

Galatians 6:11-18

(Matt 6)

“Motive Matters”

Not only *what* we do, but *why* we do it matters to God... The bible is replete w/scripture regarding the motive of man. *Why* do you do the things that you do? We read in the book of Proverbs, “*Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, But the Lord weighs the hearts.*”¹ You see it goes beyond *what* we do (even if we did right), the question is *why* we did it?

You’re in Matt 6, allow me to draw your attention to the very 1st Vs (Vs 1-6; 16-18). Charitable deeds, praying, fasting (in another place Jesus spoke of giving), all good things to do, but they can count for nothing before God predicated upon *why* they were done. In 1 Cor 3, Paul, in speaking of the day we stand before the Lord makes it clear that regardless of *what* we’ve done, the *reason* we’ve done it will become apparent & based upon *that* those things will either burn like wood, hay & stubble, or become precious jewels & great rewards. Why do you do what you do? ... It’s important. A *good* work can be spoiled by a *bad* motive.

As a believer there are 2 basic motives that we have for doing everything we do. We can either do what we do for *God’s glory*, or we do it for *our own glory*. We can either do things w/a heart to point all power, all blessing & all glory to *God*... or we can do things ever so subtly in such a way so that people are able to see how good, how great, how humble or how spiritual we truly are.

Paul told the Corinthians, “*...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*” 1 Cor 10:31
Peter; in speaking of how we’re to love one another, & serve one another said, “*If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*”²

We can live for the praise of men, or for the glory of God, & it all comes back to motive... Oh how we need like David to set our hearts *before* God, that we might be searched *by* God. David cried, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*”³
“Know me, try me, see if there’s any motive amiss in me & purge me of impurities...”

Vs 11

¹ The New King James Version. (1982). [Pr 21:2]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² The New King James Version. (1982). [1 Pe 4:11]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ The New King James Version. (1982). [Ps 139:23-24]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Now when we read this, initially we're sorta left to scratch our heads & wonder why Paul would even say this. #1 Why point out that he's writing (wouldn't that seem obvious) & #2 why draw attention to the size of the font ☺?

Well, actually it wouldn't be obvious that Paul was writing. In fact, his typical custom would be to dictate his message to a scribe of sorts who would pen the letter for him but then at the *end* of the letter he would add sort of a "postscript" a "P.S." (if you will) to authenticate that the letter was actually from him. Believe it or not people would actually seek to write & circulate letters that they *claimed* the apostle wrote which in reality he didn't write at all. So in order to combat the forgery he developed this style of tagging something on at the end by his own hand so that people could rest in the authenticity of the letter. You can find other examples of this kind of "postscript" to his letters in 1st Cor 16, Col 4, 2 Thess 3.

So for him to draw attention to the writing of his own hand wasn't altogether uncommon. The bigger question is why is he pointing out the large letters that he was using? For some reason he wants them to note the difference between the size of the letters his scribe/secretary was using the size of the letters *he's* using.

Some wonder if it was perhaps because he had bad eyesight (as we speculated back in Ch 4) therefore he was saying, "See, you know it's me, I gotta use these big letters so that I can even see what I'm writing to you." I suppose there's some plausibility to that but to me it doesn't really complete the puzzle, why point out the obvious like that?

Let me ask you a question. When you're texting/emailing someone (or posting on your chosen social media site) & you reach over & hit the "all caps" key, why do you do that? It's because you want what you're getting ready to say to be really emphatic, right? It's almost like you're shouting through the letters, it's like "DON'T MISS THIS!" To me that seems way more practical, Paul is pointing out that he has something important to say in conclusion here & it's critical that they not miss it, he's not ending the letter conventionally, but emphatically... Notice.

Vs 12-13

Let's quickly recap why it is that Paul wrote this letter to the Galatians. In short it was all about getting right & staying right w/God, yes? & In reality that should be the chief aim of our lives, shouldn't it? I mean, some people perhaps think, "I dunno pastor, I got real life problems. You're up there talking about God & all (& I suppose that's good) but I got practical issues, I got bills to pay, my marriage is in duress, I got *this issue* or *that problem*."

“I’m just not sure where *getting* right w/God, or *being* right w/God factors into those things at all.” Listen, the bible teaches that being right w/God is the most important thing you could ever concern yourself with (for more than one reason). #1 Even if you’re the most healthy/wealthy successful individual there is, if you’re not right w/God it’s not going to count for much in the end is it? You could be the most successful person to ever make your way to hell... So there’s an eternal aspect to life that we need to consider, your last day alive on this planet isn’t your last day living.

But not only that the bible teaches that if we’ll prioritize our relationship w/the Lord, if we’ll seek 1st the Kingdom of God & His righteousness, that God will make it His business to meet our needs (not our greeds, but our needs) (Matt 6:33). So even should you have a problem in *this* area of your life, or *that* area or maybe *many areas* of your life. It’s still of paramount importance that we come back to the word of God & make it our aim to not only *get* right w/God, but to *stay* right w/God, to walk w/Him & honor Him w/our lives...

Well, there were certain people who were infiltrating the area of Galatia & trying to impose upon them a set of rules & regulations that they needed to keep if they wanted to be right & stay right w/God. & Paul has spent this entire letter systematically dismantling that position. They were seeking to subject these believers to the law of Moses. Telling them if they really be right w/God it was fine if they believed in Jesus, but they also needed to be circumcised, to honor the Sabbath, to keep the feasts & festivals, new moons & all of that. Today one might say, “Well believing in Jesus is good, but until your baptized, or unless you give so much or show up each week at church, you’re really not right w/God.”

But what Paul is saying is, “Hey, all that’s a bunch of bologna, the way you get right w/God & stay right w/God is by grace through faith in J.C. & that’s it! It’s not about what you *do*, it rests entirely upon what He’s *done*. It’s not about being subjected to rules outwardly, it’s about submitting to the Person of the Holy Spirit inwardly, it’s not in following the law of *Moses*, it’s in walking in the love of *God*.”

Now what Paul does is shine a light on the *motive* as to *why* these guys are even seeking to subject them to these standards in the 1st place. & He says, “Listen, these guys aren’t concerned for your righteousness, they’re not trying to win people to Jesus or to help you grow in grace, they just want another notch on their belt. They’re wanting one more reason to brag to their peers about how great *they’ve* done.

Their interest isn't in *you*, it's in *themselves*. They're not looking to *glorify God*, but rather to gain the *praise of men...*" They saw these gentiles that they converted to Judaism as badges of achievement, trophies in their case...

You know, "I converted 3 gentiles to Judaism this week!" "That's nothing, I convinced 5 of them, & they were circumcised & everything!" It was like a mutual admiration club, it wasn't a concern for the salvation of the souls of men. Today you might hear things like, "We baptized 8 people this week." Or "We baptized 45 people this month." Well, that's great, but why even keep the record? Now it's not wrong to want to follow up, & disciple & see the Kingdom increase. But if it's a merit badge, a sign of how spiritual or how great you are... now it's not to the glory of God, but it's for the praise of men.

Paul says, "These guys are having you circumcised for 2 reasons, #1 To avoid persecution & #2 for the praise of men. It's for the outward show. It keeps them in good standing w/the religious leaders back in Jerusalem (they aren't ostracized or excommunicated from the temple) & it keeps them off the radar of Roman persecution. Judaism was an accepted/sanctioned religion by Rome, Christianity wasn't.

Now again let me say that circumcision, keeping the Sabbath & so forth, none of those things are wrong. If someone wants to do those things they're free to. But if they're being *compelled* to, made to believe that they're not right w/God unless they do, that's a major problem. It causes me to abandon the sufficiency of Christ & trust in my own efforts to gain me approval in the sight of God & *now* rather than being right *with* God, you're in sin *before* God.

Beyond that Paul says, "Don't be fooled even for a second, they're seeking to subject *you* to the law, but not even *they themselves* keep the law." That's what Paul was pointing out back in Ch 3, the law doesn't bring justification, it brings condemnation, not because there's something wrong w/the law, but because there's something wrong w/us. We're sinners. Far from making us righteous, it reveals to us our sinfulness.

You might write it down & look it up later (Acts 15) Peter there pointing out as well that it didn't make sense to put a yoke on the neck of the Gentile believers (referring to the burden of the law) which neither they nor their forefathers were able to bear. *Keeping the law is a non-option it can't be done. It wasn't given to make us righteous, but to show us that we're sinners in need of a Savior...* So Paul says, "Don't be deceived, all they're interested in is statistics to report, when you do what they say it makes them look good."

Vs 14-15

Let me remind you here as well that Paul has spoken of the lusts of the flesh versus walking in the Spirit. What these Vs are showing us is that the Spirit led believer lives *not* for the praise of men, but for the glory of God... When human merit is excluded, than human boasting becomes impossible. We read in the 9th Ch of the book of Jer, *"Thus says the Lord: 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,' says the Lord."*⁴

When human merit is left out of the equation, than we got nothing to brag about. & When it comes to the Salvation that God has provided, it has nothing to w/man & everything to do w/the work accomplished upon the cross of J.C. ☺!

So in essence Paul is saying, "God forbid that I boast in some kind of accomplishment of my own, I will make my boast in the cross of J.C." Now if anyone was able to boast in their own accomplishments it was Paul. Look quickly to **Phil 3** (2-11).

Paul couldn't care less about the glory that came from fame, or the glory that came from riches, or power or status among men. He was dead to those things; they carried no appeal *to* him & had no influence *upon* him. He gloried only in the cross of our Lord J.C.! **Now when he uses the word "cross", he's not speaking of that piece of wood upon which Jesus was nailed. But rather all that the cross speaks to, the entire doctrine of salvation made available through the shed blood, death & resurrection of J.C. as the substitutionary atonement for our sin.**

Now for us to hear of Paul glorying in the cross, it doesn't sound that strange. Because we're 2,000 yrs, cultures & nations removed. We look at the cross in sort of a sentimental fashion. We wear it as jewelry around our neck or in our ears. **But in Paul's day the cross wasn't a pleasant piece of jewelry; it was the lowest form of death & the ultimate in humiliation. It stood for rejection & shame, it would be as if you gloried in the hangman's noose, or the electric chair, "I'll make my boast in the lethal injection." Who would say such a thing?** But that's what Paul is saying here... He chose something utterly despicable, utterly contemptible & shameful as the basis of his boasting—the cross of J.C.

Why would he do that? A # of reasons really. #1 He knew the **Person** of the cross. Jesus is mentioned some 45 times in the book of Galatians.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Je 9:23-24]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Paul was captivated by the Person of J.C.; God & Man perfect in One. Our kinsman redeemer, God became a Man & as a Man suffered a sinner's death so that sinners such as us could be saved through faith in Him, what love is this? It's too high for me. Paul knew the *Person* of the cross.

He also knew the *power* of the cross. He knew what it was to be set free from the chains & bondage of sin through the blood of the cross of J.C. He knew what it was to cast aside the reformation of the law & receive the transformation of the Spirit of God because of what Jesus accomplished for us upon the cross. Jesus met him one day on the road to Damascus & changed his life forever. He learned that Christ died for our sins & was set free from self, from the flesh, from the chains of this world. He experienced the *power* of the cross.

& He knew the *purpose* of the cross; through Adam creation had fallen; but in Christ God would bring a "new creation". **The creation over which Adam was given dominion ended in failure, but the new creation over which J.C. reigns will never fail & throughout His millennial kingdom the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Jesus will reign forever in righteousness.**

Paul knew the Person, the power & the purpose of the cross, therefore he would make his boast only *in* the cross of our Lord J.C.

"By whom the world has been crucified to me, & I to the world." Again Paul is saying you can have all this world, just give me Jesus. The pleasures, the treasures, the honors of this world... He says they're dead to me & I'm dead to them, they hold nothing for me (not in the light of eternity).

Of course when Paul is speaking of "the world" he's not speaking of humanity. For God so loved "the world" He gave His only begotten Son... He's speaking of the world system, those things that lead us away from God, the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye & the pride of life. Back in Vs 24 of Ch 5 he said that those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh w/it's passions & desires. The world has been crucified to me & I to the world.

Vs 15

Or to understand that another way; it's not in what I do or don't do that commends me to God. The important thing is that I am made a new creation in Christ. He's not saying that there are no moral standards for the believer (we've been over that earlier in the letter), he's saying that what's important is that I've been born again as by the Spirit of God! Whether you were a hardened sinner or an upstanding citizen is a peripheral issue at best.

If you haven't been born again, if you're not a new creation you're not headed for heaven. What's critical is, have you received Jesus? Paul told the Corinthians, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."*⁵ You see, it's not about circumcision or uncircumcision, it's about being "in Christ", that's where new life is found, in Him you're a new creation.

Vs 16

"As many as walk according to this rule," what rule? The understanding of what's truly important is being found in Christ. When you learn to lay aside what you do & trust fully in what Jesus has done (in getting you right & keeping you right with God), that's when the peace & mercy of God come flooding in. It's like a sigh of relief, no pressure on me, Jesus already finished the work... There is peace & mercy in the message of salvation by grace through faith alone. The peace of God will be upon the one who trusts in Jesus, the mercy of God will be upon the one who trusts in Jesus.

Vs 17

I'm gonna keep this quick. Paul isn't speaking of the mystic marks of the stigmata as some purport (if you don't know what that is don't worry about it, it's irrelevant). He's talking about the suffering, the scars that he's inherited in his body because of the message he preaches & word that he teaches.

These guys were boasting in the mark of circumcision. Paul's badge of honor were the wounds he received simply because he trusted in J.C. Sometimes you see veterans who have so many medals that you can't hardly see their jacket, they're badges of honor. For Paul when he'd remove his shirt his body was laced w/badge after badge of marks that spoke of his love *for* Christ, his commitment *to* Christ, his identification *w/* Christ.

In Paul's day slaves would be branded w/the mark of their owner. Sometimes soldiers would brand the name of their general on their body as a mark of allegiance & loyalty... Let me tell you something, our Lord will brand those who belong to Him, He'll place His brand in your life, upon your heart, reproaches for His sake. The question is, are we honored to bear in our lives the "marks" of the Lord Jesus.

In essence Paul was saying, "You want to see physical marks that show I belong to God, it's not circumcision... now leave me alone & quit playing around w/these false doctrines, I've been through enough I don't need this added to it." (As for a glimpse of Paul's sufferings, write down & look up 2 Cor 11:23-28).

⁵ The New King James Version. (1982). [2 Co 5:17]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Vs 18

It's by grace that we're *made* right w/God, it's by grace that we *stay* right w/God & w/in the context of this Ch it's by grace that we're freed from selfishness that we might bear burdens, share blessings & minister w/right motives; not for the praise of man but for the glory of God. Amen? Amen.

Prayer Points:

Father may Your grace abound toward our lives. We thank You for the abundance of Your grace, the richness of Your mercy & the fullness of Your peace. You've enriched us beyond measure, beyond anything we could ask or even think in J.C. Your Son.

Purify our hearts that we might do all that we do for the glory of Your Name, & we praise You for the cross & the salvation You've so freely provided, have Your way in our lives & may the things You've entrusted to us through this letter be etched in our heart yielding fruit for Your glory.

If you're here today & uncertain as to where you stand before God, you've perhaps tried to do good, or sought to be a better person but now you know... it's not about what you can do for God, it's about what He's done for you in the Person of J.C. God can give you new life, make you a new creation right here & right now. Believe on the Lord J.C. turn from your sin, trust in Him & He'll take it from there. God loves you, Jesus died for you & if you'll believe upon Him, you'll leave here brand new... in Jesus name.