

Galatians 5:1-15 Fighting For Freedom in Christ

I. Stand Firm in The Freedom of Christ (1-6)

A. The Command to Stand in Freedom (1)

1. It was for the purpose of freedom that Christ set us free
2. Paul exhorts the Galatians to continue standing in that freedom of grace
 - a. "Stand" is a continuous action not a one time event
 - b. "Keep on Standing" – means to hold fast to the truth of the gospel of grace and the sufficiency of Christ
3. Paul exhorts the Galatians not to place themselves back under the slavery of the law
 - a. Remember the previous section where Paul contrasts the slavery of law and the freedom of the gospel – which was seen in Hagar and Sarah
 - b. The Galatians are not to allow others to bring them into slavery again. They are to hold fast to what Christ purchased for them.

B. The Consequences of Not Standing in Freedom (2-4)

1. Adding to Grace is Returning to the Law (2-3)

- a. Submitting to Circumcision is to Forfeit the Benefit of Christ (2)
 - i. Adding circumcision to the gospel nullifies Christ's sufficiency
 - Jesus is either sufficient for salvation and righteousness or he is not – there is no middle ground
 - To add the smallest work of the law is to destroy the perfection of Grace
 - ii. Adding circumcision to the gospel destroys the benefit of Christ's death
 - The Galatians are being told circumcision will add to their spiritual state and their righteousness
 - Paul says that circumcision will nullify their righteousness before God (which is Christ's work on the cross)
- b. Submitting to Circumcision is to Be Indebted to the Whole Law (3)
 - i. Adding circumcision is not just a minor element which believers may disagree
 - ii. Adding the tiniest law to the gospel is to destroy grace – therefore, righteousness will only come when the Entire law is kept – and not before

- iii. Righteousness by Grace or by the Law are mutually exclusive – It's either one or the other. They cannot be mixed.
 - 2. Returning to the Law Forfeits the Grace of Christ (4)
 - a. Those who seek justification by Law have removed themselves from Grace
 - i. "Fallen from Grace" does not mean "lose your salvation." It means you have removed yourself from the realm of Grace. There is no grace available for those who trust their own righteousness
 - ii. Man cannot be justified by law and by grace at the same time – Grace is unmerited favor and law-keeping, by nature involves merit.
 - b. Those who seek Justification by Law receive no Effect from Christ's sacrifice
- C. The Demonstration of Standing Firm (5-6)
 - 1. Those standing in Grace Wait for the Promise (5)
 - a. They wait for the hope of righteousness by faith
 - b. They wait for the hope of righteousness through the Spirit
 - 2. Those standing in Grace have a faith that works in love (6)
 - a. Righteousness before God does not depend on circumcision
 - b. Being circumcised or being uncircumcised doesn't make a difference at all in the gospel
 - c. What matters is being born again (see Gal. 6:15) and that new birth manifests itself in a faith that works through love – the evidence of righteousness is not the cutting of the flesh but the outworking of a changed life.
- II. Stand Firm Against Those Who Corrupt the Gospel (7-12)
 - A. Teachers of Righteousness by Law Are Not from God (7-8)
 - 1. The Galatians were running well when Paul left them
 - a. They were trusting in the gospel alone
 - b. They were living by faith in God's son
 - 2. The Galatians are being hindered from obeying the truth
 - a. They Judaizers are telling them they have not obeyed God fully until they are circumcised
 - b. Paul tells them that the Judaizers are actually the ones hindering them from obeying God.
 - c. Adding to the gospel of Christ is deception
 - 3. This Teaching that hinders them does not come from God
 - a. God never contradicts Himself
 - b. The Gospel of Christ is God's good news of salvation to all mankind everywhere

- c. Any person who teaches a different gospel is accursed of God (See Gal. 1:8)
- B. Teachers of Righteousness by Law are Destroying Grace (9)
 - 1. Even a small issue like circumcision is deadly to grace
 - 2. A little leaven spreads throughout the whole lump of dough
 - 3. Once a tiny law is introduced as necessary for righteousness, the whole law comes rushing in as necessary also – grace is thereby nullified.
- C. Teachers of Righteousness by Law will Be Judged (10)
 - 1. Paul is confident that the believers in Galatia will submit to his teaching “in the Lord” (Because they are indwelt by the Spirit)
 - 2. Paul is quick to warn those teaching contrary to the gospel that judgment awaits them whoever they are
 - a. Those who deceive have the blood of the deceived on their hands
 - b. Those who deceive as teachers will reap a greater condemnation (see James 3:1)
- D. Teachers of Righteousness by Law Misrepresent Paul (11)
 - 1. Paul seems to defend himself here against the accusation that he teaches circumcision when he is among Jewish believers. Paul says, “if that is true, why do they persecute me?”
 - 2. Notice that Paul says if he did preach circumcision along with the gospel it would remove the offense of the cross.
 - 3. Keeping laws is a sure way to tell if people are watering down the gospel of Christ
- E. Paul Vents His Frustration at Teachers of Righteousness by Law (12)
 - 1. The Text says, “I would they were even cut off which trouble you.” (KJV)
 - 2. The word “cut off” there is used in the Greek Version of Deuteronomy 23:1 to speak of making a man a eunuch.
 - 3. Paul in essence is saying those who are standing over you with the knife should finish the job and emasculate themselves.
YIKES!!!