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**A1025 – June 20, 2010 – Galatians 5:1-6 – Stand Firm In Freedom**

Now we move into the third section of Galatians. Remember, by way of a basic outline, what Paul's doing. Gal 1-2 are Personal, Paul's personal defense of his apostleship. That has to be defended because we've got to have a source for truth, a source of absolutes. And if Paul is not an apostle then what Paul says is just Paul's opinion. Then the Galatians are left with the opinions of the Judaizers, who were apparently claiming greater authority than Paul on the basis of their relationship to the Church of Jerusalem. So Paul has got to establish before these Galatians that he is an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. I personally saw the Lord Jesus Christ in His resurrection body on the road to Damascus and He commissioned me and I represent Him. Therefore what I said to you in person and what I say now in this letter is the word of God. If we don't have the word of God we don't have anything but the word of man. So Paul establishes, by a Personal defense, his apostleship in Gal 1-2. In Gal 3-4 we have Doctrine, Paul's doctrinal defense of justification by faith and sanctification by faith. In chapter three we saw the propositions related to these two great truths and in chapter four we saw the illustrations of these two great truths. Having established the Doctrine we move to Gal 5-6 which are the Application. How does the doctrine work? You'll always see this structure in Paul's letter where he first lays out the doctrine and then comes to the application. It's this very order of things that's missing in our churches today. We want to go straight to the application; we want to know what do I do, how do I build my marriage, how do I raise my kids, how do I make decisions in life and we want to do all those things devoid of the doctrine. But it doesn't work that way because it's the doctrinal truths that underlie and provide the support and motive for the application. So if I don't lay a firm doctrinal foundation then my application is weak; I'm skating on thin ice. And when a little pressure comes in life the ice caves in. Applicational teaching only, or when it dominates, is a travesty because it's bypassing the

mechanics God the Holy Spirit has built into the structure of inspired Scripture. Always doctrine comes first, and then once we grasp the doctrine we can talk about application. But application alone can't be sustained without a doctrinal foundation. So we're going to move now in Gal 5-6 - to the practical application of the doctrine we've learned in Gal 3-4. We're committed to these words as infallible Scripture; they came through the apostle Paul. He's taught us about justification and sanctification by propositions, by illustrations, somewhere he's hit each one of us, hopefully a number of times and ways he's kicked our ideas to the curb and clarified the gospel. You are justified by grace through faith and you are sanctified by grace through faith, now so what?

To get into chapter 5 we want to review something in chapter 2. So turn to Gal 2:3. In Gal 2 Paul is giving us the story about how he came to Jerusalem and had a little meeting with Peter, James and John about the gospel. Paul wanted to make sure that the gospel he was giving to the Gentiles was the same gospel Peter, James and John were giving the Jews. We want to make sure we're all on the same page here. And in this little meeting Paul brought along Titus. Titus was a Gentile believer. So let's see what happened. Verse 3, **But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.** <sup>4</sup>**But *it was* because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.** <sup>5</sup>**But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.** Now this is a prophetic analysis of why that meeting over the gospel occurred. The prophets, and Paul was a prophet, main function was to give a divine analysis of history. The prophets do tell the future, but the main function is not to tell the future, it's to analyze history from the divine perspective. And that's what Paul is doing in verses 4 and 5. He's saying, this is the prophetic analysis of that meeting, this is the divine perspective of events that happened in Jerusalem. What happened was Paul went in and submitted his gospel to Peter, James and John. He says, by the way, when all was said and done Titus was standing right there in the room the whole time and Titus was a Gentile and we were discussing the gospel I preached to Gentiles and no one stood up and said, "Is Titus circumcised? Did you do surgery on his flesh?" Now if circumcision was required either to be justified before God or to be sanctified then certainly Titus would have been compelled to be

circumcised. But apparently that wasn't the case. The case was simply that this is going to become an issue. It wasn't an issue yet, but it was an issue on the horizon. And God knows how to solve our problems before we even know the problems exist. And so upon prophetic reflection Paul realizes, "You know, God was solving our problem about Gentiles and the gospel ahead of time." Just by having Titus in the room and Titus not being compelled to be circumcised solved the next problem. The problem is in verse 4, **false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring them into bondage**. The emphasis there is on the sneakiness of these false brethren. It's not a frontal attack, it's a flank attack, it catches you off balance, and you don't see it coming. And the attack is on Christian freedom. See, the Christian is free from legalistic ritual. Legalistic ritual brings a Christian into bondage and that's what the false brethren came in to do, to put Christians back into a legalistic system of bondage.

So here we see evidence of a group of legalist fanatics growing in Jerusalem. And when they saw two Jews, Paul and Barnabas, walking with the Gentile Titus, down the streets of Jerusalem they attacked them; uncircumcised Gentile believers can't associate with Jewish believers. You can't eat together. This is a problem. And Paul, look at his prophetic analysis: he says this was a covert op going on; it was all satanically inspired that these **false brethren** would come in secretly to spy out our liberty. And Paul recognized the attack and attacked back, they didn't give into that bull for even an hour he says (that's an idiom for no time), we didn't put up with it for even a moment. We shut that down. But now we have these legalist fanatics spread all the way up to Galatia and they're doing the same thing, sneaking in, undermining grace and trying to take away the liberty that the Galatian believers have in Christ Jesus. And they're having quite a bit of success bringing these Christians back into bondage. They were born in bondage; they were freed by Christ, now they're going back into bondage.

Now let's think about this from the standpoint of our three phases of salvation. You want to be clear about what we mean by the three terms; justification, sanctification and glorification and then we'll present a problem. Justification is being freed from the penalty of sin, sanctification is being freed from the power of sin and glorification is being freed from the presence of sin. Now to grasp this you have to know that all men are born under the

penalty of sin. We are in Adam and we sinned in Adam and therefore the human race is under the penalty of sin. You say that's not fair. The Biblical argument is that if you were in Adam's shoes you would have done the same thing. So we are all under the penalty of sin in Adam. What's the penalty of sin? Eternal condemnation, eternal separation from God in the lake of fire. But at the moment of faith alone in Christ alone your position changes from being in Adam under the penalty of sin to being in Christ and freed from the penalty of sin. It's at the moment of faith that you are justified, you are declared righteous in God's court of law. That is phase one, your position is now in Christ. The second phase has to do with your experience and here we talk about being sanctified, freed from the power of sin. Because you are now justified sin no longer has power or dominion over you. You now have the means of living a life that pleases God by means of the Spirit of God. This is a grace operation. You are no longer the slave of your sinful flesh, you are set free from the power of sin as you utilize the faith technique and walk by the Spirit. The third phase is glorification and that means you get a resurrection body and the day you receive your resurrection body you are set free from the presence of sin altogether. That's your ultimate sanctification when all is said and done. So at phase one by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ we are justified, we have a new position in Christ, this is the past tense of our salvation, we are freed from the penalty of sin. Phase two we are by the grace of God through faith in the word of God sanctified, this is our daily experience, it's the present tense, ongoing phase of our salvation during which we are set free from the power of sin as we trust the word of God which activates the Spirit of God to produce fruit in our lives. And phase three, we are by the grace of God through faith in God glorified, given a resurrection body; this is our ultimate salvation, when we are in the future set free from the presence of sin altogether. From beginning to end, all three phases of salvation are by the same mechanics, grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

Now we come to Gal 5:1 and with those three phases in mind, I want you to take the insert in the bulletin, on the back of that insert is my translation of Gal 5:1-6 and it's not word-for word, some of it is of course, but I'm trying to be real careful with the translation because in most translations there are some words chosen that can cause a lot of confusion. I'm not interested in you being confused, I'm interested in you understanding this text and a real problem that many Christians face, which is what Paul is addressing. So as

we read through the text can you identify these three phases? Can you identify when Paul is referring to justification, phase one, sanctification, phase two, and glorification phase three? That's the question. So let's work through it. So let's try to identify these, then we'll get into the details of the text.

Gal 5:1, "Christ freed us into freedom." What phase? There are two phases there? Christ freed us, that's past tense, completed action, phase one, justification. Into what? Into phase two, into a state of freedom where we presently are, that's phase two, into sanctification. You want to learn to read the Bible to see these phases. You're not in a race to see how many chapters you can read today. Who cares how many chapters you can read if you don't know what you're reading? Here's one way of reading, just look for these phases. "Stand firm then and do not again be loaded down with a yoke of slavery." What phase is this command related to? Stand firm. Phase two, your sanctification. Now, verse 2, "Look! I Paul say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will not aid you." Now, what phase? They've been freed, that's phase one, justification, they've been freed into freedom, and here they are now in phase two, sanctification, and the Judaizers are coming in, spying out their liberty, (hey, you Gentiles need to get circumcised). So verse 2 is phase two, in reality they are believers, so the danger is their spiritual life, spiritual growth. Who's not going to aid them in their spiritual growth if they receive circumcision? Christ isn't. See Christ helps us in our spiritual growth; this is just like the vine and the branches in John 15. Christ is the vine, we are the branches. And we branches must remain in vital connection with the Vine if we're to have His life poured out through ours and bear fruit. Alright, verse 3, "And again I testify, [to] every man who has himself circumcised, that he is under obligation to keep the entire law." Again, this is in phase two, it could refer to anybody really, but in the context he's referring to these believers and he's warning them that circumcision will not help them grow spiritually, it's going to rather put them in bondage to legalism. Verse 4, "You have been alienated [estranged] from Christ, whoever is [trying] to be justified by law, you drifted away from the grace [necessary to produce fruit]. So what phase is this? He's talking to the believers at Galatia who are trying to be justified by law. They're already justified, verse 1, Christ freed us, but now the Judaizers have come in and told them, no, you're not really justified, you have to be circumcised in order to be justified, you have to follow the ritual calendar of Judaism to be justified. Some of them have already been

duped by the Judaizers into thinking they are not really justified and they have to do these legalistic observances to be justified. Paul says, in phase two you are alienated from Christ, you have drifted away from grace. So they really are believers in Phase Two but they've been duped into thinking they haven't even entered into Phase One. They think they have to do works now to be justified. And a believer who is in that situation cannot produce spiritual fruit, he's trying to get brownie points with God, he's trying to build merit with God through his works, so this is a fleshly procedure. Believers can and do operate by the flesh, verse 4 describes some of them. Now verse 5, the hard verse: "For we, through the Spirit, by faith, await eagerly the expectation of righteousness." Now, what tense? Is this past? Are we looking expectantly for something in the past, something in the present or something in the future? Well, we're waiting for it, so we don't have it yet. What phase? Phase Three, our future glorification, when we get our resurrection body and we not only are declared righteous, but we actually are righteous, we don't sin any more, we are freed from the presence of sin altogether, our ultimate destiny has been reached. Verse 6, "Since in Christ Jesus neither circumcision produces anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith at work through love [produces]." So we're back in what phase? Phase Two, experiential sanctification, what's the technique that produces? Is it works circumcision? No, its faith working through love, that's what produces? What does it produce? Fruit. So that's how you read the passage, that's Paul's point. And basically what he's telling us believers is about how to live the spiritual life; how to grow spiritually. He warns us how not to grow spiritually and then instructs us how to grow spiritually. If you resort to legalistic works then you can't grow spiritually, if you resort to faith working through love then you do grow spiritually, Christ's life is poured out through yours.

Alright, now for the details. That's the overall, but we still want the details. Here's the problem, you tell me I'm justified when I believed, but I still go on sinning. This is a tension that's produced, what some call a legal fiction. This is where Rome attacked Protestantism. Rome said, you Protestants, you are living a legal fiction. You cannot really be justified until you are without sin. When did we say we're without sin altogether, freed from the presence of sin? Way down here at Phase Three. Rome said, you are not justified until Phase Three, you have got to be totally separated from sin altogether before God can say you are justified. Protestantism said, no, God justifies us at Phase One,

the moment we believe, that's when God declares us righteous. It doesn't mean we are righteous, we still sin, but in terms of our judicial standing or position, we are righteous. And this sets us on track for one day being free from the presence of sin altogether. So Rome said that justification is a process of becoming holy and only after you really are holy can God declare you righteous, down at the end of the process. That process begins here on earth with the seed of regeneration at your infant baptism, then you go through the six other sacraments and grace is dispensed as you do those sacraments and when you come to the end of your life most of you still have sin so you are cast into purgatory until that sin is burned off and finally after this long process you are free from sin and God finally declares you are righteous and you go to heaven, that's the Roman Catholic plan of salvation. Protestantism said, no, when a person believes they are justified and freed from the penalty of sin, so the justification happens at the beginning not at the end, it's not a process, it's a once for all declaration. God declares us righteous in His court and the fact that He does that is a motive to live a godly life in Phase Two and it sets in motion the certainty of Phase Three. He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion (Phil 1). Those He called He justified those He justified He glorified (Rom 8). But see, that's hard to believe that I really am justified. Why is that hard to believe? Because I'm still sinning down here. And this is what is being seized by legalists. They're saying, well if you really were justified you wouldn't be sinning anymore. How can you say you are righteous and yet you're sinning? Here look, come over here and I'll show you how to be righteous-do this, do that, get circumcised, light a candle, get baptized in water, say this prayer, rub these beads, do mindless meditation, etc...etc...etc...then you'll really be justified. And people buy into it because they find it hard to believe that God could actually declare a sinner righteous. That's the exact problem these Galatian believers were having. I understand and you understand the tension we live in as believers. God declares me righteous, yet I'm still sinning, and I don't want to sin, I don't like it, I'm tired of it, I don't want to do it anymore but I keep on doing it. Maybe I'm not really justified. That's the seed of doubt that Satan wants to plant in your mind. He wants you to believe you are living a legal fiction. And so what do you do? You buy the line and you start doing religious observance and it makes you feel like you're really pleasing God, you're doing all the right things, and this way you can actually feel like you are building some righteousness. And Paul is saying, guys, that's wrong, you are not going to build any righteousness with God,

you are going back under the yoke of slavery. If you do that Christ isn't going to aid you in growing spiritually. You're not going to produce any fruit out there doing it all by yourself, you're into works and Christ doesn't help those who help themselves, Christ helps those who trust Him and depend on His grace! So we've got to walk by faith. The answer isn't legalism; the answer is faith working through love, trusting God. What did Paul say in Gal 2:20? We have to repeat this *ad nauseum* because it's so critical to our spiritual growth. "I have been crucified with Christ;" Phase One or Phase Two? Phase One. It's past tense, done. "I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;" alright, now we're in Phase Two, now we're into how to live the Christian life, how to grow spiritually, "and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." How do we live it? By faith. Verse 21, "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness *comes* through the Law, then Christ died needlessly." Look, if we build righteousness by works of the Law then the cross of Christ is unnecessary. We don't need him, we can do it ourselves. Paul says, that's wrong, dead wrong, forever wrong, it couldn't be more wrong. Righteousness comes by faith not by works.

Now let's go to chapter 5, verse 1, the first sentence is a short but concise summary of Galatians. Commentators have said this is the theme of the book. Here it is: **It was for freedom that Christ set us free;** or, here's how I put it, in your bulletin you have my translation of this passage. This in verse 1 is a direct translation, very word for word, "Christ freed us into freedom." Into the sphere of freedom. Implication: before Christ freed us we were in slavery, we were in bondage. But now Christ has taken us out of bondage and put us into a state of freedom. I don't know if Paul has in the back of his mind an OT event. But there is an OT event that depicts in a grand way God doing this for Israel. Anyone know what it is? It's the Exodus! The nation was in slavery in Egypt for 400 years and God set them free from Egypt. Why did God do that? For freedom. God frees people so they'll remain free. He frees them from bondage, not so they can go back to bondage. It's us who, in our flesh, want to go back to bondage. What did the Israelites want to do once God set them free? Go back to Egypt. Go back to slavery. God says, no, I don't want you to go back to Egypt. I set you free so you could remain free. We have this in every level of society. This is the flesh. The flesh loves bondage. We see this in the prison system. Guy gets thrown in prison for 30 years, he gets out on probation, walks the streets for three weeks and



realizes, I have nothing out here, all my friends, my whole life is back in the prison. So what does he do, commits another crime so he can get thrown back in. We see this with women and abuse. They live with a guy for years, he abuses her, beats her up physically and mentally, every now and then she'll run somewhere, but two days later she's back with him. And you think, what is going on with these people? People love bondage. There's something about how we get programmed in bondage situations, such that when we get out of bondage we don't know what to do with the freedom so we just want to go back. The Galatians are doing the same thing; Paul says "Christ freed us into freedom." What Christ did there in freeing us, that's an aorist tense, it means it's done, He freed you, when you believed in Christ He freed you once for all from bondage. You are justified, you don't ever have to be a slave again, just like when Israel came out of slavery in Egypt they didn't ever have to be slaves to Egypt again. In fact, God said you will never go back to Egypt. They tried numerous times but God said in the Book of Deuteronomy, you will never go back there.

Now we come to the second part of the verse and this is a logical inference. Since Christ freed us into the sphere of freedom, now "stand firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery." There are two commandments here, two imperative verbs, **stand firm** and **do not be subject**. The first imperative, **stand firm** means stay where you are, they are in Phase Two and he gives them the positive command to stand firm in that sphere of freedom. Then we have the negative command, a second imperative, **do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery**. Or put another way, do not go back to Egypt. You've been there and done that, don't go back, that's a place of slavery. Now the **yoke**, that's a word picture, it describes a piece of equipment used in agriculture. Lots of equipment is used in agriculture and when plowing a field the farmer would build a frame and mount it on the animal to control the animal, so it would work for him. That's the picture of us before we believed in Christ and were freed. We had this yoke of slavery mounted on us, we were being ruled and controlled by other powers that be to do work for them. We've already discovered who they were in Gal 4:1-11. Both Jews and Gentiles before they trust in Christ are under the *stoicheia*, the demonic forces of this world, we were actively building the kingdom of Satan just as the Israelites were building the kingdom of Pharaoh. What Satan does is he gets us into his program to further build his kingdom. He does it a number of ways. Satan is slick, Satan has studied the human race

for thousands of years and he's observed and observed the human flesh and out of his reservoir of observation he's developed various techniques of appealing to our flesh. Satan is not stupid. Satan is a brilliant creature, not omniscient, still limited in his knowledge, but brilliant. And he's learned what appeals to our flesh and he learned that religion appeals to people, they like that, he learned that mysticism appeals so he uses that, he learned that some people are into rationalism, so he uses false philosophies. And what these things all share in common is they appeal to the flesh of one type of person. And he uses all of them to get people enslaved to him and build his kingdom. So if one doesn't work on you, he'll just try another one and he's got this down to an art form. For the Galatians it was legalism. Legal ritualism was like a frame being mounted on their backs so they could come under his control and build his kingdom. And Paul says **do not be subject**, which means, "do not be loaded down" with this, legalism is a yoke of slavery. If you've ever been loaded down, you've had to carry something on your shoulders and your shoulders alone are having to bear this, it may be a physical object, or it may be your having to carry information, your having to keep information to yourself, you can't share it with anyone else and it's a burden, it weighs heavy on you and that's the picture here, if you turn to legalism your putting yourself under a heavy weight, a heavy burden. Paul is warning them against this. This is all a diversion, satanically inspired, to divert us from the true spiritual life. What did Christ say, take my yoke, for My yoke is easy and My burden light.

All we're learning about is how to live the spiritual life, it's very practical and everyone here has struggled with the apparent legal fiction between being declared righteous and yet still sinning. It drives you crazy to go on sinning, day after day after day, when we've been told that in heaven God looks upon us as righteous. Is that right? That doesn't seem right. How can God call me righteous when I'm down here sinning? This is a big question. This question, or how you answer it, is what divides Protestantism from Roman Catholicism and it's what divided Paul from the Galatians.

So, now we come to verse 2, **Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you.** Now the circumcision, that's the circumcision of the flesh, was the simple surgery of cutting away the foreskin and the Judaizers were laying it on them, you've got to be circumcised in order to be justified. Circumcision was the initiatory rite, this

is how you started on the path to righteousness in Judaism, this introduced you to the 613 Laws of Moses and once you were circumcised you were on the path of establishing your righteousness with God. And Paul says, uh, uh, uh, if you do that, if you consciously, willingly submit to circumcision then **Christ will be of no benefit to you.** The word **benefit** means help or aid, aid in what? Aid in the spiritual life, aid in actually producing fruit, real fruit. Remember John 15, the Vine and the Branches, this is Paul's version of that passage. Submitting to the circumcision is what takes away that vital link of dependence on Christ. What did Jesus say? If you don't abide in Me and I in you, you bear no fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. This is how Paul puts it, if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. Don't expect to produce spiritual fruit by being circumcised. You must be kidding me, right? You think by a simple surgery that you guys can produce spiritual fruit? You just cut off the vital connection of having Christ's life poured out through yours!

Now it's a condition of the 3<sup>rd</sup> class, **if you receive circumcision**, maybe you will, maybe you won't, they were on the fence, but if they caved in to the Judaizers then and got circumcised, then Paul says, the condition being fulfilled, **Christ will be of no benefit to you.** You just cut yourself off from having Christ's life flow through you and produce true spiritual fruit. But the other side of the coin is that if we walk by faith then Christ will provide unlimited help to us; His assets are made available to us in unlimited quantities to produce true spiritual fruit. But no help to those who try legalism.

**Gal 5:3, And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.** Now why do you repeat something? To emphasize. Repetition is the mother of knowledge and it's the mother of emphasis. If I've told you once that's not enough, I tell you again and again and again. We're going to get this down, this is a critical juncture in these Galatians spiritual life, and they're riding the fence trying to decide whether they're going to get circumcised or not. Just know, Paul says, that's initiatory to the whole Law and as we learned in Gal 3:10 anyone who put themselves under the Law put themselves under the curse of the Law. And if you didn't keep every law and there are 613 of them, the rabbi's counted them, there are 613 and you are under every single one and that includes the curses of the Law. This is why; I don't know why anyone would

want to put themselves under the Legal system of Moses. Why would you want to do that? Because by doing that you put yourself under the curses of the Mosaic Law. You can't separate the legislation for the penalty of violating the legislation. I don't know why in the world you would want to do that. I guess if you like being cursed, go ahead. But the whole point of the gospel is Christ became a curse for us! So what, you're taking on the curse? That's a rejection of Christ. Yet we have all kinds of believers putting themselves under the 10 Commandments, putting themselves under the moral law of the Law of Moses, breaking it up, splitting it up, picking and choosing. Paul says, uh, uh, you take one, you take them all! And that's a yoke of slavery which neither our fathers nor we could bear, that's what Peter says in Acts 15, a Jew of Jews said that. If we Jews and our fathers couldn't do it are we going to require Gentiles to do it? Baloney. Phooey. Bad theology.<sup>1</sup>

Gal 5:4, **You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.** This is the verse that gives people trouble, they see that word **severed** and oh, that means I can lose my salvation. What did we already say when we went verse by verse through here and identified the Phases? What phase is this? Phase Two. They've been freed in verse 1, Christ set us free. Now what are they doing? They're falling from that freedom, they're falling into legalism. That's all this verse is talking about. In John 15 it would be a branch that's not abiding in the Vine. If that's the case then that branch isn't going to produce any fruit, it's an unproductive branch, that's the point. The language is a bit strong in the translation, **You have been severed**, that is, when a believer is taught by some legalist that you really aren't justified until you're not sinning. And you're looking at your life and you see all the junk and you say, well, you're right, my life is sinful so I guess I'm not really justified and then the person says, here's what you need to do, we've got these sacraments, we've got these religious services you need to attend, we've got baptism over here, and if you do all these things then you'll be doing what God wants you to do and when you've done it all you will have established righteousness with God and you'll be justified. That's the thing that severs a person from Christ so to speak, what the word means is their alienated from Him, in the sense of verse 2, Christ is not going to help you. Why? You've abandoned His grace, that's why. That's why the end of the verse says, **you have fallen from grace**, again, the word fallen is a bit strong for the verse, people read that, I lost my salvation. No, the word, a very interesting word, is a nautical term for

drifting off course. You see in verse 7 they were running well, so we know in the context this is the meaning Paul has for this word, you've drifted from grace. Grace is the straight path in the Christian life; it's depending on Christ's assets not ours. Grace is always compatible with faith and never with works. And those in this verse who are trying to be justified by law are depending on their works, they have drifted from grace. That's the point and another thing about this word "to drift from" is that it includes the notion that you've left what is necessary to produce something. It's God's grace that is necessary to produce any fruit in our lives and by context we know that's what Paul is referring to. You've got to be in close connection with Christ, you've got to abide in Him to bear much fruit and to turn to legalism will shut that down immediately. How do we correct that? We confess the sin of legalism and get back in fellowship, 1 John 1:9.

**Gal 5:5, For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.** Now here it sounds like they're not justified yet, that we're just waiting, hoping that we'll be counted justified at the end of our lives. But that's not what Paul is saying at all. What Paul is doing is giving the answer for overcoming sin in the present. The Judaizers had their answer and Paul had God's answer. The Judaizers answer was, you're sinning, you're not really justified, you need to do works and if you do enough works the God will justify you. Paul's answer was live by faith, waiting for the hope of righteousness. You're not going to be sinless in this life, forget it; experientially you will still sin until the day you die. That is a frustration we have to live with in the interregnum. In the period between when we are declared righteous, Phase One, and the time when we actually are righteous, Phase Three, we live in tension, we live in frustration, Paul said it in Rom 7, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" You know I'm tired of sinning. I hate it and Paul says there's only one way to master, by dependence of the Spirit by faith. Here it is. Here is the spiritual life in a nutshell. You can't produce it, all you can do is trust God's word and the only way you can trust God's word is to study it, immerse yourself in it, think about it, for faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God! When we trust God's promises in the word the Holy Spirit kicks in to produce His fruit. That's what works. We look forward, we wait eagerly, Paul says, for the day when we will be in Phase Three, when our experience conforms to our position. But until then you can't think you can solve your sin problems by doing good works. The only way to produce true spiritual fruit is by verse 6.

Gal 5:6 **For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.** Now, I don't like the translation, there are two power words used in this verse. The Greek actually has four power words, the two used here are *ischuo* and *energeo*, from which we get energy. What these two words refer to is the equivalent in the English language of what in physics is called potential and kinetic energy. Potential energy just means it has the capacity to do work. A number of years ago I understand there used to be a big boulder north of town sitting in an unstable position. That rock had a degree of potential energy. It had the potential to do work as long as it sat there. It didn't do any work; it only had the potential to do work. Now when it fell and rolled down the hill that potential energy was transferred into kinetic energy. Kinetic energy is the actual work being done. And here Paul contrasts works and faith by using these two words. He says **neither circumcision nor uncircumcision** has any potential energy. In other words, whether you get circumcised or not it can't do any work, it doesn't even have potential energy, don't do it, it means nothing in terms of producing any kind of spiritual fruit. Well, if circumcision or uncircumcision has nothing to do with producing fruit, what does? Answer, **but faith working through love.** That word **working** is the equivalent of kinetic energy, this is what gets work done. It's faith, first comes faith, you've got to trust the word of God. If you don't know the word of God how can you trust it? Just like the gospel, if you never heard it you couldn't believe it. So in the same way, now in Phase Two sanctification, if you're going to grow spiritually you've got to believe the word of God. So to do that you've got to study it so you know what to believe. And I am telling you, it takes a lot of study. We take it so lightly today; maybe I can do it in a 5-minute devotion. You know what that means? 2500 minutes a day non-devotion. Now which do you think is going to win? Ha, ha, ha. It's obvious. Now look, as we grow in the word, as we learn the word, and we come to a situation in life where we can trust the word of God or go with our gimmick and we have built up enough reserves of the word of God to go with the word of God and act on it, trusting God's promises through the sphere of love, that is, we're doing it out of a motive of love for God and others, then that produces. That's the kinetic energy and that is what activates God the Holy Spirit to produce spiritual fruit in our lives. And nothing else will do that.

So today, the challenge is to believe the word of God when it says if you believe you have been justified, you are righteous. Phase One is finished and despite the fact that you continue to sin in Phase Two you are now in a state of freedom. And sin may frustrate you but don't think that you're going to solve your sin problems and earn merit with God and make all sorts of fruit that you're going to wave in God's face and say, look what I've done, look what I've done because God is going to turn his face away. He doesn't want to look at that crud. He wants to look at Christ, He wants you to depend on His grace, He wants you to walk by faith so the life of Christ is poured out through yours, so that the fruit of the Spirit is generated through your life.

Let's conclude with a reading of Gal 2:20 once more "It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me, the life I live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

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<sup>i</sup> Not all rabbis would have agreed with Paul on this point, but many would. Gamaliel II, for example, is said to have wept when he came to the end of the thirteen requirements of Ezk. 18:5–9, saying 'Only he who keeps all these requirements will live, not he who keeps only one of them' (b. Sanh. 81a)<sup>i</sup> A similar story is related of him in b. Makk. 24a, with reference to the 613 precepts of the law; but his colleagues held that he who kept but one was regarded as having kept them all (cf. *Midr. Tehillim* 15.7). R Aqiba is credited with a specially liberal attitude in this regard, summed up in L. Finkelstein's statement that he sometimes 'asserted God's mercy to be such that a single meritorious act will win a man admission to the future world' (Akiba [New York. 1936], 186; cf. E. P. Sanders, *PPJ*, 125–147).<sup>i</sup>

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