

Highlights from the Book of Galatians

Brief Outline of Galatians:

Galatians 1 & 2: Personal – Grace and the Gospel

Galatians 3 & 4: Doctrinal – Grace and the Law

Galatians 5 & 6: Practical – Grace and the Christian Life

Four Significant Themes of Galatians:

1. The Establishing of Paul's Apostolic Authority
2. We Must Detecting and Defend Against Doctrinal Error
3. Justification is by Faith in Christ Alone
4. Christian Liberty Makes It Possible to Restore Those Who Fall Into Error

On the most important doctrine of faith and justification by Christ alone, Martin Luther said:

- “We have to fear lest Satan take from us this doctrine of faith, and bring into the Church again the doctrine of works and men's traditions. Wherefore it is very necessary that this doctrine be kept in continual practice and public exercise, both of hearing and reading.”
- “If this doctrine be lost, then is also the doctrine of truth, life, and salvation also lost and gone. If this doctrine flourish, then all good things flourish; religion, the true service of God, the glory of God, the right knowledge of all things which are necessary for a Christian man to know.”
- “For if the article of justification be once lost, then is all true Christian doctrine lost.”

Regarding the law, in April 1857, Charles Spurgeon preached a sermon entitled *The Uses of the Law*. In this sermon he gave 5 uses of the law:

- 1) The first use of the law is **to manifest to man his guilt**.
- 2) The law serves **to slay all hope of salvation of a reformed life** (future obedience can be no atonement for past guilt)
- 3) The law is intended **to show man the misery which will, fall upon him through his sin**.
- 4) It was sent into the world **to show the value of a Saviour**.
- 5) It was sent into the world **to keep Christian men from self-righteousness**.

Perhaps a summary of the entire book of Galatians comes from this quote of Martin Luther:

“Now the true way to Christianity is this, that a man do first acknowledge himself by the law, to be a sinner and that it is impossible for him to do any good work. For the law saith thou art a corrupt tree, thou canst not bring forth good fruit, all that thou thinkest, speakest, or doest is against God. Thou canst not therefore deserve grace by thy works: which if thou go about to do, thou doublest thine offence: for since thou art an evil tree, thou canst but bring forth evil fruits, that is to say sins. ‘For whatsoever is not faith is sin.’ Wherefore he that would deserve grace by works going before faith, goeth about to please God with sins, which is nothing else but to heap sin upon sin, to mock God, and to provide His wrath. The first part then of Christianity is the preaching of repentance, and the knowledge of ourselves, of what we are, namely sinners. The second part is: if thou wilt be saved, thou mayest not seek salvation by works, ‘for God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him’. He was crucified and died for thee, and offered up thy sin in His own body. Here is no congruence or work done by grace, but wrath, sin, terror, and death. Wherefore the law doth nothing else, but utter sin, terrify, and humble, and by this means prepareth us to justification, and driveth us to Christ. For God hath revealed unto us by His word, that He will be unto us a merciful Father, and without our deserts (for we can deserve nothing) will freely give unto us remission of sins, righteousness, and life everlasting for Christ His Son's sake.”

About glorying in the Cross of Christ, John Brown wrote:

“In this glorying in the Cross of Christ, the apostle sets an example which should be followed by every Christian, and especially by every Christian minister. Indeed, we are not Christians at all, in the true sense of that word, if we are not glorying in the Cross – in the Cross alone – as the ground of our hope. It is to be feared that multitudes are deceiving themselves on this all-important point. They say they are depending on Christ; but in many cases, if they would but ‘examine themselves,’ they would find that they are depending on themselves. They expect pardon and salvation, not solely because Christ, the just One, died in the room of the unjust, but entirety, or in part, on the ground of their not being so bad as others, or of their repentance, their reformation, their good intentions, their alms deeds. If they think of the Cross as a ground of reliance at all, it is only as something to have recourse to in order to supply the deficiencies of other grounds of hope. This is not to glory in the Cross; it is to do it foul dishonor. ‘Other foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid.’ From the beginning to the end of Christ's religion, the weight of our eternal hopes must rest solely on the Cross.”

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How would you finish this sentence? If I want to be a really good Christian I must As the back cover of Warren Wiersbe's commentary Be Free – Exchange Legalism for True Spirituality continues, "How you finish that sentence is critical. Finish it incorrectly, as many people do, and you fall into the same trap that ensnared the first-century Christians in Galatia." Below are, in my opinion, 16 correct ways that I have encountered in my study.

1) If I want to be a really good Christian I must be delivered from this present evil world by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. (1:4)

2) If I want to be a really good Christian I must stand unwavering in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (1:6-10)

3) If I want to be a really good Christian I must know that the Gospel is the very truth of God and not the invention of men. (1:12)

4) If I want to be a really good Christian I must rejoice and be consoled by or find rest in the fact that it is not through works of the flesh or the law but rather through the grace of the Lord Jesus that both Jew and Gentile are saved. (2:11-16)

5) If I want to be a really good Christian I must be living by the faith of the One Who loved me and gave Himself for me. (2:20)

6) If I want to be a really good Christian, I must have received the spirit by the hearing of faith and not by the works of the law and I must be perfected by this same faith. (3:2-3)

7) If I want to be a really good Christian, I must be a child of promise who lives by faith. (3:11-18)

8) If I want to be a really good Christian, I must be an adopted son and not a child in bondage. (4:3-5)

9) If I want to be a really good Christian, I must be a free child of promise who casts away the bondage of the flesh. (4:30-31)

10) If I want to be a really good Christian I must be circumcised in the heart not in the flesh. (5:2-6)

11) If I want to be a really good Christian I must through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. (5:5)

12) If I want to be a really good Christian I must search for leaven in my life and I must strive to purge it out when I find it. (5:9)

13) If I want to be a really good Christian I must fulfill the law – by loving my neighbor as myself. (5:14)

14) If I want to be a really good Christian I must have a life that yields the fruit of the Spirit by yielding to the Spirit. (5:22-25)

15) If I want to be a really good Christian I must pursue my fellow-Christian's highest good, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. And I'll do this all because Christ bore my burden. (6:2)

16) If I want to be a really good Christian I must glory in the cross and only in the cross. (6:14)