 circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that matters is a new creation! [cf. [1 Cor 7:19](#)]

16 And all who will behave in accordance with this rule, peace and mercy be on them, and on the Israel of God.

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

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.

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