

**Bible Text:** Galatians 5:1-12  
**Preached On:** Saturday, January 18, 2020

**Shreveport Grace Church**  
2970 Baird Road  
Shreveport, LA 71118

**Website:** [www.shreveGrace.org](http://www.shreveGrace.org)  
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If you will, look with me in your Bible to Galatians chapter 5 as we continue our study through this epistle that the Apostle Paul was directed of the Spirit to write to the churches in that region. As I mentioned before, Galatia was not a city, but rather a region, and it would be comparable to what we know as Turkey today, that area. But the LORD has his people that he's called out from every tribe, nation, and tongue and there may be some in that area today that are the LORD's and we just don't know about them. I don't currently have any knowledge of any congregations there in that part of the world that do meet and worship God in Truth and the LORD Jesus Christ in this Gospel of Grace that we enjoy but that doesn't mean there aren't any and I would be delighted to hear from some, should that be the case. Just know that in the world, the LORD has his people, whether we know them or not, just like with Elijah, where the LORD said he had 7,000 who did not bow the knee to Baal, even though he considered himself to be alone.

And I'm sure all of us as we're in our various locations, many times we feel that way. I was looking up the population of the world and the most recent census I saw was from 2018 where there are close to 8 billion people in the world from what they can count. And then you look around and see ones like ourselves so few in number, sometimes you may wonder, well, are any the LORD's? And yet he does. He has his remnant that he's going to call out for whom Christ has paid the debt and they rejoice in the same message of the liberty of Grace, and that's what's the title of this message, "The Liberty of Grace," what liberty we have in the LORD Jesus Christ.

So my text is Galatians 5 and verses 1 through 12 we'll look at today, LORD willing. It says here, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." What Paul is writing here, standing fast means that we're to rest in the work that the LORD Jesus Christ has accomplished and we're to stay in that place that he has given us in his perfect righteousness accomplished for the salvation of his people. Here he speaks of it as being in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, made us free in the sense of justified. We are justified by the work of the LORD Jesus Christ alone. That means acquitted of all guilt and therefore we rejoice in that freedom that he has given us and made us free.

Notice, "wherewith Christ hath made us free." Any other type of preaching is a yoke of bondage as he describes there. That's speaking of those that while we rejoice and stand in that freedom and liberty, being free from the law, oh happy condition, that Christ has so made us free yet there are those that are not free and would seek to bring us back under bondage, under the yoke of bondage. And so think about as we study through what this freedom is without mixture from man or any works required of us, that was the point with our LORD Jesus Christ that caused such great offense to the Pharisees and the scribes in his day because he would simply walk up to one of his own and tell them, "Your sins are forgiven." He knew those for whom he came in this world and for whom he would pay their sin debt and therefore could say unto them, "Your sins are forgiven," another way of saying that, "I've come to pay that sin debt and to lay down my life so you're free." And the Pharisees who had all of their system of works and requirements and duties and ceremonies, all these things, nothing offended them more because they would, as is the case with all conditional preaching, they would have men under bondage, and particularly under their bondage.

So we need to be warned against those that would seek to put us under bondage. We've been freed in Christ from the very curse of sin and the very power of sin. It cannot lead us away to the point where we fall into perdition. No, Christ has freed us from the curse of sin, the power of sin, and we look forward to that day when we shall be fully freed from the very presence of sin. So there's therefore now no condemnation, even with regard to sin. Secondly, Christ has made us free from that ceremonial law. There in the Old Testament, all the sacrifices, all the feast days, all the Sabbath days, and all of its burdensome rites and ceremonies, Christ hath made us free. We rejoice in that, that there's no obligation, as we go back and even read the law, that we're under, whereby Christ has not already fulfilled it as our advocate, as our representative, if indeed we're his.

And here's the part of greatest contention because some say, "Well, yes, all of that we've been made free, but then there's that moral law. There's the 10 Commandments. Are we not still under obligation to the 10 Commandments?" And here again, I say, if we are in any way, then we're not free. Which one of those commandments would you like to testify that you have fulfilled even now in not just the letter of the commandment but the very spirit of it? Who can say because even our LORD said that that the whole law is summed up in these two commandments, "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul with all your strength and love thy neighbor as thyself." Now I can pause and let anybody testify if they will as to how they're doing. I'll tell you what, if any way we're still under that moral law by way of obligation and under it as far as it being able to condemn us, then there's no salvation and we make a mockery of the work of the LORD Jesus Christ. There's only one man that has ever fulfilled the law of God and that's the LORD Jesus Christ, done it in word, done it in deed, and done it in spirit, the spirit of the law. That's why when we read those commandments, yes, they're there, but it causes us to run to Christ and to see him as that one who has made us free from its condemning

power. And so we don't become entangled again with those that would seek to put that yoke of bondage back on us as if in some way their system of works and deeds could make us free. No, we're complete in Christ.

So that's the freedom of which Paul is writing here, the freedom of God's Grace, the liberty that we enjoy because of the Grace of God, and so much so because the real issue here with these Galatians were these Judaizers running around behind him and saying, "Yes, it's Christ, but you still must need to be circumcised." There's that ceremonial law that they were requiring of any who would consider themselves to be children of God, and so Paul very plainly here, and this addresses those that would say, "Yeah, the ceremonial law and the civil law, all that, but the moral law, we're still under obligation to fulfill it." Well, then what you're doing is putting men under a yoke of bondage that they cannot keep and even as Paul wrote there in Galatians 2:21, "if righteousness come by the law," or in any way are keeping the law, "then Christ is dead in vain." You make his coming to be in vain. But he says, "I do not frustrate the Grace of God," there in Galatians 2:21. Frustrate means I don't pervert it. It's either Grace or it's works, and if it's works, then it's not Grace, and if it's Grace, it's not works.

And so here Paul in verse 2 goes back to the vital issue of that day, these Jews, while the Gentiles the LORD was bringing them into the church that the Jews were saying, "Ah, but to really be the LORD's we still have to require them to be circumcised, in essence then they'll be like us. You have to become like us." It's like modern day religion does when people come and they join those groups, they teach them how to walk and to talk and to dress, to speak, and you can sometimes tell what denomination the people are of just by how they walk and talk, because they mimic, they repeat what they've been told. And here, Paul says, "Behold, I Paul say unto you," and here's a pretty straightforward declaration and this is just this very same boldness that we must have in the face of those that would try to pull any one of us back under the works of the law in any way, either to maintain, gain or maintain our salvation. "I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." He's not speaking here of a circumcision that is medically performed as you find today in hospitals when babies are born. No, this is talking about in the religious sense that if a man is to submit to circumcision in order to gain acceptance with God, that was the vital issue, in order to gain acceptance with God, Christ profits you nothing. Quit talking about being a Christian. Quit talking about Christ as if he puts his approval on any such thought. Christ is received by the Grace of God as the only Redeemer and Savior without condition; even our receiving him is the fruit of his work on our behalf and for us.

So Christ alone is to receive the glory. If we add anything, anything that is performed, any kind of performance in some sort of religious way, like some saying, "Well, Christ can save you just as soon as you make your decision, or you bow your head, or you walk an aisle," those are all forms of submitting, requiring people to submit to a work which seeks to find acceptance with God. I actually heard a preacher say one time that you can't

just pray the sinner's prayer in your heart and mind, you have to verbally pronounce it so that is a testimony that you truly mean what you're doing. All of that foolishness is so prevalent even in our day and what it is, it's attributing to you or to the seeker some work or performance or condition that they must do in order to gain God's favor, and making it look like it's right just by putting Christ's name to it. I dare say Christ's name is being used and put to many condemnable practices today, which his Word denounces completely.

So again, whatever that circumcision may be, it's any kind of requirement that men put on men in order to find acceptance with God, earning God's favor. You don't earn God's favor. Grace is God's Grace alone to give to whom he will and he gives it to those that he has given to his Son. So whether it's circumcision, put baptism in there. People put a lot of emphasis on baptism. I was once talking to a man that's in one of these organizations that says unless you've been baptized in water, you can't be saved. And when I said to him, "Well, how can that be so? How does water save?" And he said, "Well, it's like salvation's out there on an island but to get to it you've got to go through the water." That was his reason but you won't find that in Scripture. I don't care whether it's baptism or feast days or prayers at certain times, people can make prayers to be like circumcision that without these prayers then God won't hear you, or even doing good for others, anything that is not entirely resting in and trusting in the LORD Jesus Christ there is no profit. Notice here it says, "Christ shall profit you nothing," underscore. It's vanity. And any attempting particularly to add our works of supposed righteousness to his is a denial of Christ's completely and to show contempt for Christ. Some people treat it like a small thing. That's just a little... No, it' isn't. Where Christ doesn't get all the glory, then it's a contemptible thing. As Isaiah said, "All of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags before him." That's not saying all of our sinfulness, but all of our supposed righteousness. Righteousness says anything that you think you can perform is nothing but filthy rags before him.

So you can see here in reading it that the force that the Apostle Paul brings to this matter, and I believe it's just with that same force and concern that we speak to others who are caught up in works religion or a mixture of Grace and works, the leaven in the message. He says, "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." So any part of that law that men would seek to bring back and to continue on as some measure of righteousness, and a lot of people like to talk about your personal obedience. "Yes, I understand what Christ accomplished, but it still requires my obedience, my personal obedience to prove that I truly am Christ's." Well, if that's the case, then such a person is denying the finished work of Christ but secondly, if you're gonna make that case, then you're debtor to the whole law. You can't just pick and choose. This is not a smorgasbord. "Well, I like this and I like this, but oh well, I'll jump over that." No. If you in any way make any requirement based on any obligation to obey any part of the law, whether ceremonial or moral, then you're a debtor to do the whole law.

You might as well go back there and declare boldly that Christ's work was not complete and now start bringing back the sacrifices.

There's nothing more blasphemous than that, but that's how many think that they can just pick and choose parts of the law and make that their project. It's like New Year's resolutions. "Well, this year I'm going to work on lying less or telling the truth more, or this year I'm going to work on not having such sinful thoughts." Well, I'll tell you if that's the path that you resolve to take, then you're obligated to fulfill the whole law and you're declaring in your rebellion that Christ didn't fulfill it. This is the freedom of Grace, the liberty of Grace wherein we stand to know that, yes, we are sinners and not if we sin but when we sin, as John wrote in his epistle, 1 John chapter 2, when we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Any other effort, any other work contributing of our own can only condemn us and only denounce him and show contempt for him and his work that he accomplished.

So here in verse 4 it says, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from Grace." Now we need to keep this verse in its context and remember to whom it is spoken and for what reason. It is spoken here to those who seek to be justified before God by their own works of righteousness and their obedience to certain laws such as circumcision or Sabbath days or washings. Every denomination has its rules and regulations, so it's speaking here to such that if indeed they make that their mission and their doctrine of being justified before God by any works of the law, when it says there "ye are fallen from Grace," in reality it's saying you've never known the Grace of God. You've fallen from it. The further you pursue that way, the further away from Christ and his justifying Grace and his Word you take it. It's a path going in the wrong direction. You've taken the Grace of God and you've mixed it with works and so therefore it says there Christ is become of no effect to you at all. It doesn't matter what you profess of Christ, if this is indeed your direction, then what it means is Christ has never done a work in you, and unless the LORD is pleased to deliver one from that way, it's a pretty clear evidence that Christ's work was never done for you.

So very solemn thinking here as we read this, "Christ is become of no effect unto you." It's not that you once were Christ's but now you've lost that salvation. No, he's describing there when it says, "Christ is become of no effect unto you," Christ is not going to honor any kind of confession or doctrine that mixes his work with man's work. He'll not share his glory with another. That's what he's saying there, you've fallen from Grace. Quit talking about grace because that's not the Grace of God. And so here again, even though Paul is denouncing many of these that are among the Galatians, propagating this false Gospel, yet he's hopeful. He's hopeful that there are some there in that region that as this epistle was sent and read throughout that indeed they were the LORD's and that not all were being deluded and deceived.

He says verse 5, "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." This is what distinguishes one who's been taught of the LORD by his Spirit from all others. If you wanted a good summary of what the testimony of a true child of God is, this is it. We, speaking of those that God has chosen and for whom Christ has paid the sin debt and the Spirit has drawn, we through the Spirit, that same Spirit. How can you tell that the Spirit is at work in the heart of a sinner other than that that Spirit directs that sinner to the LORD Jesus Christ alone and who has finished work alone. And never to works, never to the works of the flesh. If you see somebody that is striving by their own works to find acceptance with God or by their labors, the Spirit of God is not in them. That's a clear evidence right there.

You say, "Well, how do you know the Spirit of God is in us?" Well, the Spirit, by that Spirit, through that same Spirit, notice, we wait for the hope of righteousness. What is the hope of righteousness? Or rather, who is the hope of righteousness? That's the LORD Jesus Christ. He came the first time in order to pay the sin debt of that people that the Father gave him, and now we wait for that same one to come again. And I'll tell you, he's coming in our lifetime. He'll come either because it's the end of the world and he's purposed that all things should then be destroyed and those that are his raised and taken up with him to be ushered into his presence forever, or he's coming in death. Either way, he's coming. But while we're alive, what is the hope of those that he has redeemed and called? This is it, we wait for the hope of his righteousness. We wait knowing that it's that righteousness that he came and fulfilled which will stand on our behalf when we stand before a holy God.

We have no other righteousness and so the Spirit so directs our heart by Faith. Here again, it's not by our believing, but by the declaration of Christ. As I've said, you can substitute the word faith there with the name Christ, "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by Christ," that righteousness that he came and earned and established, that God imputed once for all to those for whom he accomplished it. And so the sum of our hope is what the Spirit reveals by revelation of Christ through his Word and teaches us not to rely on our own works or deeds or any personal obedience to the law, but we await and we anticipate that when we stand before God, our hope of righteousness will stand because it's the righteousness of God that he promised to everyone for whom Christ paid the debt, that that righteousness alone is all that God requires.

So that hope is in Christ. Christ is the Hope, Christ is the Righteousness, and Christ is the Object of Faith, he is the Faith. What a simple statement there in verse 5 that is an expression of what is our liberty in the Grace of God is to be able to, by his Grace, enjoy all that Christ has wrought on our behalf, know what a blessed assurance that we have in him. So remember that verse, verse 5. Next time you're troubled, next time that others would seek to draw you aside by their message of works or mixture of works and Grace, let this be our confession right here that we through the Spirit wait. Wait means we're not

running around with a hope-so hope. No, we wait for the Hope that is Christ of Righteousness, his righteousness accomplished and established that God has once for all accepted and imputed, and we wait there by Faith, by Christ.

And so, again, he comes back to those who are being deceived by these false preachers, and they can be subtle. You can sit and listen to a preacher, as every once in a while I might go through the radio and I hear a preacher, and you listen for a while and you think, "Well, it sounds like he's saying some right things." Well, keep listening because sooner or later that preacher's going to divulge what is his hope and he's going to deviate off of whatever sounded good in the beginning right back down to, "Now here's what you need to do." And so Paul here in verse 6 addresses this matter, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." So there again, it can be subtle because a preacher can come there and say all this requires is your belief, you see, by faith and and your love. That's not what this is saying here. If we are in Christ by his Grace and through that Faith [the revelation of Christ] to the heart, it does not profit us anything to be circumcised or uncircumcised. None of that matters, or to observe or not to observe things that are commanded in the Levitical law. None of that is what Paul says in any way commends us to God.

What God requires of those sinners that Christ has come and saved is the work of the LORD Jesus Christ and that's what is described here, "but faith which worketh by love." That Faith which causes the sinner to rest in Christ's work alone and is expressed when it says here, "but faith which worketh by love." First of all, that Faith is the effect of God's love unconditional on behalf of Christ for such as we are. It doesn't matter whether you're clothed or naked. It doesn't matter whether you're dressed or in the shower. Nothing of that changes. It's not by circumcision or uncircumcision but it's by that Faith that reveals the LORD Jesus Christ and his finished work.

And by his love. You see, a lot of people turn that around and say, "Well, it's our faith and it's our loving. We prove that we're the LORD's by those two things." No, we're made manifest to be the LORD's according to the Faith, that is the work of Christ, which worketh by love. We love him because he first loved us. All of this is the outflowing of God's love on behalf of sinners such as we are so why would we think then that we need to do anything in order to merit that love, because it's the love of God which is unchangeable and unchanging whereby he set that love upon us from eternity and nothing we do or don't do is going to change that love and therefore we don't follow this path or go down this path of of works as so many do.

And here he talks to these now about their profession in verses 7 and 8. You started well in the beginning. He said, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you." So there very clearly again Paul is bold to say that any pursuing of this path is certainly not of God. In fact, it would cause question as to whether you know anything of God or not, the fact that you're being

drawn aside by these that would add man's works in any way to God's Grace. You started well in the beginning. In other words, you came as a helpless sinner to Christ, at least by profession, and you found in him all you need and were even at one time zealous for this Gospel of Christ, again, by profession. I know a number of people that when they are first taught of this message of Grace, they get excited. It's like you just freed a captive because they've been sitting under false teaching of bondage all their life and now suddenly to hear it's like a refreshing rain on a dry soil, "Oh, how refreshing." And I've had people tell me that. And then, all of a sudden, they turn away. They become enthralled once again with the message of works that they once professed to have renounced and they go back like a dog to the vomit.

Well, this is what Paul is asking here, "Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" I'll tell you this, if the LORD has done a true work of Grace, none can hinder you. So if there are any that have with their lips professed Christ as the Savior for helpless sinners and professed to have found in him all they need, and have been at one time zealous for this message of Grace and yet turn away, the only thing you can conclude is they never were the LORD's and they are rightly condemned. It is not God who called you by his Grace, or Christ who has fulfilled all things on behalf of such sinners as we are, nor is it the Holy Spirit who revealed the Gospel or any other apostle of Christ who has preached the Gospel to you, that if they come speaking of another way or desires of pulling you back under that bondage, you can tell that that's not Christ. That's not the work of the Father, the Son, or the Spirit, and anyone preaching that is not a true preacher of Christ.

You see, a lot of people think that Satan is dressed up in a red suit with pitchfork and horns, and that's how they perceive him as invisibly evil, but when you read over in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, Paul warns of many that appear to be ministers of righteousness and yet they've transformed themselves into that and yet are truly nothing but false preachers. In 2 Corinthians chapter 11, beginning with verse 2, Paul says, and this also is the same spirit with which he's writing to the Galatians here. He says, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." This is what preachers do is point sinnersto Christ and rejoice as the Spirit of God draws them to him as their one and only husband. But he says, "I fear," in verse 3, "lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve," notice, "through his subtilty." See, this is where people that have not been taught of the Spirit, they don't hear the difference and you can point it out all you want to, but they're still not gonna see the difference. They're still gonna follow after these false preachers because the LORD has not yet opened their eyes. Even "as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted," That's where this all begins, in the mind, "from the simplicity that is in Christ."

As I've said before, any message that a messenger has to declare that does not have Christ in the preparation, and have Christ in the presentation of the message, and Christ in the

conclusion, is a crime. It's no different than a thief that feigns to be one thing but has his objective to draw you aside, take what you have. That's a thief. And so this is Paul's concern for them and he continues over in verses 13 through 15 where he says, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers," notice, "transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." This is where in Scripture it says he that have ears to hear, let them hear. Now those that are not taught of the Spirit and left to themselves, they're not going to be able to discern the difference. I liken this to some folk are tone deaf. They couldn't tell whether you're playing the piano on key or not. They're tone deaf. They can't tell. Doesn't matter and they'll sit and listen to that music. But for any that have been given this ability to know what a key is supposed to sound like, when it's not on that key, it causes them to pull back and to say, "That's out of tune." Such is the Spirit of discernment that the LORD gives to his children so that a voice of a stranger they shall not follow. There was a dear lady that every time I went to this place to preach, she always came up afterward and said to me in such a tender tone, "I'm thankful that you played it in the key of C." Well, what she means is you preached Christ for me and now I can go home and rest. That's what those that are the LORD's desire, that's all they desire, but these others are going to come and play in a minor key and there is a dissonance there and you're uncomfortable with it because it's not the clear message of the LORD Jesus Christ.

This is what Paul is saying, such are false apostles, deceitful workers. They're gonna say it in just a way so that you think that, well, they're preaching Christ, but they're not. "Transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." A lot of times it's not so much what they say, because I've had people send me little clips of certain preachers and they'll say to me, "Listen to this, this sounds pretty much what we believe." And then I'll go out online and I'll listen to the rest of the message and I'll write back to them and say, "You didn't listen far enough or you cut the clip too short," because if you listen long enough, these that transform themselves into the apostles of Christ because they are deceitful workers, their real purpose and goal is going to be to draw you back again under bondage.

These are the ones that Paul warns the Galatians of, "And no marvel," he says in verse 14, "for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." Think of who he was before he fell and now the deception that he brings as he deceives multitudes through false preachers.

He says in verse 15, "Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness," preaching close to it, but listen for the conditionals. Listen, at some point you're going to hear that it's not the work that Christ came and earned and established and God imputed alone as being righteousness. You listen far enough, you'll hear someone say after preaching all that Christ supposedly did, "Now in order to make this effectual, here's what you need to do." And there you go. They've just perverted the message of Christ. Now, it's Christ's righteousness alone, period. As I face

my dying breath, I pray that I have no other thought than that that hope be in Christ Jesus alone, that if he died for me, then he is all my righteousness.

He says here, these others have "transformed themselves as ministers of righteousness," and notice, "whose end shall be according to their works." You mix anything into the work of Christ, in the end, you'll know nothing but condemnation by those very works that you proclaim. There's no other righteousness that God has ever approved or accepted, but that we stand in that righteousness if we're his. There's no other righteousness.

And so in verse 8, "This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you." If you hear anybody talking about any manner of works, even in the smallest fashion that is necessary for the Grace of God, you can tell them pretty clearly there in verse 8, that persuasion does not come from God; those he calls, that's not their persuasion. That's not the Faith that he gives them. And I know people are gonna react and say, "Well, who are you to judge?" Well, I'm not, this is the Word. This persuasion, that is of mixing works and Grace, cometh not of him that calleth you. If the LORD is calling you and has called you, it's not gonna be according to that persuasion.

He says there in verse 9, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." That's what people say, "Oh, it's alright, it's a little leaven, but it can't affect the whole lump." Well, that's not what the Scriptures say. Some would say, "Well, Paul, you're getting a little upset here." Well, there's reason to be upset, especially when we consider how people are being deceived. We're not to embrace any form or fashion of men's works or decision and still call it Grace. Paul is reminding them here that just like leaven in the dough, you don't see it, it's mixed in there, you don't see it, but it has a great effect and so does air. That's what leaven represents, especially in regard to the work of Christ. This is why we're so careful to define who he is and why he came and what he accomplished there at the cross because a little leaven is saying, "Well, he did all this, but now you're not justified until you believe." Well, wait a minute. So is our justification based on our believing, or is it based on the work of the LORD Jesus Christ alone?

I know this, if Christ has finished the work on behalf of a sinner, it's when he finished the work that they were declared righteous once for all, and those that were declared righteous once for all, at the cross by the completed work of the LORD Jesus Christ, yes, the Spirit does in time cause them to look to him and believe, but it's not their believing that is their justification. What that believing does, God-given, Spirit-given believing does is declare that the work was accomplished when Christ finished it. He's the Object of Faith and so a little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump. Don't treat it lightly. It must be stamped out immediately whenever we even perceive, someone says, "Well, something doesn't sound right." Well, it probably isn't. That's why we come back to the Word, measure everything in accord with the Word and who Christ is.

And so here's where Paul then expresses some hope. This is almost like a father having disciplined his children and scolding them for losing their way, how he says, "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." Even though Paul has had to deal firmly with them, this is the tenderness and love that the LORD gives to his servants for that people for whom the preacher preaches, that in his hope and his desire is that the Spirit of God will cause them to see the Truth in what he has been declaring and will deal with the false teachers in judgment as opposed to them being drawn aside and facing God's condemnation. And so he looks to the LORD.

Verses 11 and 12, we have to stop here. He says, "And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. I would they were even cut off which trouble you." It's interesting how he uses the word cut off there as symbolism of circumcision, that those that preach this circumcision is necessary, that they themselves be cut off and they be freed from their influence.

And so his desire is that the LORD would be pleased to use this message to turn them once again back to Christ, turn their eyes upon the LORD Jesus Christ as he's revealed in the Scripture and look fully in his wonderful face and all of these other things that men would purport to be the Word of Christ to be seen for what they are. Paul was saying if it was just something as simple as changing his message, because that's really what they wanted him to do. "Can't you just add circumcision?" Paul says, "And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?" In other words, "Am I going to go back to preaching just a little works in order to avoid the persecution?" He says, "Then the offence of the cross is ceased." And that's another whole message in and of itself. What is the offence of the cross? Well, summed up in one point, it's the offence that men have nothing to do with their salvation, that it's all of God, and that being declared righteous has nothing to do with any works of will that man might contribute. That's an offence to man, but it's the offence of the cross because it took the work of Christ to make his people to be accepted in him, in the beloved. So that's the offence that the cross settles the matter before God. It was there that sinners were completely reconciled to the holy law and justice of God. No works on their part contributed.

That's the message and so I often say, if you want to find out whether a man truly believes the Gospel, just preach the cross to him and continue to preach it without deviation and you'll find out any that aren't the LORD's. They're going to be trying to put man's works in there somewhere and convince you to change your message and do so, but to do so is to avoid, tend to avoid the offence of the cross but in the end, all such will be cut off. I pray that the LORD will use this to strengthen us in our day in the same deception, same deceivers that were in the world, but mostly in our heart, this flesh would deceive us were it not for the Grace of God. So stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. Therein is our Hope, amen.