

**GALATIANS - SERMON 22**  
**GALATIANS 5:1-12 — THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST'S WORK**  
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3 May 1998

INTRODUCTION:

Read Galatians 5:1-12

The root of the heresy that permeated the Galatian churches was the result of a perversion of the doctrine of God's covenants. Paul has corrected this perversion in Chapter 4 mainly. God's covenants are those arrangements by which God purposes to deal with His people. The Abrahamic covenant was fulfilled by the coming of the promised Seed, Jesus Christ. The old covenant, instituted by Moses at Mount Sinai, was not a modification of the Abrahamic covenant, it was not a development of the Abrahamic covenant but rather it was brought in alongside the Abrahamic covenant to restrain Israel's sin and maintain Israel's national identity until Jesus Christ should come. Once the Lord Jesus Christ had come the old covenant was no longer required and it was abolished forever and was no more to be the basis upon which men related to God. The apostle used the powerful illustration of Sarah and Hagar to drive this point home. The son of the bondswoman was to be driven out, as the old covenant was to be driven out as a means of dealing with God. The old covenant was temporary in nature.

Having accomplished the above, Paul now makes his final concluding applications to the Galatians of his teachings regarding the covenants. In chapter 5 Paul requires a decision on the part of the Galatians. They must choose all of one covenant or all of the other covenant. They cannot mix them.

Paul's general exhortation is found in verse 1.

Galatians 5:1

*Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.*

Paul is urging a clean break with the old covenant and a standing fast in the new covenant. The contrast is poignant; a state of *liberty* verses a state of *bondage*. In the new covenant there is *liberty* in enjoying acceptance with God. Under the old covenant there was bondage and slavery falling out from the cursing, demands, and burdensome guilt of the law and the violation of it. Peter also speaks of this bondage.

Acts 15:7-10

*And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"*

Peter refers to the old covenant as a *yoke on the neck*.

Following the general exhortation of Galatians 5:1 Paul begins to offer arguments to enforce that exhortation to the minds of the Galatians.

OUTLINE:

- I THE UTTER INCOMPATIBILITY OF COMBINING OUR WORKS WITH CHRIST'S WORKS FOR SALVATION, vv 2-4.
  - II THE ENTIRE SUITABILITY OF FAITH IN CHRIST ALONE FOR SALVATION, vv 5-6.
  - III THE NECESSITY OF RECOVERING THEMSELVES FROM THIS GRIEVOUS HERESY, vv 7-10.
- CONCLUSION: GALATIANS 5:11-12

- I THE UTTER INCOMPATIBILITY OF COMBINING OUR WORKS WITH CHRIST'S WORKS FOR SALVATION, vv 2-4  
The word incompatible means that two things are absolutely irreconcilable and do not get along together. The two things are mutually exclusive if they are incompatible.

Paul is saying that if one tries to mix his own works with those works of Christ in order to secure or achieve salvation, he attempts the impossible.

Galatians 5:2-4

*Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. v 3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. v 4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.*

Circumcision was the mark of entrance into the old covenant. Paul is saying that if the Galatians are circumcised as a declaration of the necessity of old covenant law-keeping in order to be saved and to rely upon that law-keeping for salvation, then Christ and His work will become of no value to them. If one intends to approach God on the basis of works for salvation, then that person must approach God entirely upon the basis of his works. The Judaizers were encouraging a mixture of man's works and Christ's works. Paul is denying the possibility of that mixture. To dilute Christ and His work in any way is to render Him of no *profit* to you with respect to salvation.

Paul restates the requirement of the law - perfect compliance. If one sets upon law-keeping for salvation then he becomes indebted to the keeping of *the whole law*, vs 3. One sin, one time, in one's life disqualifies that one from salvation forever. Partial obedience is unacceptable.

In verse 4 Paul warns that those who resort to law-keeping for salvation *become estranged from Christ*. The benefits of Christ's saving work are totally forfeited by the one who turns to his own law-keeping works for salvation. In law-keeping there is no grace. You sin, you die, that is it.

*You have fallen from grace* means that these Galatians are switching from a relationship with God based upon unmerited favor to one based upon one's own perfect performance in which there is no provision or room for error. Beforehand the Galatians relied upon the grace of God through faith alone in Christ for favor and acceptance with God, but now they have fallen from that high and exalted relationship to the weak and failing works method.

The Galatians, in this fall, are placing themselves in an impossible position. In effect they are only placing themselves under the curse of the law in their adoption of the law for salvation. It will bring certain ruin upon themselves. They are renouncing Christ as their

Savior and turning to themselves as saviors. They are refusing the gift of righteousness from Christ and determining to provide their own righteousness.

This is the condition of the vast majority of human-kind. They refuse Christ in favor of relying upon themselves for righteousness. For them Christ becomes of no profit or effect to them at all.

Paul's point is that Christ must save us totally or Christ will not save us at all. He will not tolerate any additions to His finished work.

This is why Paul urges the Galatians to *stand fast . . . in the liberty by which Christ has made us free*. The concept of *standing fast* is that of resisting an contrary influence.

## II THE ENTIRE SUITABILITY OF FAITH IN CHRIST ALONE FOR SALVATION, vv 5-6.

### Galatians 5:5-6

*For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.  
vs 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything,  
but faith working through love.*

As a result of the regenerating and illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, Paul believes along with all true Christians that he will obtain true righteousness to stand in the presence of a holy God, not by his works, but by the works of Christ. It is by faith in Christ and not faith in our works that we shall stand in the presence of God acceptable. This righteousness is imputed to us by faith. Christ completely, perfectly, and exactly obeyed the law of God and thereby obtained a perfect righteousness. God then takes the righteousness of Christ and gives it to us as a gift. Hence we need not go about trying to establish our own righteousness. Paul's great concern is expressed in another epistle;

### Philippians 3:9

*. . . and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith. . .*

There are two ways of obtaining righteousness. One method is to obtain it by oneself, though this righteousness is not sufficient for salvation in the end. The other is to obtain it by faith in Christ. Christ has obtained for us that which we could not obtain for ourselves, perfect righteousness.

### Romans 3:21-22

*But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. . .*

### Romans 5:17-19

*For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For*

*as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.*

Galatians 5:6

*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*

The issue is not circumcision (as a metonymy for law-keeping), but rather faith in Christ. The nature of true saving faith expresses itself in the context of love to God, to Christ, and to fellow believers.

### III THE NECESSITY OF RECOVERING THEMSELVES FROM THIS GRIEVOUS HERESY, vv 7-10.

Galatians 5:7

*You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?*

Paul likens the Christian life to a foot-race. In the past the Galatians were running well.

Paul is asking who are these people who are turning the Galatians from the way of grace to the way of works. He associates them with a *hindrance* and an obstruction. Notice that the hindrance of the false teachers is *from obeying the truth*. This is the mark of a false teacher he will hinder his people from *obeying the truth*. It is the *truth* that enables us to run well. The encouragement to disobey the truth is that which causes us to stumble.

Galatians 5:8

*This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.*

God has effectually called the Galatians, but this invading and new doctrine is not from Him. God is not behind the new teaching brought to them by the Judaizers. Paul had argued this in Galatians 3:1-5 when he questioned the Galatians in regard to their experience of initial salvation. Since this new teaching came not from one of God's apostles and since it is incompatible with the true gospel, it is to be rejected.

Galatians 5:9

*A little leaven leavens the whole lump.*

A little false doctrine will gradually spread, infect, and affect the whole of your Christian faith. A little false doctrine is unacceptable and it must be purged out. The analogy of leaven is very good and helpful. To tolerate false teaching always producing bad fruit.

Galatians 5:10

*I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.*

Paul still is hopeful for the Galatians. He believes that ultimately the Galatians will be restored and as a part of that restoration they will reject the false teachers. Paul refers to the false teachers as *troublers*. God's mind in regard to those who teach false doctrine is serious and He considers them to be *troublers* in His church.

1 Corinthians 3:17

*If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.*

The *temple* is the New Testament church. How is it defiled? The church is defiled when false doctrine and false teaching are brought in. Heresy is considered filth in God's eyes.

Conclusion:

Galatians 5:11-12

*And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. v 12 I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!*

Paul accuses the Judaizers of mis-representing him and his teaching - *still preached circumcision*. Paul experienced persecution, but he did so because he no longer preached circumcision. [To cater to the demands and false teaching of the Judaizers (or any false teachers) will probably result in the subsiding of persecution, but at the cost of the true gospel of grace. The true gospel of grace does provoke men to persecute. Alter the gospel and the offense of the gospel may be removed, but at the expense of the true gospel.]

The *offense of the cross* is simply that man must become poor in spirit to be saved. He must abase his pride and become humble. Self-determination must be turned into submission. For the Jews, national pride and exclusivism had to be abandoned. But all of these things were offensive to the proud rebellious human heart.

Paul issues a directive. Those who have brought this false doctrine in among the people of God, Paul righteously wishes that they would be *cut off*. Paul urges the Galatians to recover themselves and in doing so recognize the false teachers and cast them out.

Coming to an understanding of the truth always makes demands upon us with reference to our choices and our behavior. To know the truth and yet not to make concrete steps to implement that truth is to disbelieve the truth in the end.

Paul not only explains the errors of the Judaizers, he also issues an action and a directive - *cut them off*. We are not to tolerate error among us.

There are certain men and certain books to whom we ought not to give attention and time. They will hinder us in our race.