

The Death Of Pride

Galatians 1:6-7

“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.”

As we continue our study in the book of Galatians, we find that the central phrase of our text is the "grace of Christ." Paul expresses great *surprise* and *frustration* at the fickleness of these Galatian believers who had at first so joyfully accepted Paul's message of *grace*, and then had been so easily led astray by certain legalistic *Judaizing teachers* who discredited Paul's teachings of grace, and asserted that these believers were still bound by the law. Paul had preached that they were saved by *grace - plus nothing*. There is nothing man can add to the grace of God, for God's whole salvation rests on the finished and completed work of the Lord Jesus who "bore our sins in his own body on the tree," and then gave His "spirit an offering" for those sins. Christ bore the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, and now "Christ is the end of the law for everyone who believes."

Paul had left these Galatian believers happy and rejoicing and serving the Lord in the liberty of grace, not by constraint of the law, not by fear of losing their salvation, but by love, gratitude and devotion for their great salvation by grace. They loved Paul greatly and devotedly for showing them the truth of salvation by grace. But *then*, as *now*, there were those who would *enslave* believers *by the bondage of the law*, and instead of trying to win the lost to Christ by *grace*, they went about terrifying Christians by their legalistic claims that *while they were saved by grace, they were kept save by their works*.

Although the Galatian Christians knew they were saved, they are now faced with clever preachers quoting Scriptures based on the Jewish law and out of context, had managed to cause a certain amount of fear and doubt to take away their joy and assurance. This affected their love for Paul, and they lost respect for his authority.

Look at verses 6-7 where Paul says; "I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following another gospel that pretends to be the Good News but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ." He says that their pious phrases sounded like the Gospel, but it was actually "another gospel." In verse 7 he says they "deliberately twist the truth."

These preachers were not denying the Gospel, but they were teaching a "twisted" or "distorted" doctrine by adding something to the grace of God. These false teachers were teaching we are *saved by grace* - and then *kept saved by works*. Paul said that is not just *wrong*, but called it "another gospel, which is not the gospel at all," but a "twisted" and "distorted" message of salvation.

Paul was so positive in this that he pens two of the most significant verses in all of his epistles. He says in verse 8, "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed." This is strong language indeed. To be accursed is to be lost! Paul says to these Galatian Christians, the teachers who are attacking my Gospel of grace, who tell you that you are under the law for your salvation, who say that your salvation by grace depends on your works after you are saved, - these teachers, says Paul, are perverters of the Gospel and placed themselves under the curse of the law. The law cannot save - it can only curse the sinner. So Paul says that is surely as the Law curses the sinner, it also is a curse to the believer. **Why?** Because that kind of teaching places the believer under its curse. **Why?** Because no man can live up to the letter of the law.

Paul is so sure of his ground that he repeats his startling condemnation in verse 9, "As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed."

What was so different about what Paul preached? Paul preached the message of grace. The test of the Gospel is grace. If you

want to know if the message you hear is the Gospel, ask only one question, "Is it the message of grace only grace - with nothing added?" **It is a biblical fact - the test of the Gospel is grace.** If the message **excludes grace, or mingles law with grace, it is "another gospel."**

Paul sums it all up in Galatians 2:21 when he says, "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." **What a terrible thing to say that our righteousness can be gained by law keeping.** It accuses God of needlessly letting His Son be murdered without any reason. The child of God who is saved by the grace of God renounces all legal claims to the mercy of God, but accepts everything as a gift. **If you work for a thing you earn it. If God saves you because of anything you do, then God is indebted to you.**

Look at the answer in Romans 4:4, "Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt." **If you can work for, or earn, your own salvation, or work to keep it, then God owes you salvation as wages, and you don't have to thank Him for it, because you earned it, and God owes it to you.** Don't you see why God will not allow any man to work his way to Heaven? God does not give us a start for Heaven by **grace**, and then say, "Now keep going on your own power." That would give us something to brag about, saying, "Yes, God saved me, but I got here by hanging on."

Grace is the death of pride. It slays all self-exaltation. Nothing will humble a person like the grace of God, and when I see a proud Christian, I know he/she does not fully understand God's grace. **There will be no strutting in Heaven.** If the Lord would let you have anything to do with your salvation, you would be the biggest bore in Heaven. You would be a pest in boasting. **Heaven would never hear the last of it.** You would never get through telling about it. That is the reason, says Paul, why it is "...not of works, lest any man should boast."

The gospel should never cease to thrill us. We should never be found lacking in the celebration of where we have been and where

we are now. The gospel is a message of grace. We are here tonight because of God's amazing grace!