

GALATIANS - SERMON 44
GALATIANS 6:1-18 — FALSE AND TRUE TEACHING
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INTRODUCTION: Read Galatians 6:11-18

This passage includes Paul's concluding comments to the Galatians which compose a summarization of his entire argument in this epistle against the Judaizing heretics. He establishes a contrast between their false teaching and false motives and his biblical teaching and biblical motives. The Galatians had a clear choice to make. They could not follow both Paul and the Judaizers. Paul has demonstrated the contradicting differences between the two theologies. The choice they would make was not insignificant. It would prove a determination between lost or saved.

Paul's intimate affection and involvement in this matter is proven by his uncustomary penning of the epistle by his own hand. Normally Paul used a secretary to write down his words for him.

Roman 16:22

I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord.

Tertius was the stenographer serving Paul when he dictated the epistle to the Romans. When Paul wrote to the Galatians, he did not wait for a stenographer, but wrote the letter in his own hand.

Galatians 6:11

See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!

Whether the reference to large letters means that Paul considered the epistle to be a long one or that his writing skills required large letters (alphabet), the point remains the same - Paul hand wrote this epistle himself. He did so because of his urgent concern for the Galatians. Paul was moved by concern for the sound doctrinal progress of the Galatians and disturbed by the false doctrine being brought in by false teachers. [Paul was not of the mind to be quiet or patient or accepting of false doctrine among Christians and churches.]

Paul closes this letter with a review of the false teachings and evil motives of the Judaizers. The central issue was the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 6:12

As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

Galatians 6:14

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

OUTLINE:

I THE UNGODLY TEACHINGS AND MOTIVES OF THE JUDAIZERS

II THE GODLY TEACHINGS AND MOTIVES OF PAUL

I THE UNGODLY TEACHINGS AND MOTIVES OF THE JUDAIZERS

It is very often the case the false teachings arise out of ungodly motives. Occasionally, a false teaching can come from someone sincere and with good motives. In such a case the false teaching is the product of ignorance or immaturity with regard to sound teaching. In most cases those who bring false teaching from mistaken motivations can be corrected to a good end easily as they harbor no evil intentions. However, most false teachers are the product of false and evil motives.

Paul states that the motive behind the Judaizers was false and evil. They were not innocent and suffering only from mis-information. These were selfish and prideful men. Paul exposes, not only their false teachings but also their false motives.

A Avoiding persecution: Galatians 6:12

As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

That the Judaizers would *compel you to be circumcised* represents their false teaching. *That they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ* uncovers their false motive.

These men, who were so zealous to make the Galatians submit to the initiatory rite of Judaism, were not motivated by an honest but mistaken understanding. Their object was to secure the favor of unbelieving Jews and to avoid their persecution. The vast amount of persecution suffered by the early Christians came at the hand of the Jews and not the Gentiles.

These false teachers are said to *desire to make a good showing in the flesh*. This means that they wanted to take a course of conduct with their converts that would be agreeable to those who they wished to please - the Jews. Circumcision pleased the Jews (unbelieving Jews). Requiring circumcision would demonstrate that they still believed that the old covenant system was valid and that they were not rejecting the old religion in favor of the new religion.

The doctrine of Christianity that was so hateful to the Jews was that faith in the substitutionary sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross was alone sufficient to obtain acceptance with God. Therefore, the whole old covenant Jewish system was not only superceded and useless, but to practice it in order to obtain favor with God was positively sinful and wrong. This teaching infuriated the Jews.

Galatians 5:11

*And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution?
Then the offense of the cross has ceased.*

The false teachers, in order to avoid the kind of persecution that Paul experienced for the faith, rebutted the argument that the old covenant customs were no longer necessary. They felt that the old covenant rituals united with faith in Christ would

appease both sides. By this method the Galatians would be Christians among Christians while yet appearing to be Jews among the Jews.

The only motive behind promoting the act of circumcision was the appeasing of the Jews. This became evident by the Judaizer's inconsistency with regard to the duty to keep the whole of the law of God.

Galatians 6:13

For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

The Judaizers themselves did not keep the old covenant law in its entirety. They did not require law-keeping of their converts - only circumcision. This was a substantial inconsistency which Paul had pointed out to the Galatians.

Galatians 5:3

And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.

The old covenant law is an all or nothing proposition. The inconsistency of the Judaizers demonstrated their false and selfish motivation - pleasing and appeasing the Jews in order to avoid personal persecution - was made evident by their inconsistency.

B Attracting glory to themselves.

Not only did the Judaizers seek to avoid persecution by their false teaching, they also sought to attract glory to themselves. This they would achieve by being able to point to a physical external evidence of their ministerial success.

Galatians 6:13

For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

Several defects are evident in their methods.

- 1 The Judaizers were trying to preach the gospel and please the world at the same time. This is not a thing possible! The true message of the gospel is hateful to the world. To Jews the gospel is a stumbling block and to the Greeks it is foolishness.

1 Corinthians 1:21-14

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The Judaizers believed that they could slightly modify the gospel in order to circumvent the unpleasant reactions mentioned in the 1 Corinthians passage. [How like the methods of the Church growth movement this truly is.]

What aspect of the gospel did the Judaizer have to compromise in order to appease the Jews? It was the very heart of the gospel, the cross of the Lord

Jesus Christ. The Jews would tolerate most of the doctrines of Christianity except that one central truth. The fact that the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary was alone sufficient for reconciliation with God effectively put an end to all of the Jewish sacrifices and this was an offense to them.

When we try to preach the gospel and please the world at the same time we embark upon a losing game at best. In order to please the world we must gut the gospel of the very center of its message. That salvation is by grace alone through faith alone is an offense to the world. The contemporary is trying to please the world and in so doing they are gradually paring more and more of the gospel away. Serving the gospel will always be an offense to the world. We must expect persecution if we preach the true gospel.

- 2 This compromise on the part of the Judaizers demonstrates their unconverted condition. If we will not endure persecution for the Lord Jesus Christ we do not belong to Him. We become, as it were, stony ground hearers.

Mark 4:16-17

"These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble."

It is a common thing for professing believers to fall into the temptation of compromise with respect to the gospel. The true disciples are usually made manifest by the evident endurance of persecution.

2 Timothy 3:12

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

To avoid persecution one need only stop living in a godly fashion.

- 3 These Judaizers looked to a mere outward physical act as the basis for salvation and as the basis of the assurance of salvation. We see modifications of that in our day. To have been baptized, to have made a "decision," or sign a card in some circles suffices as sure evidence of salvation. This has become the great flaw in the invitation system so popular in the last 175 years.

Galatians 6:15

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

If we would discern the salvation status of someone it is to be by observing the evidences of a new creation from the inside out.

- 4 These people looked to physical proof as the measure of ministerial success. We see this same flaw in modern evangelistic movements which tout their numbers. For the Judaizers the true issue was not the number of converts, but rather the number of surgeries they had performed. They looked only to the outward signs.

II THE GODLY TEACHINGS AND MOTIVES OF PAUL: Galatians 6:14

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Paul has an entirely different method and motive for teaching the Galatians. Paul's motive was not to bring glory to himself or build his reputation or following. Such a motive was repulsive to him.

Ephesians 3:8

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. . .

1 Timothy 1:15

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

1 Corinthians 15:9

For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

2 Corinthians 12:11

I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.

Paul was ready to bring glory to Christ but not to himself. When he was constrained to speak of himself it was only for the purpose of establishing his credibility and authority as an apostle. Even this was done so that the message would be embraced, not so that he would be glorified. Paul did not promote himself, but he promoted the Lord Jesus Christ. This was a great contrast to the method and motive of the Judaizers. They would conceal Christ in order to promote themselves.

To glory in the cross is to glory in the fact that the incarnate Son of God died on the cross as the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins and that He alone is the means of salvation by His work on our behalf at the cross - and without embarrassment. To trumpet the Lord Jesus Christ to the high heavens as the power of God and the wisdom of God was Paul's method and motive.

1 Corinthians 2:1-2

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

1 Corinthians 1:22-24

For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

When Paul wanted to preach the power of God and the wisdom of God he preached Jesus Christ. The core of every doctrine was the cross of Christ and Him crucified.

Romans 4:25

. . .who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

Romans 3:25

. . . whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed. . .

Ephesians 1:7

. . . In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace . . .

1 Corinthians 6:20

For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Ephesians 2:13

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Paul's letters are blood-drenched letters. Christ crucified was central to his ministry.

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

We can preach the whole Bible and yet preach Christ continually.

The Judaizers saw the cross of Christ as the great obstacle. Paul saw the cross of Christ as the God-ordained means of salvation. The cross of Christ produced the opposite effect in Paul. The Judaizers shunned it because it drew persecution to them. Paul became emboldened by it and therefore he was crucified to the world, caring not what it thought of him.

Galatians 6:14

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

This should be the attitude of every true Christian. We must not care what the world would think.

James 4:4

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

God would call the “Christian” who seeks to appease the world an adulterer.

We are married to Christ and we are expected to be faithful (Ephesians 5).

1 John 2:15-17

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

We do well to survey our actions and thoughts by the question - does this promote the cross of Christ or deny it?

Galatians 6:15

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

Paul is saying that we must be converted in our hearts. External conversion avails none.

Galatians 6:17

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

The true marks of conversion are not marks of compromise, but marks resulting from persecution. The sure sign of godly living and conversion will be persecution.

Conclusion: Galatians 6:16

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

The true Israel of God is composed of those who glory in the cross. Upon them there will be peace and mercy.

Philippians 3:3

For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. . .

Heart religion is at the core. May the Lord find us to bear the mark of the true circumcision on that great day.

Hymn # 177