

The Book of Galatians

Introduction

Paul had visited Galatia during both his second and third missionary journeys, and his work here had been extremely successful. The Galatians were an emotional and intense people and great numbers of Gentiles had eagerly accepted Christ. However, serious problems began to arise after Paul left. A group of Jewish teachers called "Judaizers" insisted that the Gentiles could not be Christians without keeping the laws of Moses – specifically circumcision. This group also challenged both the authority and message of Paul.

The book of Galatians therefore is written to these churches to both defend his calling and to clarify his message. His message is simple – a person is not saved by faith PLUS keeping the law, but by FAITH ALONE. Galatians is the Christian's Magna Carta or Declaration of Independence from the law, and has served to free millions of Christians from legalism. It was Martin Luther's favorite book and provided the fuel for the Protestant Reformation.

Brief Outline:

- Paul Defends His Calling (Chapters 1-2)
- Paul Explains the Gospel (Chapters 3-4)
- Paul Explains How to Practice the Gospel (Chapters 5-6)

Key Word – Freedom

Key Idea: Saved by Grace Alone through Faith Alone

Key Verse – Galatians 2:16 - *"knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ"*

The Message of Galatians

I. Paul Defends His Calling (1-2)

Paul reminds the Galatians that this Gospel did not come from man, but rather was revealed by God. He says that even if an angel from Heaven preached another gospel, they should be accursed. Will we follow and trust in the opinions and thoughts of man or will we follow and trust in the Word of God?

Some people during this time were saying – We are special. We've got rights! Paul reminds them in Galatians 2:20 that they had forfeited their fights. When we asked Jesus to do for us what we could NEVER do for ourselves we put our strength and resources to death.. Now, we depend on the resources and strength of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit- the only way we can succeed in this life. As Paul, we say, "I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

II. Paul Explains the Gospel (3-4)

Paul further explains salvation through grace alone by faith alone using two examples:

1. Abraham

Paul uses the example of Abraham to demonstrate that no one has ever been saved by the law. In Galatians 3:6-7 Paul shows that Abraham was justified by his faith many years before the law was ever established

2. School Master

In Galatians 3:24 Paul compares the law to a schoolmaster. In this time, the schoolmaster was regarded as a strict disciplinarian. Yet the goal of a disciplinarian is always improvement. And so it is with the law – it served as a spiritual guide to bring us to Christ.

III. Paul Explains How to Practice the Gospel (5-6)

In this section, Paul gives Christians the key to victory over our biggest struggles in our daily walk with Christ.

Enemies of Freedom

Enemy #1 - Legalism (5:1-4) – Legalism says, “There are things that you can do that will make you more acceptable to God “

The Truth:

Producing righteous living falls outside of our job description. When it comes to producing righteousness – whether for salvation or for living we must allow God to do the work. Anytime we try to live out the Christian life (I’m going to do better) in our own strength we have just entered into legalism!

Enemy #2 - License (5:13) – License says, “I have been forgiven so I can now live however I want.”

Where legalism says I can do something, License says I choose to do nothing! Anytime we take the gifts God has given us and use them for our own gain and glory we have just given into to this! We say “Thanks for salvation, no thanks with service”

The Truth:

In both legalism and license we are saying I don’t need you God! Satan will do anything to get us to believe we don’t need the Holy Spirit. **Liberty says I NEED YOU GOD!**

Liberty (5:5) – *“For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith”*

How do I get His power involved with my weakness? The same way you came to Him for salvation – through faith (Forsaking All I trust Him)

We come to salvation by admitting that we are sinners incapable of saving ourselves and by faith trust Jesus as our only way for salvation. But then, our tendency is to say, “OK I’ll take it from here.” We wrongly assume that it is our job to live right, change ourselves, and become a better person. We are **no more** able to live righteous lives than we are able to save ourselves. The Spirit filled life is a life of faith. It started on faith, and it runs on faith

Personal Application:

A Prayer of Faith:

Lord I claim victory right now over _____. I recognize that I cannot handle it or overcome it in my own strength, but I serve a God who can and right now I trust that You will!