

VIII- Defamation of the Pure Gospel Galatians 5:2-15

Galatians 5:2-15 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. 3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. 5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. 7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? 8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. 9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. 10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. 11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offence of the cross ceased. 12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you. 13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

Exposition of the Text:

We come to the last section of the book of Galatians. I have titled this section The Pure Gospel We Practice. This is the practical section of the book. Paul in his writings always gives an application to life. He gives the results that should happen because of the doctrine he has set forth from God. This is that section. You will notice that the titles of each session express this thought also with the exception of this session. This session we will talk about the Defamation of the Pure Gospel and discuss what the Judaizers were wanted the Galatians to do and the implications of them doing it. There is also a most difficult verse in this section about falling from grace that we will explore.

Outline: Defamation of the Pure Gospel Galatians 5:2-15

A- The Defamation of Circumcision: Galatians 5:2-4 a

B- Defamation of Gospel Means Falling From Grace: Galatians 5:4 b Galatians 5:6

C- Defamation of the Gospel Hinders Growth: Galatians 5:7-10

D- Defamation is to Avoid Persecution: Galatians 5:11-21

E- Defamation leads to License: Galatians 5:13-15

A- The Defamation of Circumcision: Galatians 5:2-4 a

"...if ye be circumcised..." "The word 'if ye be circumcised,' present an hypothetical case. The Galatians had not yet submitted to that rite, but were on the verge of doing so." 53 Paul in some ways is doing preventive maintenance. He uses three phrases to describe the loss or the defamation that circumcision will cause. "Christ shall profit you nothing" Galatians 5:2 ; "a debtor to do the whole law" Galatians 5:3 ; and "Christ is become of no effect to you" Galatians 5:4 a.

Paul is talking about the Christian walk they need to have when he says that Christ shall profit you nothing. A friend of mine says, "Making Christ Savior of you life will carry you through eternity but making Him Lord will help you through tomorrow." 54 Paul is talking about making Christ Lord here when he makes the first statement.

The second statement is very important. Remember Paul ask the Galatians in Galatians 4:21, "Do ye not hear the law? He now points out that if they submit to the rite of circumcision that they are obligated to keep the whole law. They could not submit to circumcision and stop there. Jam_2:10 says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Had the Judaizers not told them this? Probably not! "The fact that Paul points this out to the Galatians, implies that the Judaizers had not done so." 55 I remind us that the Judaizers had already persuaded the Galatians to observe the Jewish cycle of feast. (See Galatians 4:10 .)

The last phrase, "Christ is become of no effect unto you..." must not be misunderstood and applied wrong. It applies not to their justification but to their spiritual lives. To their walk not their standing, which is secure in Christ.

This naturally introduces the next topic. Can a man be lose once he is saved?

B- Defamation of Gospel Means Falling From Grace: Galatians 5:4-6

Does this teach temporary security of the believer? Does it teach that a man can be lost again once he is saved? NO! (1000 times.) Paul is not talking about their salvation itself but the method of salvation. Law and grace do not mix and if they were to submit to the law as a means of salvation then they would fall from grace or my translation would be, "turned from grace." "The words, 'fallen from' are from ekipto which means 'to fail of, to lose one's hold of.'" 56

"...we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." We have our righteousness by faith and not self effort or works. (See Eph_2:8-10 .) The Law requires obedience and the Gospel requires faith. They are two totally different methods of hope for salvation. The law never saves the gospel never fails.

Paul in verse 7 points out that it is not circumcision nor uncircumcision that counts but faith.

To conclude this section let me give a quote to bring these verse down to our level and into our situation. "If the Galatians accepted circumcision as necessary for salvation, they would be leaving the grace system for the Mosaic Law system. The same error is repeated today when a believer leaves a church that emphasizes salvation by grace through faith and joins on which teaches that salvation depends on repentance, confession, faith, baptism, and church membership." 57 Allow me to add also when we try to make binding for spirituality the keeping of certain days, including Saturday or Sunday, and the need of returning to the dietary laws for spirituality we practice Legalism.

C- Defamation of the Gospel Hinders Growth: Galatians 5:7-10

Paul is going to use two images in this section. One is running and the other is cooking. In verse 7 Paul says to them, "you were running well who cut in on you." They had heard the gospel and believed and had been faithful in the past. Before the false teachers came they did not have any idea of adding to the Pure Gospel. The word translated "hindered" means "to cut into or cut in on." Someone had cut in on them as they ran and got them off course. Paul uses the image of a runner in the games that they were familiar with to point this out. These were much like our Olympic games today. "In the races, each runner was to stay in his assigned lane, but some runners would cut in on their competitors to try to get them off course. This is what the Judaizers had done to the Galatian believers: they cut in on them and forced them to change direction and go on a 'spiritual detour.'" 58

The next thing we see is that this was, "not of him that calleth you." "This was not of God," Paul says. He then turn to the cooking illustration. He uses leaven to illustrate. In scripture leaven is usually associated with sin. (See 1Co_5:6 .) Paul knows that it takes very little to

destroy the work of God. If circumcision was allowed to enter then it would contaminate the gospel like leaven spreads through the whole loaf of bread and causes it to rise. Paul however expresses confidence that they would not allow this to happen in verse 10. "I have confidence in you...that ye will be none otherwise minded..."

D- Defamation is to Avoid Persecution: Galatians 5:11-21

Paul evidently is accused here of preaching circumcision. He had indeed had Timothy circumcised in an attempt to avoid conflict with the Jews whom Timothy was trying to minister to. (See Act_16:1-3) This however was not for salvation but an attempt to not be a stumbling block to the Jews of Galatia.

Our Lord during His ministry on earth was persecuted and He pointed out that we who would stand for the truth will be also. The legalist avoids persecution and the offense of the cross by insisting on circumcision and keeping the law. They wanted the Galatians to compromise on this matter. Paul asks them, "Then is the offense of the cross ceased." He knew that if he was guilty of preaching what the Judaizers were saying then he would have avoided persecution at their hands. He had not compromised as evidenced by the persecution. My friends Satan would like to do away with the cross and give us another way of salvation. Religion is acceptable as long as it does not include the gospel.

Paul uses some strong language in verse 12 toward the Judaizers. Allow me to give us several translations of this verse to show it's meaning.

Revised Standard Version:

"I wish those who unsettle you would mutilate themselves!"

Phillips Translation:

"I wish those who are so eager to cut your bodies would cut themselves off from you altogether."

American Standard Version:

"I would that they that unsettle you would even go beyond circumcision."

New English Bible:

"As for these agitators, they had better go the whole way and make eunuchs of themselves."

New International Version:

"As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!"

Paul in effect says that he wished these Judaizers would castrate themselves. Let me attempt to set this in historical context. "The Priest of Cybele, who lived in that area, took castration to be a rite of priesthood. Paul is saying to the Galatians that circumcision is not more spiritual than this. So he wishes that the Judaizers would go on and make complete pagans of themselves, because they are acting in a pagan way. To demand circumcision as a religious rite in the face of the fact that Jesus Christ has been crucified for our sins, is no less pagan than to take the rite of the Phrygian goddess." 59 What Paul is wishing is these men would become incapable of reproducing themselves.

E- Defamation leads to License: Galatians 5:13-15

Verse 13 is a summation of all the things that Paul has been argued thus far about our "liberty" in Christ Jesus.

There were and still are many people who say we cannot preach the Pure Gospel because without adding some do's and don'ts it will only give man a license to commit all kinds of acts.

Paul here says that we should not use the liberty which we have as an excuse for sinning. "use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh." "Paul now warns them of the opposite of legalism, which is lawlessness." 60

Paul in Rom_6:1 asks, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" The answer is, "God Forbid." The Christian life does indeed call us to purity of life but not as a work for salvation but as evidence of it.

Notice in Galatians 5:15 the lack of love, which legalism produces, will lead to a couple of things. 1- biting and devouring one another and 2- mutual destruction. James in Jam_3:13-16 says concerning this, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if any have bitter envying and strife in you hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth....for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." We can also see a warning concerning this in Isa_9:18-21 .

We must be careful to not to allow the pure gospel defamed by our actions. We must not become legalistic and start arbitrarily attaching various works and actions to and for salvation.